



PO Box 16079  
City East QLD 4002  
Subscribe: <https://qasel.schoolzineplus.com/subscribe>

Email: [president@qasel.org.au](mailto:president@qasel.org.au)  
Phone: 0418 715 359



14 December 2018

## From the President



Dear QASEL members

Who can believe it? We are at the end of 2018 and most of us would agree it passed in a flash!

I have found it challenging to fit it all in and despite the best of intentions I didn't get to all of the schools and programs I planned to however I did get to the majority of those I was invited to-including schools, HOSES and schools networks, clusters, regional business meetings and alliances.

At the end of the 2018 school year, may I take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate you all on your outstanding work with our wonderful students, that I have been so privileged to have observed all across Queensland!

I have been involved in a number of reviews, forums ,working parties, Ministerial Taskforces, DG,DDG, ADG led initiatives, committees etc etc all year.

I am not listing these as they are too numerous in this final newsletter.... However for your information, and on behalf of QASEL, I have responded with verbal feedback and written responses (including valued input from your State Council), to a range of D of E work and projects...Examples are: the ongoing Strategic Directions Committee chaired by the DG in response to the IPS review; the Review of Behaviour Procedures, the Senior Assessment and Tertiary Entrance Principals Reference Group; the School Improvement Unit Stakeholders Reference Group;the TECESE Governance Committee and end of year Graduation; the SBMAQ Conference and end of year celebration; responses to the Religious Instruction policy; the Appropriate and Ethical Use of Public Resources policy; P and Cs Qld Principal meetings and launch of the CRS-Container Recycling Scheme; Teacher Mobility Project Stakeholder Reference Group; Qld State Schools Staffing Resourcing and related policies including Leading the Management of Schools project; Teaching Queensland's Future Executive Stakeholders Reference Group; Headline Indicators for Special Schools advocacy for review etc

I have also attended 1-1 meetings as for the other terms of the year, with both DDGs and most ADGs to advocate around school and IT funding, Infrastructure, Curriculum, TRS Safety Net advocacy for equality and input to an ongoing review, advocacy for HOSES Professional Learning etc

With regard to Human Resources, particularly focusing on equality of access to positions e.g. Band 8 Heads of School positions in P-10/12 larger Special Schools (FYI- Currimundi Special has used school funding to create two Band 8 positions in a 2019 pilot- watch this space-Good luck Alwyn, Carolyn and Heidi!)

An exciting outcome of the HOSES professional learning advocacy, is the considerable subsidy for HOSES attendance at the 2019 QASEL conference. ALL HOSES will receive an email from Deb Dunstone, ADG State Schools-Disability and Inclusion about this tangible support of \$500 per HOSES. Therefore, for an Early Bird registration this will mean a QASEL member HOSES pays only \$295 to attend the QASEL 2019 Conference-People Purpose Passion! A tremendous level of support and a great opportunity to attend QASECON19!

Please HOSES also consider presenting your great work in QASELCON19 concurrent sessions/workshops. Expressions of Interest to present will be circulated early 2019.

ALL QASEL MEMBERS who usually attend conference and are intending to do so for 2019, will need to register early as there is likely to be a significant growth in the number of attendees for 2019 with the financial support being provided for HOSES. Payment is by 28 February for Early Bird and there is capacity to register individuals for day attendance for members of your staff...

<http://www.cvent.com/events/qaselcon19/event-summary-b5643ecf7fe54099b9ce1b725cc16f04.aspx>

There is so much more I could write about... however I believe **the QASEL newsletter** is just that... what are **members of QASEL** doing in your schools that should/could be **celebrated in YOUR newsletter** shared across the membership/state and celebrated in the outcomes for your students!

In a possible future model (tbc) , as President I plan to provide a short regular President's update about my advocacy on your behalf, current issues, responses, research etc ... hopefully entitled something inspiring....( suggestions?)...

And separately also through Schoolzine will come **YOUR** regular newsletter with **YOUR** content. Jamie who is working as a PT BM (based at Redland District Special) to support the President/QASEL will receive content/photos/video clips etc from YOU and produce this through SZ. (Desley continues at Beenleigh Special supporting Nicole as Treasurer) More on these to follow early 2019.

The Premier invited the Presidents to attend her annual Government Reception earlier this week and you were all

acknowledged by her and the Minister for your great work in our schools.

Therefore go on your summer break knowing this and please return safely and refreshed in the New Year! Enjoy the time with your family and friends. Stay safe and enjoy every minute... Return refreshed for 2019!

Happy holidays!

I wish you a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year!

**Warm regards**

**Roselynn Anderson**

**President**

**Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders**



*Kathy O'Brien with her blurb*

## Department of Education Information for YOU!

**Self-Care – The critical reason why school staff and leaders must prioritise their own wellbeing without feeling guilty.**



The reality of schools (for as many years as I have worked in education) is that teachers, Principals, and school staff more broadly run the gauntlet each term at frenetic pace often collapsing physically and emotionally at the finish line. For many, holidays are spent recovering from exhaustion, sickness, with a short window to reenergise the batteries. Quickly doing it all over again next term. Historically, this was a seemingly more manageable task than it is now in 2018. However, the speed and volume at which staff move in contemporary schools is mindboggling and it is fast becoming obvious that this is no longer a reliable or healthy way to approach the school year. Considerations and approaches to school leader and staff mental health and wellbeing fundamentally needs to be, considered, fit for the context of schools, and planned for (both personally and across the school organisation). This must be an architected space rather than an accidental hap hazard occurrence. It also needs to be strengthened from a prevention base as opposed to mere intervention. The foundations of good self-care and wellbeing in an organisation means healthy management and support where professionals thrive while maintaining a reasonable baseline of wellbeing and health. This means not waiting for cumulative harm in workforces where it is only tackled from a deficit model, which seems to be mere damage control. Sadly, in my experiences, and in my conversations with educators there is a significant amount of guilt attached to self-care and whilst there is great rhetoric about the necessity of it, very few school organisations have found ways to deeply embed it in their culture.

It's very difficult to embed it void of individual value judgement, the perception its "fluff", or that privileging time for self-care is a luxury and means less time to do the "actual" work. On the contrary, it's fast becoming a moral, economic, and high performance imperative. Organisations can see significant (and efficient) changes to team performance and baseline results when applying self-care and staff wellbeing thinking and strategies to their Monday to Friday existence. It is now undeniable that staff wellbeing and mental health will, over the next 5 years, become a significant priority and expectation for school leaders and staff. Maybe this endorsing culture will very quickly challenge the notion of "guilt", "fluff", and "luxury".



Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders Inc. (QASEL) | PO Box 16079 CITY EAST QLD 4002 | BM@qasel.org.au | www.qasel.org.au

## Special Education Leaders (QASEL)



## Items for Information

### International Congress on Education of the Deaf

This is the link to save the date information for the ICED OF Brisbane 2020

<https://2020iced.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/y/E8DFFD07B0D77A>

## Artist in Residence

Kathy O'Brien of Desert Dreams has contacted me to offer her services as an artist in residence for our students across all schools. Kathy has worked in schools across the state and NT with groups and classes of students on contract and short term work in the genre of felting. Kathy has contacts with other artists also who may work across a range of genres...Kathy's contact number is 0419 846 342.

