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**THE NATIONAL
AGENDA**

c o n t e n t s

7 **Editorial: The National Agenda**
Nic Barnard

13 **2011: Already a year to remember**
Chris Bonnor

As flawed and unpopular as it may be, the relaunched My School website has revealed the unequal playing field on which public and private schools compete and illuminated our declining international status. With a funding review underway, the evidence could at last help us create something better.

19 **Public Education and the Common Wealth: Towards sustainable democracy**
Lyndsay Connors

If Australian democracy holds any lessons it is the central importance of a free, secular public education system. But shifts in federal funding have left public schools in dangerous territory. It is time for governments to recognise that their primary obligation must be towards the public system.

**27 Issues for the Review of Funding for Schooling
Barbara Preston**

Private schools fought the creation of public secondary schools a century ago, and their effort to maintain dominance has never let up. Preston argues that predictions in the 1970s that public funding for the private sector would lead to a two tier system have been realised — and must now be corrected.

**33 The National Curriculum: A case study in policy
catch-up
Alan Reid**

Already behind schedule and arriving ad hoc in stages, our new Australian Curriculum is a lost opportunity marked by muddled thinking, poor planning and rushed implementation, leaving its architects to patch up problems before schools even begin to put it into practice.

**37 Trust the Teaching Profession with the
Responsibilities of a Profession
Lawrence Ingvarson**

Teaching may be unique among professions in that governments, not practitioners, define the standards teachers must meet, despite the work of dozens of subject associations. With Canberra proposing a performance pay system that is doomed to fail, Ingvarson says it's time to trust the professionals.

**45 Teacher Education Buzzwords in a New Era: What
does it all mean?
Diane Mayer**

A national set of professional standards for teachers has finally been agreed by the states and Commonwealth. But how can we truly measure teacher performance? And what will the standards be used for, and by whom?

**51 Linda Darling-Hammond on accountability, equity
and following America
Interview by John Graham**

59 Notes on contributors

Editorial: The National Agenda

NIC BARNARD

HAS THERE BEEN a time in recent memory when education in Australia has seen such a rush of reform and in such unlikely circumstances as the present day?

When an unimpressed electorate returned the Gillard Labor Government without a majority last year, the observer might have been forgiven for thinking that the pace of change in our schools, preschools and tertiary colleges was about to slacken. Instead, the past few months alone in federal politics have brought the relaunch of My School, the pushing forward of the review of schools funding, the announcement of performance pay for teachers, new national standards for teachers, a teacher education program for career changers modelled on Teach for Australia and proposals to widen competition in vocational education and training, to name but a few.

But has there also ever been a time when so much reform made so little sense? Beyond the review of funding — on which we must and can rightly remain optimistic — much of the change appears ad hoc, fragmented and uncoordinated. Alan Reid, in his analysis of the nascent Australian curriculum in this issue of *Professional Voice*, puts it rather neatly: an exercise in catch-up.

Policy on the hoof, implemented to suit electoral timetables rather than practical ones, has an unfortunate habit of producing unexpected outcomes. Certainly, it's not

the best way to deliver a coherent package of reforms that complement and reinforce each other.

Reid's argument is that the creation of a comprehensive national curriculum is made much harder by the decision to introduce it too quickly, and without a coherent framework. With so much evidence that an interdisciplinary approach is the one required for a century of such rapid change, developing technology and shifting global relationships, the curriculum developers have instead hived off subjects into new silos, and left them to battle for space in the timetable.

Contradictory impulses can be found in other areas covered by our contributors in this edition. Perhaps our cost-conscious and fiscally responsible government is repeatedly attempting to kill two birds or more with a single stone. How else to explain the use of NAPLAN testing not only to evaluate student achievement, but to compare schools and assess teacher performance as well? Or to charge a relatively new body, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, with not only working with the profession to develop new standards but also imposing them on teachers in the form of performance management? As Lawrence Ingvarson suggests in his essay, the Gillard Government seems to want AITSL to be an instrument both of the profession and of government. It's a hard circle to square.

