

The Advertiser



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WITH TOKEN ON PAGE 2 TODAY

Picture: Beau Williams

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GEORGE TURNS THREE

SEE PAGE 3, WORLD

Parents want children in classes for up to 10 hours a day

SCHOOL OVERTIME

EXCLUSIVE
TIM WILLIAMS

MOST parents want the school day extended to relieve financial pressure, reduce the need for homework and to ensure better access to activities such as art and sport, a major new survey shows.

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Wild weather batters state

ELIZABETH HENSON

STATE Emergency Service crews responded to more than 200 calls last night as strong winds and rain lashed SA, causing widespread damage. Gusts of up to 110km/h toppled trees, some smashing into homes and bringing down

powerlines. More than 10,500 properties across the state lost power during the evening. The hardest hit areas included Adelaide, Elliston, Port Lincoln, Cleve, Maitland, Kingscote and Clare. A house in Tenynson lost most of its roof as the storm hit the metro-politan coast about 3.30pm.

Call-outs for fallen trees and branches came from West Beach, Semaphore, Rose Park and the Hills suburbs of Monarto, Mt George, Coromandel Valley, Aldgate and Mylor. The storm struck just hours after the Bureau of Meteorology issued a severe weather warning, forecasting strong to

gale-force winds and heavy rain until around midnight. It also warned of high tides and localised flooding, particularly near Port Adelaide. SES chief of staff Leanne Adams said the storm was expected to ease by midnight. However, several smaller fronts had been forecast to fol-

low, making it a potentially dangerous few days ahead. The severe weather was in stark contrast to the spring-like conditions earlier this week. On Thursday, Adelaide experienced its warmest July day in five years, reaching 22.7C. The warmest July day was 26.6C in 1975.

Mums and dads in favour of longer school day

FROM PAGE 1

Two-thirds of more than 700 respondents to a survey of public-school parents by the SA Association of State School Organisations supported a longer school day.

That was the same proportion who paid for childcare and out-of-school-hours care programs, indicating that parents are looking for relief from those costs.

More than half of respondents wanted the school day to run for eight hours, with 15 per cent favouring either nine or 10 hours. And 75 per cent wanted secondary schools to offer evening classes.

Currently, schools must provide between 5.25 and 5.5 hours of instruction time each day, with at least 40 minutes for lunch and some flexibility for start and finish times.

Most schools are open for between 6-7 hours a day.

SAASSO, a body representing parents, is calling for a "proper review" of the school day in light of the survey results. Director David Knuckey said: "We think the government does need to look into what the 21st century school day should look like."

"We see in other states, and in private schools, more flexible arrangements."

"We have principals out there saying the (9am-3pm)

WHAT PARENTS WANT

SHOULD SCHOOLS OPERATE LONGER HOURS?

Yes	66 per cent
No	34 per cent

HOW LONG SHOULD THE SCHOOL DAY BE?

Current hours	34 per cent
(usually no more than 7 hours)	
8 hours	51 per cent
9 hours	4 per cent
10 hours	10 per cent
12 hours	1 per cent

SHOULD SECONDARY SCHOOLS OFFER EVENING CLASSES?

Yes	75 per cent
No	25 per cent

WHAT SHOULD LONGER SCHOOL HOURS BE USED FOR?

Homework	72 per cent
Wellbeing	68 per cent
Sport	61 per cent
Languages	49 per cent
Music	38 per cent
Nature play	37 per cent
Art	32 per cent
Drama	28 per cent
Counselling	21 per cent



school day is just old-fashioned and doesn't meet the needs of society.

"No one's talking about an eight-hour instruction day. We are talking about schools opening longer to provide other services."

Mr Knuckey said a crowded curriculum and primary schools' "fixation" on literacy and numeracy to improve NAPLAN results meant languages, art and music were being squeezed out.

"With a longer day, instruction hours could focus on "core" academic subjects with

the extra time used for those other activities.

But Australian Education Union state president Howard Spreadbay said schools were already mandated to cover the Australian Curriculum, including the arts, in current hours.

"I don't think there's any evidence that a longer school day would improve students' learning," he said. "What parents are saying is they want the school day to accommodate their pattern of work."

"(They are saying) we want a longer school day because we want our kids to be supervised

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

- More than 700 people took part.
- 94 per cent were parents.
- 26 per cent worked in a school.
- 65 per cent of all respondents had placed their children in Out of School Hours Care.
- 68 per cent had enrolled their children in childcare.
- Respondents who worked in schools were far more likely to oppose extension of school hours.

Mr Knuckey acknowledged longer hours would require "a generational shift in how our teachers work", but said it could result in more flexibility.

Some high schools, typically those that cater to adult re-entry students as well as teens, already offer twilight and evening classes. And Playford International College, formerly Fremont-Elizabeth City High School, opens from 8am to 5pm to give students access to supervised study sessions.

SA Secondary Principals Association president Peter Mader said education was increasingly moving online and into "flipped learning", with students introduced to topics through digital content they watched at home before exploring them in class activities.

That meant the focus should be on smarter use of time and "the need to go deeper into the content at school", not a longer day - which would present a significant industrial hurdle.

Anne Millard, the Education Department's executive director for school and preschool improvement, said an "across the board" extension of hours would have industrial, legislative and cost implications.

PAGE 50, EDITORIAL

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