Hopefully the mental health approaches catch up to our absolute acceptance of the importance of physical health.

Another outdated and perhaps antiquated view is that resilience (in Australia) means weathering and standing in a stoic fashion suffering through stressful or distressing periods and coming out rock solid on the other side. We are now realising that resilience must be a more fluid concept. When experiencing a stress or distress, moving with that situation or emotion, experiencing the distress, allowing yourself to be vulnerable if need, and finding strength in how you regulated your way through the event.

### Why is self-care the new thing?

For a long time looking after yourself (as an educator) was an afterthought. We would only consider self-care when we are already well down the track of exhaustion and cumulated stress it was driven by deficits and we waited until breaking point to intervene rather than from a prevention perspective. By definition self-care is understanding your own personal health and wellbeing and having knowledge of, and access to, a variety of strategies that not only prevent poor health but we can call upon to stop a situation of poor health worsening. This includes learning to identify activities and practices that support wellbeing as a professional and help to sustain positive self-care in the long-term.

A great analogy when thinking about self-care is the 'oxygen mask' analogy. Everyone has boarded a plane and heard the mandatory airline safety briefing. In this briefing, the oxygen mask is to be placed on 'you' first before assisting anyone else. Teachers and school leaders often feel guilty about looking after themselves and prioritising activities that will maintain or build their own good mental health. However, using the oxygen mask analogy shows the reason that school staff must find time to ensure that they take care of themselves first. After all, a healthy, energised, and engaged teacher makes for a healthy, energised, and engaged classroom.

A great way to reframe how school staff feel about mental health, wellbeing, and self-care is to apply the same thinking they have towards physical health to mental health. Many school staff prioritise time and money maintaining physical health through paying for gym memberships, purchasing matching active wear and sneakers, or finding a few hours a week to get out and be active. What if school staff were encouraged to do the same for their mental health?

Finding time and prioritising mental health is just as important, if not more so. Another thing for school staff to consider is how early they seek help when they are feeling wobbly or like they are not travelling okay in the world. We often tell people around us about physical ailments, discuss them, and seek professional help within days or a week of noticing the problem. Imagine if we applied the same rationale to our early mental health concerns. Evidence shows that the earlier school staff are encouraged to seek help for a mental health issue or concern the better the likely outcome overall.

### Self-care for the holidays

At **headspace**, we are very aware that looking after our mental health is crucial in enabling us to live our lives in positive and

meaningful ways, and to cope with life's changes and challenges.

For school staff recharging their batteries and getting back some balance is one of the most important things to start the year (2019) fresh and rejuvenated.

Some of these recharging activities might include;

- **Sleep is the key:** Sleep is one of the most central elements to good or poor mental health. Good sleep hygiene can make a world of difference to an individual's functioning. Find a consistent and healthy sleep pattern. Reduce light stimulus, reduce screen time and stimulus an hour before bed. Have a cool sleeping room temperature.
- **Get into nature:** Oxygen, moving, fresh air, and activity are all perfect ways to regain your balance and improve your mood. Being in nature and outdoors doing activities can release serotonin and dopamine.
- **Connect:** Being with other people, being a part of a club, or connecting with others just to check in improves our sense of belonging and connectedness and can help maintain positive moods or help shift lower or flat moods. Often when we are feeling "not great" interactions with others is the first to suffer.
- **Consider what goes in your mouth:** Sometimes when we have a flat mood or are feeling skew we can make less healthy choices about what we consume. Getting a balanced diet and having an alcohol free day here and there can help with finding balance over the Christmas and New Year festive period.
- **Switch off:** The holidays are a great time to get away from screens, emails, social media, and switch off all devices. Be conscious of how much time you are using your devices and take a break to enjoy other things in life. Find ways to clear your head of busy-ness, head noise, ruminating thoughts, and be conscious of being present and having a clear mind. This can reduce feelings of anxiety or depressive moods when you have a lowered threshold. Mindfulness and meditation are a perfect 3-5 minute recharge and don't underestimate what a battery boost and balance it will give you.

Another great tip we use at headspace is the "NIP- it in the bud process". It's a simple process to check in with ourselves, or someone else, if we are noticing things aren't okay.

We have found it useful to focus on three simple steps: NIP = *Notice, Inquire, Plan*

Notice: What have you noticed about how you are feeling, thinking and acting. You may feel relieved, excited or happy about the year just gone. You may also notice that you have recently had difficulty sleeping, been choosing less healthy eating or drinking habits, you are easily irritated for no particular reason, or been feeling unusually stressed or worried.

Other things you (or others) may notice about you include;

- a noticeable change in how you are feeling and thinking
- feeling things have changed or aren't quite right
- changes in the way that you carry out your day-to-day life
- not enjoying, or not wanting to be involved in, things that you would normally enjoy
- changes in appetite or sleeping patterns
- being easily irritated or having problems with friends and family for no reason
- a reduced tolerance and coping threshold
- finding your performance at work is not as good as it used to be
- increased consumption of alcohol/smoking as a maladaptive coping mechanism
- feeling sad or 'down' or crying for no apparent reason
- having trouble concentrating or remembering things
- having negative head noise, ruminating, or distressing thoughts
- feeling unusually stressed, distressed, anxious, or worried.

**2. Inquire:** You might ask yourself/or someone else, what do you think is causing these changes. In fact someone else may notice them in you and raise it with you. It's also important to stop and reflect on how long you have been feeling like this, should I talk this through with someone, and can I articulate what exactly it is that I'm experiencing or feeling. A really great tip is the "out of 10 scale". For example; asking if 10 represents amazing functioning, happy, healthy, calm, and operating at full resilience – and 1 represents the complete antithesis of these things, breaking point, and the highest distress or the poorest health ...then where does your wellbeing rate on that scale right now. Why do you think you are at that rating? How long have you been at that rating? What could improve your rating in the short term/long term?

**3. Plan:** Now is a great time to plan to address some of the stressors and imbalances you have. Both over the Christmas break and well into 2019. Even though most of us are aware of the many positive things we can do to promote our health and wellbeing for example get more sleep, exercise more, set aside time to do things you enjoy, quarantine some quiet time for meditation or relaxation away from emails, social media or binge watching etc – it is often hard to do these things in the lead up to the holiday season. Nevertheless, how can you build these strategies into your plans for next year?

The holiday period might also be a good time to think about whether you could do with some professional support in exploring issues that weighed you down during 2018. Sometimes friends and family can be good for exploring and addressing concerns built often we also like an independent ear too. Someone who is able to listen objectively and help you consider strategies from new perspectives. This is not a sign of weakness, rather of strength and resourcefulness. This may include your GP, a counsellor, or another related professional.

Above all, as you approach the end of this year, be kind to yourself – reflect on what you have achieved and how you have managed from a strengths perspective. Also, never underestimate the influence your behaviour and attitude to mental health and wellbeing can make a difference to those children, young people, and even adults around you.

headspace would like to thank all of the Australian teachers, school leaders, and staff for your hard work in 2018. Thank you for everything you do to take care of the children and young people that you educate and please don't forget it's just as important to take care of you.