Similar confusions and lack of coordination can be found in other sectors, beyond the remit of this school-centric edition of *PV*. In early childhood, the Commonwealth Government has at last recognised the critical importance of early years education, implementing with the states and territories a national agenda that will revolutionise — a word not too lightly used — the sector. The introduction of universal access to preschool for all 4-year-olds, a new curriculum, cemented links with local primary schools and, above all, the requirement for all childcare centres and other early years institutions to have a qualified early childhood teacher, are all developments long sought by the AEU and by practitioners. How our governments can do this without addressing the very real shortage of early years teachers is another question, and one which does not seem to have crossed the minds of ministers (yet).

Meanwhile, in the vocational education and training sector, a deepening Labor love affair with markets has seen the Gillard Government tie further funding to market-driven reforms. The intention is to meet a skills shortage of which the Government is slowly becoming aware and which will have critical consequences when Australia's mining boom finally tails off. However, as we have seen already in Victoria, the primary impulse of private providers is most likely to be to offer those courses that are popular and cheap to deliver — which may not be the same thing at all as expanding courses to fill the gaps in workforce skills.

As with NAPLAN, My School and performance pay, too many of these reforms sound good in media releases and news bulletins. Scrutiny reveals shallow foundations. In her Henry Parkes Oration last year — reproduced here in edited form — Lyndsay Connors placed at least part of the blame for Australia's chaotic and inequitable school funding system at the door of the electoral cycle.

“One unfortunate by-product of Australia's federal system is that Commonwealth

and state elections are held at different times, with the result that the country is, in a sense, permanently in election mode," she said. "This makes it difficult to find the political space within which to deal with politically complex and sensitive issues. The future of our public school system has become one of those issues."

Connors is talking primarily about funding, but she could be addressing any number of policy issues in education.

This edition of *Professional Voice* attempts, as ever, to sift the evidence around the various reforms, initiatives and policies that make up the national agenda, and to see how reality and research stack up against that agenda's intentions.

In some cases the verdict is blunt: Ingvarson calls the performance pay scheme proposed by the Federal Government ahead of this year's budget "one of the silliest performance pay schemes I've heard of." Not much equivocation there, but Ingvarson, like Linda Darling-Hammond whom John Graham interviews in the back of this edition, has plenty with which to justify it.

But from Chris Bonnor there is at least some cautious — if slightly perverse — optimism.

Bonnor, in our opening essay, draws together the relaunched My School website, the NAPLAN testing program and the recent PISA international comparisons published by the OECD to propose that a tipping point may hopefully have been reached in the argument over schools' funding and our increasingly divided, stratified education system.

His argument is that, for all its imperfections, My School in its new iteration at last provides the evidence of the social segregation that has been allowed to happen in our schools through the funding policies of the Howard Government, and continued by the ALP as we wait on the Gonski review. "Who would have imagined that the My School website ... would start to challenge the urban myths pedalled for years by those who have devoted their lives and careers to dismantling public education?"

The shifts in the socio-economic index ratings from My School's first draft demonstrate that student populations in public schools are considerably more disadvantaged than previously thought, and those in private schools — including systemic Catholic schools — more advantaged, certainly than has been argued by lobbyists for the private sector.

With the 2009 PISA results also illuminating Australia's "long tail" and linking it clearly to a deficit of equity in our education system, the consequence of this might, Bonnor hopes, be a recognition that we need to reunite our divided system. "We now have the best chance in decades ... to help create something better," he says.

The engine in this will be the Gonski review. As ever, funding underpins everything in education. At an autumn reception in Parliament House to celebrate Public Education Day, AEU federal president Angelo Gavrielatos quoted principals from around the country who had good news stories to tell of how national partnerships between Canberra and the states had produced results in their schools. The praise did not go unnoticed by Education Minister Peter Garrett. But as Gavrielatos pointed out, national partnership funding is finite; Victorian schools have already learned that what

is given by government can be taken away by government, as this state's teaching and learning coaching programs, to be curtailed at Christmas, bear testament.

What is needed is a long-lasting settlement that we must hope the Gonski review provides.

