



This week's stories from the media

- Union agrees to 4 year bargaining agreement
- SA Kids fallen behind in maths, reading and scientific literacy
- Singapore has world's best system for one reason
- Backlash as union accepts government's pay offer
- Senate inquiry calling for behaviour curriculum
- School system fails fairness test

SA Kids Fallen Behind

SA 15-year-olds have fallen the furthest behind of any state a new international snapshot shows.

The state's results suffered the sharpest decline in all three core testing areas of reading, maths and scientific literacy, according to the latest PISA tests published by the OECD.

Nationally, the maths & reading skills of students have drastically declined over the past 20 years, with the average Australian Year 10 student falling at least a year behind despite school funding tripling to \$72bn.

Only an unprecedented drop in student performance overseas has saved Australia from plummeting down the list of 81 countries assessed under the program.

Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) senior research fellow Lisa De Bortoli said SA's results were "reason for concern".

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Teacher Union Agrees To Four Year Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

A deadlock between the SA government and the teacher's union appears to be broken, with public school teachers being encouraged to accept a fourth "improved" pay and conditions offer.

The union's executive decided to recommend to its members that they accept the revised enterprise agreement, to avoid a third strike in as many months.

The revised deal proposes a 4 % teacher pay rise in the first year of the new agreement, and 3% increases over the next three years.

Members have until December 15 to vote on whether to accept the offer.

Education Minister Blair Boyer told ABC Radio Adelaide he was happy with the union's decision to endorse the latest offer.

"I know it has been a tough time for people out there in our schools as we've gone through this bargaining process and two industrial actions," Mr Boyer said.

"The final offer that was put yesterday comes in, I think at about \$1.6 billion over the life of the agreement because it includes a fourth pay offer in there."

The agreement also includes an additional 1 hour of non-instructional time a week for teachers in an effort to address growing workloads.

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Singapore Has World's Best System For One Reason

Australia teaches most of its students the same material at the same time, but there is a growing push toward a more targeted approach.

With the release of PISA this week students in Singapore have again topped the world.

In Australia, results have stagnated after two decades of decline.

Singapore has designed its national system around the observation that children have different learning needs.

Based on their performance at the end of year 4, students are taught core subjects at one of two levels - foundation or standard.

Exam results at the end of primary school determine which of three high school streams students are assigned to.

Streaming is not a central feature in Australia.

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Backlash As Union Approves Pay Offer

The Education Minister was all smiles at a school visit after the teachers' union recommended members accept the government's latest pay offer. However, not everyone was happy.

After months of negotiations, union endorsement of the latest teacher pay offer has come as a relief to the SA government with strike action and school closures set to come to an end.

However, not all are happy with some teachers claiming the union had “thrown in the towel”.

Visiting Darlington Primary School, Mr Boyer said he slept easier after the union's SA president Andrew Gohl would ballot members with a recommendation to accept the “improved” bargaining agreement.

Union members called the announcement “demoralising” and said the AEU had “thrown in the towel” saying a 13% increase over four years was not enough.

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Senate Inquiry On Behaviour

A Senate inquiry has found Australian students need lessons in how to behave.

The inquiry, which has been looking at “increasing disruption in Australian school classrooms,” said education authorities should introduce “behaviour curriculum”.

There is obvious concern disruptive behaviour in schools is disadvantaging students and contributing to declining literacy and numeracy results in some international tests.

On Friday the committee released an interim report with nine main recommendations. A final report is due when federal parliament returns in February 2024.

[Full Story](#)

Last Week Of School

Next week is the last week of school for 2023!



School System Fails Fairness Test

Education Minister Jason Clare has demanded a better and fairer education system - after PISA results.

Testing showed that poor teenagers have fallen 5 years behind their well-off classmates.

“Students from poor families, Indigenous students and students from regional areas are more likely to need additional support.”

The report showed that Australian 15-year olds from the poorest 25% of families are performing at the level of 10-year olds in maths, science and reading.

The report also found the gap between students from rich and poor families is growing.

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