### For counselling or crisis support over the school holidays

- Visit your local GP or search for a counsellor in your area
- Call or visit beyondblue 1300 22 46 36

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support>

- Call or visit Lifeline 13 11 14

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

### Helpful links for your staff

How to find out more about implementing self-care in your school?

<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/your-wellbeing/staff-wellbeing>

For great resources and links visit

<https://www.eheadspace.org.au/home-old/the-mental-health-of-australian-principals-in-school-communities/>

For improving mental health in your organisation visit;

<https://www.headsup.org.au/>

[https://www.educationreview.com.au/2018/12/self-care-the-critical-reason-why-school-staff-and-leaders-must-prioritise-their-own-wellbeing-without-feeling-guilty/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=ER+BN+Email+-+06+Dec+2018&utm\\_content=educationreview.com.au%2F2](https://www.educationreview.com.au/2018/12/self-care-the-critical-reason-why-school-staff-and-leaders-must-prioritise-their-own-wellbeing-without-feeling-guilty/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ER+BN+Email+-+06+Dec+2018&utm_content=educationreview.com.au%2F2)

## About the Author:



*Kristen Douglas is the Head of **headspace** in Schools, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. **headspace** in Schools works across Australia with school staff, school communities, school leaders, and education sectors to enhance and strengthen mental health literacy, self-care, resilience, and help seeking. **headspace** (along with Early Childhood Australia) are key delivery partners to beyondblue's Be You national initiative. **headspace** also works in the critical area of Principal mental health and wellbeing. **headspace** is contributing to a national ground swell of conversations and strategies to ensure that education staff take care of their own mental health and prioritise their wellbeing throughout the school year.*

While headspace is predominantly focused on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people headspace also understand that the quickest and most imperative of behaviour change for children and young people is leading it through the adults. headspace believes this transacts a much better outcome for students when educators are feeling, happy, healthy, and well.

## The seven tips for a healthy headspace – by headspace



## RESEARCH FYI (AND HOLIDAY READING!)

### Doing the Right Thing

Every year, thousands of people across the country start careers in education with a similar purpose: to do good. But it's easier said than done. Whether you're writing policy for the entire country or trying to manage a classroom of 20, educational decisions often involve difficult trade-offs. What's good for Aiden might not be good Emma; the funding fix for rural schools might disadvantage schools in cities. What's an education decision-maker — who just wants to do the right thing — to do? A team of social scientists and philosophers — Harry Brighouse, a philosopher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; Helen Ladd, a social scientist at Duke University; Susanna Loeb, an economist at Stanford University; and Adam Swift, a political theorist at University College London — came together to probe these hard choices. Combining disciplinary strengths, they created a framework for making education decisions that are both good and sound. In *Educational Goods: Values, Evidence and Decision-Making*, they lay out the values they find most relevant for education decision-makers. They also offer specific steps — outlined here — that educators can follow to align choices with values and data.

### The Future of Learning? Well, It's Personal

If you do a Google image search for "classroom," you'll mostly see one familiar scene: rows or groups of desks, with a spot at the front of the room for the teacher. One teacher, many students: It's basically the definition of school as we know it, going back to the earliest days of the Republic. "We couldn't afford to have an individual teacher for every student, so we developed a way of teaching large groups," as John Pane, an education researcher at the RAND Corporation, puts it. Pane is among a wave of education watchers getting excited by the idea that technology may finally offer a solution to the historic constraints of one-to-many teaching. It's called personalized learning: What if each student had something like a private tutor, and more power over what and how they learned? Pane

is the lead author of one of the few empirical studies to date of this idea, published late last year. It found that schools using some form of personalized learning were, on average, performing better (there were some wrinkles we'll talk about later on). "In a personalized system," he says, "students are receiving instruction exactly at the point where they need it." It's a concept grounded in the psychology of motivation, learning science and growing technologies like artificial intelligence (AI). And the hype around it is blowing up. Personalized learning is the No. 1 educational technology priority around the country, according to a recent survey by the Centre for Digital Education, a news service that promotes ed-tech. More than nine out of 10 districts polled said they were directing devices, software and professional development resources toward personalized learning.

### Harvard EdCast: How Personalized Learning Can Lead to Success

There is not one tried and true path to success, says Lecturer Todd Rose, but how can we find our own way — and help our children and students do the same? The answer, says Rose, may lie with the Dark Horses. "There's all these people who are successful that no one sees coming," he says, referring to those who follow less traditional paths on their way to personal success. "Maybe there's something we can learn from them." What all "dark horses" have in common is not training nor personality, says Rose, but instead a sense that their fulfillment it what matters most. In allowing themselves to pursue what motivates them personally, they are able to reach high levels of success in their chosen fields. But translating this lesson to the current education norms in which standardization plays a huge part is, admits Rose, easier said than done. What's more, the reluctance to make changes is understandable. "If we narrow our view of success to test scores and grades [as many do now] ... at least we have a way to know we are doing right by all kids," says Rose, noting that need for equity and fairness remains vital in schools. "When it becomes about personal fulfillment, it gets a little harder."

### What works best - audio paper

What works best in schools to improve student outcomes? This paper will look at the following seven themes from the growing bank of evidence.

1. Setting high expectations (5:32)
2. Using explicit teaching practices (15:30)
3. Providing effective feedback (23:33)
4. Using data to inform future practice (30:01)
5. Establishing and maintaining effective classroom management (38:00)
6. Supporting student wellbeing (43:35)
7. Engaging in effective professional collaboration (53:28)

### Launching a Redesign of University Principal Preparation Programs

School principals are charged with complex responsibilities that can include developing a school vision and culture, supporting teacher effectiveness, managing challenges and crises,

communicating with the greater community, and more. However, recent research and surveys of school administrators indicate that principal preparation programs do not adequately prepare graduates to cope with school realities. In response to concerns about the state of initial principal preparation, The Wallace Foundation established the University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI), a four-year effort to redesign seven universities' principal preparation programs according to evidence-based principles and practices. Each university collaborates on the redesign with high-need school districts and a state partner, and is supported by a mentor program. This report focuses on the implementation of UPPI in its first year, from fall 2016 to fall 2017. The authors report on UPPI progress and identify cross-cutting themes in the UPPI implementation effort that can help other university principal preparation programs and their partners undertake their own principal preparation system improvement efforts.

#### The machinery to drive ed reform

I founded the Education Redesign Lab in 2014, shortly after I'd returned from a stint in state government. I had been really involved at that time, for about 25 or 30 years, in crafting systemic education reform for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And while I was very proud of our comparative achievement in Massachusetts, I was very dissatisfied that we had deep pockets of underachievement. And so I designed the lab to address that question, to begin to change the conversation on education reform to a much broader, holistic conversation about the lives of children, the impact of poverty on schools, and their capacity to educate young people.