Certainly, the arguments and evidence that have emerged so far have unmistakably put the case for change. The imbalance in funding, the demographics, and the cost to the public purse have all borne out that the past 20 years have left Australia out of step with the rest of the world in creating one of the most privatised education systems on the planet (the fourth most privatised primary system and the third most privatised in secondary out of 31 developed countries, according to the OECD's most recent *Education at a Glance*).

The socio-economic status model has been brought into disrepute: the federal Education Department's own research has found that the majority of private schools get more than their share; the social divisions have been revealed; and private school fees have continued to rise above CPI even as federal funding has escalated.

Analysis of government data by the former Productivity Commission economist Trevor Cobbold, convenor of Save our Schools, found that Catholic and independent schools serving the highest income families received the most over-funding per student during 2005-07, while schools serving the poorest communities received little or no over-funding. Cobbold has also cast serious doubt on claims that the Catholic sector is, as a whole, funded per student at lower levels than the public sector.

Meanwhile, government schools are unmistakably the main provider for groups which are educationally disadvantaged or have special needs. The vast majority of low income (77%), Indigenous (86%), disability (80%), provincial (72%) and remote/very remote area (83%) students attend government schools.

The cost of providing a quality education to students rises in line with the nature of the student population in a school. Providing equal educational opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds or who have special needs costs more. This is particularly true when you have a critical mass of such students in a school.

If the Government appears committed to returning the importance of equity and rationality to education funding, we must hope that it doesn't frighten itself out of acting with its own rhetoric of choice. Minister Garrett, at that same Canberra function, proclaimed the Government's mission as ending the "war over funding" and supported again the right for parents to choose.

As another non-educationalist, Professor Clive Hamilton, has commented: "Why the taxpayer should subsidise the private choices of others is a mystery to me. You don't get a massive public subsidy when you decide to buy a Mercedes rather than catch the bus."

To return to Lyndsay Connors, who says the provision of universal public education has been at the heart of Australian democracy since federation. Suffrage demanded educated, literate citizens capable of informed choice. It remains no less important today.

Connors is not alone in that message. Canadian thinker and writer John Ralston

Saul, in one of his several visits to Australia, also talked about the centrality of public education to a healthy society.

“At the heart of this whole movement towards stability, long-term democracy, middle-class society, slowly chipping away at the idea of class, class divisions and class privileges without going into the trap of Marxism, at the core of all of this from the middle of the 19th century on has been public education,” he said.

“In the history of our democracies, the history of the dominance of universal public education is a central factor in the building of our foundations that produce the kind of successful societies they are.”

Returning our public schools to, and maintaining them in, their rightful position of centrality in our education system and our community remains, and will always remain, the most important item on our national agenda.

2011: Already a year to remember

CHRIS BONNOR

IN THE YEARS to come, public educators might look back on 2011 with some affection. After decades we are starting to see some of the dividends of years of advocacy for the children, the teachers and our public education schools and communities.

It didn't happen as one might expect. If you have been part of this advocacy you will have piled hope upon hope for an election result that matters, an epiphany amongst those who have resisted your cause, or a landmark event. You can wait in vain for the significant election result — and the epiphany might also be some time off — but 2011 has already seen a couple of landmark events which have had a considerable impact, with the promise of more to come.

These events have surprised many observers. Yet our framework of public and private schools has carried its own seeds of unravelling if not destruction for decades. It is almost a tribute to the lobbying capacity of private school groups that our current framework — with its changing rationale, special deals and overlapping responsibilities — has lasted so long.

The first event is the Review of Funding for Schooling. This is gathering considerable steam after years of lost opportunities and an extended timeline. Who

could ever have imagined that a Sydney Grammar graduate and chair of the Sydney Stock Exchange would line up with others to review school funding, driven by the belief that “differences in educational outcomes should not be the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions”?

The second event is My School 2.0. Who could have imagined that the My School website — which in its first year bordered on farce and fraud — would start to challenge the urban myths pedalled for years by those who have devoted their lives and careers to dismantling public education?

There is also a third event which happened last year when the results and findings of PISA 2009 were released. Who could have imagined that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, sometimes derided as a rich man’s club, would gather, publish and give a high profile to data which questions three decades of market-driven “reform” of schools going back to Reagan and Thatcher?

All these things: the Review of Funding for Schooling, the My School 2.0 website and PISA 2009 have combined to give public education its best break in years. It will be interesting to see how these events impact on the Gillard Government and the education community in 2011.

THE REVIEW OF FUNDING FOR SCHOOLING

By now, just about everyone who has the commitment and the confidence will have made a submission to this review and in particular in response to its *Emerging Issues Paper*.

In all probability the review will recommend that the one-third of students who attend private schools should continue to be funded — perhaps with a mixture of base funding per student and additional funding based on need. They’ll get broad agreement about that: the real fight is over the size of the base funding. Those who believe that equity is a word that means “equal funding” will argue for large per capita funding.

Public educators will argue that most funding should be based on need. Possibly most will argue for public education first and foremost. The problem is that governments, agencies and policy makers have come to see public schools as just another competing school sector. A generation of opinion-makers has disappeared from public school communities. They no longer understand the critical role of inclusive and accessible schooling — represented by public schools.

In a real sense the funding review panel’s definition of equity states the case for public education. Only fully inclusive schools and systems can commit to equity. Schools which charge and collect fees at various levels and apply discriminators in unequal ways cannot make a comparable commitment. One third of students attend such schools where differences in educational outcomes are disproportionately “the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions”.

The real test for the funding review will come later in the year when it delivers its recommendations, with an even bigger test if the Gillard Government falls over within the next couple of years. If the recommendations come down firmly on the side of

equity of outcomes, they must be accompanied by a substantial rationale, backed by the evidence that the panel used in making its recommendations. This alone will set it apart from previous funding decisions, especially over the past 15 years.

In effect the review needs to make its work and its recommendations bullet-proof. Only in this way will the changes promised by this review survive the vagaries of politics and the timidity of governments. We need to get to the stage that when Peter Garrett repeats his pledge that no school will lose funding as a result of the review — all he is greeted with is a collective groan.

MY SCHOOL AND OUR SCHOOLS

Concurrent with the funding review, the My School website is starting to tell the general public that something is seriously wrong with the way we provide and fund schools.

My School 2.0 is by no means perfect but it is a substantial improvement on the first version. In a lengthy critique¹ I have used My School 2.0 data to show how just how appalling the first website was. Like most people I'll grow old waiting for an apology from Julia Gillard to the hundreds of good schools which found their reputations needlessly trashed.

The biggest changes include the construction of ICSEA (the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage) from (in most cases) direct student data and the addition of information about school finances. Both still need to improve: ICSEA doesn't factor in practices in enrolment selectivity, and the financial data has a way to go. But it was good to see the ICSEA values of public schools adjusted to a more realistic level and the values of the vast majority of non-government schools rise. One hopes the latter enjoyed their brief moment in the brief (green) sunlight of favourable NAPLAN comparisons.

Despite its flaws, My School has put the data cat among the school pigeons. Its data has even challenged many of the assumptions driving the education policies of the very same government which claims the website among its greatest achievements.

Treasured beliefs about schools have bitten the dust as observers dig deeper into what the website is telling us. Even the crude first version of ICSEA showed that we have quite a distinct social and academic hierarchy of schools in Australiaⁱⁱ — with the hierarchy having little to do with school quality. In the case of schools with secondary enrolments, My School 2.0 shows high-fee and public selective schools at the top, then Anglican, Catholic, Christian, and finally other government schools. Catholic schools have lost their "we too serve the poor" affinity with government schools. The NAPLAN hierarchy is depressingly almost identical to the ICSEA hierarchy.

It was instructive to watch private school lobbies jump in ahead of the launch of My School 2.0 to try to sustain decades-old myths. Catholic schools might be overfunded we were told, but they apparently give it away to their poorer brethren. My School shows that government funding of Catholic schools does favour low ICSEA schools — but Catholic school authorities allow school fees to completely reverse this priority.