#### This place I call home

Queensland's children and young people hold strong opinions on a diverse range of community issues and want their opinions considered and heard in the community. More than a quarter highlighted the need for leaders and decision-makers to listen to their views. The findings highlight the practical ideas children and young people have about current community issues. They value the support they receive and the time they spend with their families. They have a lot to contribute to discussions and solutions. Listening to their voices gives governments, community service providers and business leaders the opportunity to understand what children and young people need, to make better decisions and impact on their lives in positive ways. It also gives leaders a valuable insight into the future. Much more can be done to help children and young people forge stronger connections with the people in their lives. Their generation is often characterised and portrayed by adults as being focused only on 'social media and selfies'. The Growing up in Queensland project has shown they are much more than what they do online. Children and young people crave direct human connections. The vast majority of what they have told us can be summarised as wanting adults to pay attention, have respectful conversations and listen to what they have to say about the things that matter to them. The Growing up in Queensland project explored three lines of inquiry. These were community, hopes and dreams, and the big picture.

#### Girls challenge stereotypes in gaming competition

Equal numbers of female and male teams won the 2018 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge's six categories.

Winners of the 2018 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge were announced at an awards ceremony at PAX Aus in Melbourne recently and, for the first time, equal numbers of female and male teams claimed victory. Three male teams and three female teams from around the country won the challenge's six categories. Organiser and ACER Foundation Director Lisa Norris said the result was especially significant at a time of greater focus on increasing female participation in STEM subjects and careers in Australia. 'STEM subjects are still largely regarded as male-dominated, so a key aim of the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge is to attract girls to coding and other STEM-related subjects,' Ms Norris said. 'The high number of female winners in 2018 is heartening evidence of a growing trend for girls to get involved in the space.' The challenge invites students in Years 5-12 to design and build a video game along a unique theme which, in 2018, was 'transformation'. Around 3000 students entered the competition and their entries were judged in a 'blind' process by educators and industry experts. Team 'Gold 1' from St Anthony's School in Wanneroo, WA, won the 'Years 5-8 Open' category with Unknown Dimensions, which they talk about in this story on ABC TV's Behind the News. The game asks players to reunite three sisters scattered by a family tragedy across continents and centuries. Student designers Ava, Anastasia, Lucy and Paige cite the fairytale Rapunzel as the inspiration for the story, while design elements were informed by classic games like Super Mario Brothers and Pokémon.

#### What Role Should Schools Play in Teaching Pupils to Spot Fake News?

Research conducted by the Reuters Institute last year showed that there are clear distinctions in how people of different ages access news. Older generations are more likely to access it via TV, radio and printed newspapers whereas younger people use digital and social media. Ofcom found that more than half (56%) of children in the UK aged between 12-15 used social media such as Facebook or Twitter to access news in 2017. Since social media is not regulated in the same way as traditional news media, anyone can convey information with little fact-checking, meaning young people are at greater risk from inaccurate reporting. So how do we help children to sort the fact from the fiction?...The remainder of this commentary is available at [schoolsweek.co.uk](http://schoolsweek.co.uk).

#### Australian 15-year-olds anxious about schoolwork

Australian students reported higher levels of schoolwork-related anxiety than the OECD average, with 65 per cent worrying they will get poor grades at school, according to an ACER report. The report by Research Fellow Marina Schmid from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) uses data from the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which surveyed 15-year-olds about their schoolwork-related anxiety, and earlier PISA surveys, which looked more closely at anxiety about maths. Students in the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia reported the highest levels of schoolwork-related anxiety, compared to other states and territories. In all participating countries, including Australia, females reported higher anxiety related to their schoolwork than males. Indigenous students, those from the lowest

socioeconomic quartile and students not born in Australia reported higher levels of schoolwork-related anxiety.

#### The Family Matters report 2018

Bringing Them Home, the landmark report into the Stolen Generations, was released 21 years ago, in 1997. At that time, many Australians were shocked to learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children represented 20 per cent of children living in-out of-home care (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997). Now, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children make up just over 36 per cent of all children living in out-of-home care; the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is 10.1 times that of other children, and disproportionate representation continues to grow (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2018b). Since the last Family Matters Report over-representation in out-of-home care has either increased or remained the same in every state and territory. This has eventuated despite – or because of – the laws, policies, and programs of successive Australian governments. Government and community agree there is a problem. The Stolen Generations policies and practices, in combination with persistent social inequity, have created an ongoing legacy of disproportionate child protection interventions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities across Australia, and significant under-investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led and controlled solutions. Things are getting worse, not better. Family Matters reports set out what governments are doing to turn the tide on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, and the outcomes for children and their families. The reports contribute to efforts to change the story by explaining the extent of the problem and reporting on progress towards implementing evidence informed solutions that aim to eliminate, within a generation, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living away from their parents and families in statutory out-of-home care.

#### Youth survey report 2018

A total of 28,286 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 responded to Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2018. The largest number of responses came from New South Wales (29.0%), Queensland (20.4%) and Victoria (18.1%). Over half of the respondents (55.0%) were female, and just over one in seven (15.0%) respondents were born overseas. Nearly one in five (19.4%) young people spoke a language other than English at home. The level of reported disability in 2018 was 6.0%; slightly higher than in 2017 (4.8%). The vast majority of respondents were studying full-time (94.0%), which is consistent with the result of 94.9% in 2017. Around four in ten (42.1%) respondents were working part-time and over one third (34.7%) indicated that they were looking for work, which is again consistent with previous years. 1,594 (5.8%) respondents to Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2018 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 1,277 (4.6%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 173 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.5% identified as both). Just under half (48.5%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were male and 45.7% were female, while 16.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents

indicated that they had a disability. In total, 3.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported speaking an Indigenous language at home. The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported that they were studying full-time (83.3%), intended to complete year 12 (90.0%), and indicated that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies (56.8%). Around four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported plans to go to university (42.6%) or to get a job (39.2%) after finishing school.

#### What does a great teacher look like?

It's well-known that teachers have the biggest influence on student learning over any other in-school factor, including class size, facilities and peer groups. But what is it about the teacher themselves, and how they teach, that can improve student learning? As part of our research, we conducted a review of 52 secondary sources of evidence (covering 1,427 primary research studies on effective teaching) to find the top ten characteristics that great teachers all share. We found teachers' self-efficacy, or their own belief in their innate ability to 'get the job done', had the strongest relationship to student learning.

#### The link between exclusions, alternative provision and off-rolling

Over the years we've looked at exclusions, alternative provision and, in particular, pupils disappearing off school rolls. In this blogpost, we will examine the intersection between these three things. There were 557,000 pupils in the cohort that began Year 7 in state-funded schools (mainstream and special) in September 2010. For the most part, these pupils would have reached the end of Key Stage 4 in summer 2015. Between Year 7 and Year 11, over 4,000 of these pupils had been permanently excluded. A total of 2,612 pupils had been permanently excluded, been placed in state alternative provision and were no longer on-roll at a state school. A group of 1,176 (321 + 855) pupils had been permanently excluded but were still on-roll at a state school. A small group were permanently excluded and left the state school rolls without spending any time in alternative provision. Almost 7,000 pupils had spent some time in state alternative provision without ever being permanently excluded, but were on-roll at a state school in January of Year 11. Some 6,000 others spent time in alternative provision without ever being permanently excluded, and left state school rolls. A final group of more than 18,500 pupils left the state-funded school sector without having been permanently excluded or spending time in state alternative provision. This will include pupils who leave England, move to the independent sector and move to elective home education, among others. Among those pupils we see leaving state school rolls without a permanent exclusion will be those who have been 'off-rolled' – encouraged off the roll of a mainstream school in an informal exclusion in which the school's best interests have trumped the pupil's.

#### Expanding suspension powers for schools is harmful and ineffective

New research released today reveals extraordinary increases in suspensions and exclusions in Queensland state schools. But these increases don't necessarily mean student behaviour is getting worse. Education reform and changes in school policy can also contribute to rising rates of school exclusions and suspensions. Some groups of students can be more adversely

affected by these changes than others. It is important to examine policy effects because suspensions and exclusions are more harmful than helpful and tend not to resolve the behaviour in question. This research is relevant to all education sectors and states as rising school suspension rates are not unique to Queensland. Other states are implementing reforms that could lead to similar problems.

Exclusive: Pupil behaviour getting worse, say most teachers

The majority of teachers believe that behaviour in the classroom is getting worse, an exclusive YouGov poll reveals. It also shows that the more primary school teachers have seen standards of behaviour decline than secondary school teachers in the past five years. In the poll, 57 per cent of the 911 teachers questioned said they believed pupils' standards of behaviour have deteriorated since 2013.

Isolation rooms: should they be banned?

The debate over isolation booths in schools has become a fiery one. Few issues in education are as divisive or emotive. Tes has invited one of the founders of the Ban the Booth campaign, Paul Dix, to argue for their removal, and a leading head teacher, Caroline Barlow, to make the case for their use.

WATCH: How do you tackle persistent poor behaviour?

"I think there's an assumption out there that bad behaviour is always a choice – that if somebody's not doing the right thing, then they're doing that deliberately," says Linda Graham, a professor in the faculty of education at Queensland University of Technology, who specialises in studying disruptive behaviour. In a new video webchat with Tes, Graham explains why she thinks this assumption of choice is the "biggest failure in our understanding of behaviour", and why it can lead schools to exercise limited responses to misbehaviour, which do not always have the desired results. "I think my biggest bugbear would be the assumption that if you apply a consequence then that's going to solve everything and that behaviour can be pretty easily fixed by having really clear rules and really clear, quick, sharp consequences," says Graham. "That will work for a lot of kids. But it won't work for the ones who end up getting in trouble over and over and over again. And that's because those kids don't have the self-regulation that it takes to be able think of the consequence before they act again."

Gay student gets standing ovation after coming out in front of whole Catholic school

A student at a Catholic boys school got a standing ovation when he came out as gay during a speech at assembly. Finn Stannard, a Year 12 student at St Ignatius College Riverview, in Sydney, told 7.30 he gave the speech for his "younger self". "I've been working towards this speech for four years," Mr Stannard said in front of 1,000 students. "In those four years, I have come to understand who I am and how to not be sorry for being myself. "Outside home, being gay has not always been easy. I have been the subject of countless rumours and unpleasant jokes. "Telling friends was difficult and came with a lot of anxiety. My main fear was no longer being accepted or losing my friends and being the subject of derogatory jokes."

New School-Based Program to Support Children's Mental Health (Fed)

A new school-based mental health program that aims to give teachers the tools to help students manage their mental health will be launched today following a \$98.6 million investment from the Morrison Government. The program Be You will be delivered by beyondblue in partnership with headspace and Early Childhood Australia. Minister for Health Greg Hunt said the program will provide Australian teachers with the skills and resources to be able to teach students how to manage their mental health and wellbeing, build resilience, and support the mental wellbeing of other students.

Exclusive: Call for schools to do more for teacher mental health

Three-quarters of teachers say their mental health is not being monitored at work, according to new research that highlights the growing need for schools to support staff wellbeing. The study by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families offers examples of techniques and practices to help schools prioritise the mental wellbeing of their staff and pupils. Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of the thousands of teachers, school leaders and support staff surveyed said their heavy workload caused them stress, and half pointed to the added pressure of accountability measures. Nearly one in four (39 per cent) said they had been left unhappy because of concerns about a pupil, such as mental health or safeguarding issues. Almost a fifth (19 per cent) said their work did not have a positive effect on their state of mind. "There is so much paperwork in the role now; planning, marking, assessment ladders, action plans, monitoring notes, meeting notes – it goes on," said one teacher quoted in the report. "Until the excessive workload is addressed, mental health will suffer." Another called for more understanding of the stresses that teachers face, saying: "Mental illness is an illness and not just a failure of the member of staff to 'keep up with the pace'."

'Period poverty' sanitary products 'improve school attendance'

A school has found that a scheme to give girls free menstrual products has helped improve their attendance. The Red Box project was set up to help solve the problem known as "period poverty". Castle View Academy in Portsmouth said since the scheme was introduced it had helped increase attendance levels by nearly a third. It is estimated about 137,000 girls will miss school in the UK each year because of a lack of access to sanitary products.

Listen to the children. This is what 'good' teaching looks like to them

Much has been researched, written and debated about what it means to be a 'good' teacher. Conversations in Australia continue around quality teaching and teacher quality and the way we educate our teachers. Governments at national and state levels have specifically designed and established teacher accreditation regimes to produce 'good' teachers. But despite the proliferation of public debate and political action around these issues, I was aware that the voices of students and their perspectives and experiences of being taught had been largely overlooked. As part of a wider research project exploring the nature of exemplary history teaching, I interviewed groups of young people at four different high schools about their experiences of learning, and sought their insights and understanding into what good teaching looks like to them. The students interviewed demonstrated a high degree of insight and

understanding about the nature of teachers work and shared a strong, articulate vision about what students consider good teaching to mean. And although the students in the study were all from a variety of school backgrounds – government, independent, urban and regional – there was a clear consensus amongst the students about the aspects of teaching that were regarded as most important to them. They valued the relationship they had with their teacher most of all. But they also recognised and were engaged by the different teaching methods their teachers used and they appreciated and were inspired by the deep knowledge their teacher had of their subject.

#### What Giving Students Choice Looks Like in the Classroom

Keeping in mind the prior research that proves there is such a thing as too much choice, it's important to just look at all the possible options that teachers have who are looking to incorporate more choice in their classrooms.

Where has the joy of writing gone and how do we get it back for our children?

NAPLAN results indicate a decline in students' ability to write. Outcomes in literacy, including writing, affect student achievement across multiple subject areas (including maths and science). There is a clear link between students being engaged with writing and the quality of literacy outcomes. Students' willingness to write can be promoted by making writing more enjoyable and meaningful to young people, with authentic connections to their lives

#### Learning in the Homelands

In the traditional lands of the Yolngu in Australia's North East Arnhem land there are a network of small 'Homelands' schools, officially called Homeland Learning Centres. Many Australians may not know about the Homelands Movement. It was initiated in the 1970s and involved the movement of small Indigenous communities back to their ancestral lands. Homeland Learning Centres (HLC) have been established in some of these intentionally and remotely positioned communities. For those teachers visiting the Homelands Schools – there is much to learn.

#### Eating problems in mid adolescence

While rates of being overweight and obese are increasing, thin or even 'ultra-thin' bodies are often idealised in contemporary modern cultures, particularly for women. Trying to achieve this ideal can lead to unhealthy eating behaviours. Eating problems range from anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, which can be life threatening, to problematic eating behaviours such as restrictive dieting. Many eating problems develop in adolescence, especially between the ages of 15 and 19. Therefore, intervening early, by promoting healthy eating and nutrition, is crucial for long-term health outcomes. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a 'snapshot' of how young people are faring in relation to eating problems at 14–15 years of age, the types of actions they take to control their weight and the association between those actions, particularly restrictive dieting, and physical and mental health outcomes.

#### How Parents Can Create a Nightly Homework Ritual for Reluctant Children

It's hard to fault the child who resists doing homework. After all, she has already put in a long day at school, probably been involved in afterschool activities, and, as the late afternoon spills into evening, now faces a pile of assignments. Parents feel it, too – it's no one's favorite time of day. But despite its bad rap, homework plays an important role in ensuring that students can execute tasks independently. When it's thoughtfully assigned, homework provides deeper engagement with material introduced in class. And even when it's "just" worksheets, homework can build the automatic habits and the basic skills required to tackle more interesting endeavors. Finally, homework is a nightly test of grit. Adult life brings its share of tasks that are both compulsory and unenjoyable. Developing the discipline to fulfill our responsibilities, regardless of whether they thrill us, begins in middle childhood. So how to help the avoidant child embrace the challenge, rather than resist it? The first step, especially with kids 13 and under, is to have them do their homework at a communal space, like a dining room or kitchen table. If other children are in the home, they can all do their homework at the same table, and the parent can sit nearby to support the work effort. This alleviates some of the loneliness a reluctant child might associate with assignments. The alternative – doing homework at a bedroom desk – can result in the child guiltily avoiding the work for as long as possible. Like all forms of procrastination, this has the effect of making the entire process take much longer than it needs to.

#### How to talk to your child about their school report

It's that time of year again when you receive your child's school report. For some parents and carers, understanding what it means can be challenging. Some children will be happy and others may be disappointed. Parents and carers need to interpret the information in the report so you can determine the strengths of your child, work out how their learning is progressing and what areas they're having difficulty in. This may involve having a discussion with your child or a follow-up meeting with your child's teacher. It's important to remember to be supportive, consider the personality of your child and focus on their progress.

Legislative exemptions that allow faith-based educational institutions to discriminate against students, teachers and staff

On 13 November 2018, the Senate referred the following matter to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report by 26 November 2018:

Legislative exemptions that allow faith-based educational institutions to discriminate against students, teachers and staff, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and other attributes covered by the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, with particular reference to proposals for amendments

to current legislation, and any related matters.

There are two chapters in this report:

- The first chapter provides background and outlines the administrative details of the inquiry.
- Chapter 2 presents the key issues raised in evidence and the committee's view.

Case studies: Every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools

These case studies highlight effective wellbeing practice, and how it supports learning, in local contexts. They have been prepared to assist schools to meet the department's strategic goal of 'Every student is known, valued and cared for in our schools'.

Finding the Right Assessment Tool: Another Resource for Educators and Researchers

Last week, the Assessment Work Group (AWG) shared a preview of its new SEL Assessment Guide, which provides a catalogue of about 20 popular social and emotional learning (SEL) assessments along with guidance to help practitioners use these assessments effectively. Researchers from RAND are members of the AWG, and we contributed to the Guide and to the brief for practitioners that accompanied it, *Choosing and Using SEL Competency Assessments: What Schools and Districts Need to Know*. RAND has developed a companion tool, the RAND Education Assessment Finder. This web-based tool provides information about roughly 200 assessments of K-12 students' competencies, including SEL competencies as well as higher-order cognitive competencies such as creativity. Practitioners and researchers can use it to explore what assessments are available, what they are designed to measure, what demands they place on students and teachers, and what kinds of uses their scores support.

More pupils have special educational needs than you might think

A quick glance at official special educational needs statistics reveals that 14.6% of all pupils in England were classified as having special educational needs in 2018. This includes those with a statement of SEN or an education and health care plan (EHCP), and those receiving school-based support. This figure has declined from 21.1% in 2010. The SEND reforms of 2014 have played a part, although the incidence rate was declining prior to their introduction. But how many pupils are classified as having SEN at any point during their school career? The answer is more than you might think. The chart below looks at a single cohort of pupils – those in Year 1 in the autumn term of the 2005/06 school year in state-funded schools.[1] (This group would have been in Year 9 when the SEND reforms were introduced in September 2014.) The chart shows the proportion of this cohort classified as having SEN in each termly census.

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)

Exposure to traumatic events among youth is relatively common. Almost all youth experience initial distress as a reaction to such events, but for most, natural resilience causes the distress to gradually subside. However, a substantial minority continue to experience distress in the months after trauma exposure. The Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) program is designed for use with groups of students who have experienced significant traumatic experiences and are suffering from related emotional or behavioral problems, particularly symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Delivered by school-based clinicians and taking into account cultural context, it uses a variety of proven cognitive behavioral techniques in an early intervention approach, including psychoeducation about trauma and its consequences, relaxation training, learning to monitor stress

or anxiety levels, recognizing maladaptive thinking, challenging unhelpful thoughts, social problem-solving, creating a trauma narrative and processing the traumatic event, and facing trauma-related anxieties rather than avoiding them. CBITS focuses primarily on three goals: decreasing current symptoms related to trauma exposure, building skills for handling stress and anxiety, and building peer and caregiver support. The second edition provides updates and implementation guidance based on two decades of using CBITS nationally.

## Bullying

Strong peer group helps keep bullies at bay

Adolescents with a strong peer group and close friends are less likely to be victims of bullying, according to new research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Institute Director, Anne Hollonds said the Growing Up in Australia Longitudinal Study of Australian Children found the odds of being a victim of bullying for 14-15 years olds were significantly lower for those with strong friendships and who belonged to a peer group with high levels of moral behaviour. The research found the odds of being a victim of bullying were halved for adolescents with a strong personal attachment to their peers and where friendships were characterised by positive attitudes towards school, academic achievement and high levels of moral behaviour, such as not cheating on tests or being mean to other kids," she said. "It also found the chance of being a victim of bullying was reduced by 30 per cent for adolescents whose friends valued academic achievement compared to those whose friends disliked school. "Conversely, adolescents whose friends engage in risky behaviour such as smoking and underage drinking were twice as likely to be the victims of bullying." Ms Hollonds said the research also found an adolescent's peer group could increase the likelihood of a person becoming a bully. "The research shows the odds of being a bully are twice as high for adolescents whose friends engage in risky behaviour," she said. "However, the chances of being a bully are reduced by 60 per cent for adolescents whose friendship group is characterised by high levels of moral behaviour. Overall girls are less likely to be perpetrators of bullying than boys." Institute Executive Manager, Dr Galina Daraganova said the research found almost one in five Australian children aged 14-15 years old reported being a victim of bullying in the past month and 7 per cent reported bullying others.

Adolescent help-seeking

Adolescence is a period of complex developmental transition, characterised by heightened vulnerability to emotional and behavioural problems (Steinberg, 2005). Globally, mental health disorders are experienced by one in four young people aged 13-24 years (Belfer, 2008). Despite the high prevalence of mental health problems during adolescence, many young people do not seek help for their problems, which can place them at greater risk of developing severe or extended mental health problems. Understanding who adolescents go to for help for their personal and emotional problems is important to inform appropriate pathways of care. We describe the past help-seeking behaviours and future help-seeking intentions of adolescents, focusing on who adolescents go to for help. We also compare the help seeking of adolescents who are

experiencing symptoms of mental health difficulties with those of adolescents with no symptoms.

Most teenagers turn to parents and friends for help

The vast majority of Australian adolescents seek help for their everyday personal and emotional problems from their parents and friends rather than health professionals, according to new research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Institute Director, Anne Hollonds said Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children found that seeking help from informal sources such as a friend, sibling or parent was more common amongst 14-15 year olds than from formal sources such as a teacher, family doctor or mental health professional. Non-face-to-face sources such as the internet or a phone helpline were the least common source of help for this age group. 'While not all adolescents report having personal or emotional problems, the vast majority do. The study of 14-15 year olds found that 91% of girls and 81% of boys reported having emotional or personal problems within the past 12 months,' she said. 'The study found that the vast majority of adolescents (97%) reported they did seek help when they needed it and they would be willing to seek help if they had a personal problem in the future. At age 14-15, 74% of adolescents reported seeking help for a personal or emotional problem from a friend, 69% sought help from a parent, while 25% sought help from a teacher and around 20% sought help on the internet. Only 9% sought help from a mental health professional, 6% from a doctor and 2% from a helpline.

Adolescents' relationships with their peers

Peer relationships are very influential in adolescence. During this time, when young people are developing autonomy from their parents, peers become a significant source of social and emotional support. The attitudes of adolescents' friends can have both a positive and negative influence. Strong peer attachments can enhance a young person's wellbeing while problems in peer relationships, such as bullying, can have significant psychological, physical, academic and social-emotional consequences for both victims and perpetrators. Given the significance of peer relationships for adolescents' development, it is important to understand the nature of these relationships. We provide a snapshot of the peer relationships of Australian adolescents, by describing peer attachments, peer group attitudes, and peer problems as they are reported by young people in mid adolescence.

Anxiety Is Taking A Toll On Teens, Their Families And Schools

Anxiety is increasingly becoming a serious issue for American teens. Sixty-two percent of incoming freshman surveyed by the American College Health Association said they'd experienced overwhelming anxiety the year before, up from 50-percent in 2011. High school counselors and parents are increasingly aware of the problem, especially when teens are so anxious they don't want to go to school. While teens from many backgrounds experience anxiety, it's often the more affluent families who find the problem most baffling. Adults aren't surprised when teens from poor neighborhoods feel anxious about safety or home dynamics, but it can be harder to understand what's going on with kids who seem to have everything going for them. In his New York Times Magazine article, Benoit Denizet-Lewis follows several teens from this

group in an effort to understand what anxious teens are feeling and the treatment options available to them. Often their anxiety stems from feeling they aren't in control of their futures.

TER #122 – Mobile Devices in Schools with Jocelyn Brewer – 11 Nov 2018

## Flexi and Alternative Education

Alternative schools are undervalued: academic

Australia's alternative school system is an undervalued piece in the puzzle to solving the total disengagement of at-risk youth, according to an Australian Catholic University academic. Flexible Learning Options (FLOs) are the 'safety-net' schools which currently provide education to around 70,000 young Australians who have disengaged from mainstream schooling and are facing potential welfare dependency and substance abuse. Lecturer Dr Kimberley Wilson said FLOs are located in every state and the territory and were first established in 1985. Wilson recently co-edited the book Gauging the value of education for disenfranchised youth, Flexible Learning Options, with James Cook University co-editors Sue McGinty, Joseph Thomas and Brian Lewthwaite.

Transforming Alternative Education

The French proverb which states "The more things change, the more they stay the same" sets the stage for this talk, "Transforming Alternative Education." This project was born out of a desire to bring awareness to the need to transform education as a means to reduce the revolving door of drop-outs entering and exiting our programs and schools. This talk will take you on a journey of viewing education through the lens of being an alternative education student and then the lens being a turnaround leader working with schools to transform education. Dr. Lateshia Woodley, once an alternative education student, is now a school administrator specializing in working with at-risk students and in school transformation initiatives. From 2008 to 2018, Dr. Woodley worked as a turnaround leader to help bring about positive changes in some of the lowest performing schools in Georgia. She became Assistant Superintendent at Kansas City Public Schools in the summer of 2018. Dr. Woodley has received numerous award and accolades, including the 2011 Outstanding Woman in Education Award, 2012 Resolution from the Georgia House of Representatives, 2013 Acknowledgements from the US Department of Education, 2016 National Dropout Prevention Center Crystal Star Award, 2016 GAAE Administrator of the Year Award, 2017 Central Learning Community Principal of the Year, 2017 ASCD Emerging Leader, 2017 IALA Author of the Year for Education, and 2017 Shining Star Educator. This talk was given at a TEDx event using the TED conference format but independently organized by a local community. Learn more via the link below.

<https://www.ted.com/tedx>

Alternative provision schools: 'We all deserve an education'

Research by the BBC has revealed that the number of fixed-term exclusions in the most deprived areas of England has gone up by over 70% in the last four years - four times the rate of the least deprived, which has risen by 15%. Nearly 50,000 pupils are now taught in alternative provision - schools

which provide education for pupils outside of mainstream education, who have behaviour issues or short or long-term illness. The Department for Education says every child should "benefit from a high-quality education and equal opportunity, regardless of their background" and alternative provision can be a lifeline for children and parents offering smaller classes and more tailored support. BBC News filmed inside an alternative provision school in an area of north Manchester.

There is a better way of teaching bored Australian students

If the battle of educating children is won or lost in the classroom, our schools are turning into fields of ever more bloody conflict. Over the past two decades, Australia's academic performance has gone into sharp decline compared with other developed countries. In 2000, we were at the top of the pack, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and able to swap congratulatory handshakes with education powerhouses such as Hong Kong, Finland and Japan. By 2015, though, they were waving at us in their rearview mirrors as we slipped unceremoniously down the rankings in reading and science, and dropped nearly 20 places for maths. Our new neighbours in mediocrity included Sweden and Russia. No part of the education sector – government, independent or Catholic – could brush lint off its shoulders and feel smug: the rot was pervasive. "The extent of the decline is widespread and equivalent to a generation of Australian school children falling short of their full learning potential," was the stark warning from businessman David Gonski, whose Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, was commissioned by the federal government and released in April.

## Post School

Finkel: students, focus on your discipline then you'll see your options expand

When I was a student the importance of actually specialising in something – mastering a discipline – was more or less assumed. We thought about the skills mix of our future society in the same way we imagined an orchestra. You want a broad mix of people who excel in a range of speciality fields. Yes, we do want those people to be able to play together. And we want them to sound like an orchestra, not several dozen simultaneous solos. That means – if you'll excuse the pun – that every one of those musicians needs to have at least two strings to their bow: a primary discipline – the instrument, and a secondary discipline – orchestral performance. But they can't master the secondary discipline without reaching a level of proficiency in their instruments first. If you think you can, I challenge you to give a clarinet to a ten year old and enrol her on the same day into the school band. Now, that student could have a genuine passion and talent for music – but until she can manage her fingers, and the breathing, and read music, and produce a noise that isn't a brain-splitting shriek – she's got to knuckle down and practice. Solo. Focus on your discipline – then you'll see your options expand.

Infographic: Preparing students for the future workplace

Confronting Inequity / Leveraging Teacher Knowledge

A central paradox of the teaching profession is that although teachers are tasked with supporting students in knowledge development, they are often not considered experts of their own craft. Consequently, schools often become places in which teachers are meant to comply with policy rather than contribute to its development. More than 25 years ago, Linda Darling-Hammond (1990) provided a realistic description of the job when she wrote: The teacher is viewed as a conduit for instructional policy, but not as an actor. As a consequence of this view, policymakers have tended to invest a great deal more in the creation of a control system for teaching than they do in the development of teacher knowledge. (p. 339). Historically speaking, the downgraded position of the teaching profession might be connected to the overall shift in federal education policy after the landmark *A Nation at Risk* report (Gardner et al., 1983). In that report, the authors used generalization and invectives to create a panicked conversation around the state of our nation's public schools. They wrote: America's position in the world may once have been reasonably secure with only a few exceptionally well-trained men and women. It is no longer (p. 14). ... We conclude that declines in educational performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself is often conducted. (p. 26). Thanks in part to such wording, any emphasis on teacher agency within school systems seems to have shifted toward accountability and standardization. Both anecdotal and empirical evidence substantiate this assertion. As a former high school social studies teacher and now as a researcher in education, I have spoken candidly with numerous teachers who say they don't feel respected as professionals. Moreover, a recent report from Pennsylvania State University and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation found that among professional occupations, teachers ranked lowest in feeling their opinions mattered at work (Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli, 2016).

People seeking asylum in Australia: Access and support in higher education

Accessing higher education is critical for many people seeking asylum; not simply as a means of acquiring the qualifications necessary for employment, but as essential to living a meaningful life. The opportunity to undertake study is also seen by many as an important tool for developing the capacities and knowledge to sustain their livelihoods and to contribute to their communities and to society. However, the findings of this first Australia-wide study into access to higher education for people seeking asylum highlight that most continue to face enormous barriers in doing so. These barriers are largely due to the restrictive Federal Government policies that are imposed on them. While many universities and community organisations have responded to this situation by offering initiatives and supports to enable more than 204 people seeking asylum around Australia to access higher education, they continue to face significant challenges throughout their studies, and there are many others who remain without such access.

Mindfulness can help PhD students shift from surviving to thriving

Undertaking a PhD can be very stressful, due to a range of challenges. These include having to develop discipline expertise as well as generic skills (such as academic writing and

maintaining motivation) during a largely solo pursuit. Concern has been growing about the prevalence of mental health issues (such as depression and anxiety) among PhD candidates. A survey of more than 2,000 graduate research students from 26 countries published this year found they were six times as likely to experience depression or anxiety as the general population.

Study hard and you might lower your chances of dementia

Every year hundreds of elderly students gather in Toronto for convocation, in-person and online, anxiously awaiting their diplomas. Some are in their nineties; some have dementia. One graduate, who completed 15 courses taught by Ryerson University faculty, was a former entertainment manager for Madonna. She argued in class that Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant's view of art was better than that of David Hume, the Scottish philosopher. Kant said art was based on intention, Hume said it was skill. During the class, this student could well maintain her rational argument. What she remembered the next week was little. But in the moment, which is where dementia patients find themselves, as we all do, existentially, she was present. And the benefits go beyond presence. Participation in higher learning can also temper the loss of cognitive function associated with aging and Alzheimer's disease. Gill Livingston and his team who lead the Lancet Commission on Dementia have shown that resilience can help slow the progression of dementia or delay its onset. The idea underlying resilience is a concept called cognitive reserve. Lifestyle factors such as diet and fitness — and also learning — increase cognitive reserve. Higher cognitive reserve means fighting against loss of memory.

Young people value diversity, humour and honesty in their friendships – new research

Friendships made in school play a special part in young people's development. They are more than just moral support, friends help them learn key social skills, and serve as a source of social support. Close school friends also help young people develop a sense of importance, trust, acceptance and belonging within their school. Young people who are well appreciated and accepted by their friends are more likely to be happy and do well at school and more likely to develop positive friendships and relationships as adults. In fact, schools in the UK have been found to be the most important place for young people to make friends with others of their own age. But just what is it that makes an ideal friend? Is it that they should be generous? Or they should be supportive in times of crisis over all else? For the the past six years, my colleagues and I have been conducting the WISERD Education multi-cohort, longitudinal study with pupils in secondary schools, to increase our understanding of the lives of young people in Wales. In our most recent surveys – conducted between February and May 2018 – we were particularly interested in exploring what young people think of their friendship networks. We wanted to know more about how these associations develop and how the relationships impact and shape young people's identities, behaviour, relationships and perspectives. We surveyed 895 pupils, aged between ten and 17, from 11 schools across Wales about their friendships. We asked them to choose what they thought were the most important qualities that an ideal friend should possess. They were given 11 different options

to choose from – including confidence, honesty, money, popularity and looks – and were allowed to select three options.

## Photo Gallery



Minister Grace at the launch of the CRS for schools with Sue-Ellen Gibson Chair Outdoor Education and Environmental Education Centres and President Roselyne Anderson



Minister Grace Grace Minister for Education and Roselyne Anderson President of QASEL

Principals' Associations hosting an event - Governing from the Redlands region 26 November 2019



Roselyne with colleagues Mark Breckenridge Andrew Pierpoint Deb Dunstone and Stacie Hansel at the QASEL End of Year Function



enjoyable for a school of any size. Schoolzine addresses the need for media-rich, interactive content that engages parents.

Roselyne with colleagues Mark Breckenridge Andrew Pierpoint Deb Dunstone and Stacie Hansel and Danielle McAllister at the QASEL End of Year Function

## Want to know the latest in all things QASEL?

Access us on

Facebook and Twitter.

## Schoolzine

On the go? Simply download SZapp and subscribe to the Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders. Allow push notifications to ensure you to never miss a beat. The app will be the easiest way to access our newsletters, contact us, find out more about us, access forms or documents, change your contact details or see upcoming events as well as register for them.

SZapp is a great way to keep up to date with our latest news and information. Using SZapp will give you easy access to information such as:

- Newsletters on the go
- Latest News & Reminders
- Calendar
- Policies and Documents
- Event Bookings
- Digital Forms



When subscribing to Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders please make sure that you add yourself to any of the applicable groups. This will ensure that you are receiving all relevant notifications.

## Schoolzine



Schoolzine is proud to be a digital partner and supporter of Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders.

Schoolzine has been an industry leader in digital school communications for 10 years. They are dedicated to customer service, product development and understanding the school landscape that keeps them at the top of the industry. Schoolzine's Parent Engagement Platform consists of 3 packages, an eNewsletter, Mobile App and Website offering. Purchased separately or together, they guarantee each package will make engaging with parents easy and even