Bizarre interpretations of the data excited the media. The independent sector's

Geoff Newcombe claimed there were more high-income families in public schools than found in his patch.ⁱⁱⁱ He is right, but redheads too are likely to be more numerous in the sector that has the most schools. Possibly the most grubby spectacle was the Independent Education Union's claim that small public schools, including those with special needs students, are among the highest funded schools.^{iv}

The political responses were predictable. Coalition education shadow Christopher Pyne has accused the Government of seeking to use the publication of financial data on the My School website to undermine public support for non-government schools.^v In the end even various non-government schools parted company with him.^{vi} Peter Garrett's response that "we're not actually discriminating or wanting to enter into ... the public versus private debate"^{vii} demonstrated his ongoing irrelevance.

There will be many more revelations arising out of My School as the data is crunched at leisure by researchers. Twelve months ago I claimed that we are creating social and academic apartheid in the way we provide and support schools. This wasn't an original revelation, but the data from My School backs up this claim in just about every corner of Australia. Not long ago a politician told me that the exposure of this apartheid was part of Julia Gillard's intention. I want to believe that.

PISA AND POLICY

The work done over the past decade by the OECD has placed the debate about funding and schools in a different and wider context, especially by identifying what it is that seems to contribute to high educational performance in some countries, rather than in others. In the process it threatens a herd of sacred cows in the Gillard/Garrett paddock.

We have created an increasingly differentiated system of schools — but PISA shows that systems that show high performance and an equitable distribution of learning outcomes tend *not* to be differentiated. They are more likely to be comprehensive, requiring teachers and schools to embrace diverse student populations. School systems that assume that students have different destinations and use this to determine allocation of students to schools, classes and grades often show less equitable outcomes — without an overall performance advantage.^{viii}

The funding of schools in Australia and the more recent posting of school performance data is partly driven by the belief that parents should have choice and that this choice is best informed by school performance indicators. Another OECD report, *Markets in Education*^x, states that choice of schools is overwhelmingly local and more strongly determined by the social hierarchies created by their enrolment — performance indicators are less significant. My School gives ample information about the social pecking order. Is this the role of governments?

Current Australian government policy is to encourage schools to be more independent of systems authorities. PISA says autonomy in curricula and assessment policies is associated with higher performing systems. But the association between autonomy in a range of school management measures and system performance is less clear. Gillard Government policy is exactly the reverse of what PISA suggests.

My School is partly built around the assumption that competition has a positive

effect on school quality. But even where research shows a link between competition and quality it is variously described as being insignificant. *Markets in Education*^x reports that choice regimes risk increasing ethnic, socio-economic and ability segregation between schools. It concludes that schools compete by using various measures (such as enrolment discriminators) to improve their social position, but that's about all.

Aside from other push/pull factors, increases in funding have boosted the growth of private schools — especially since the late 1990s. This growth has occasionally been accompanied by claims that private ownership of schools delivers better student outcomes. PISA reports that, after accounting for the socio-economic and demographic profiles of students and schools, students in OECD countries who attend private schools show performance that is similar to that of students enrolled in public schools.^{xi}

Regardless of their own socio-economic background, students attending schools with a socio-economically advantaged intake tend to perform better than those attending schools with more disadvantaged peers. In the majority of OECD countries, the effect of the school's economic, social and cultural status on students' performance far outweighs the effects of the individual student's socio-economic background.^{xii} The implications of this are profoundly disturbing.

Many of the revelations now given oxygen by the funding review, by My School and by PISA won't come as a great surprise to teachers and principals. But what is different about 2011 is that the Prime Minister's "cleansing light of sunshine" is certainly displaying these revelations to a much wider audience. We now have the best chance for decades, and possibly the only chance for decades to come, to help create something better.

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Public Education and the Common

Wealth

Towards sustainable democracy

LYNDSAY CONNORS

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF Sir Henry Parkes in the history of Australia is not a matter that lies settled in the past. It will be affected by decisions of this and future generations.

Parkes is known as the "Father of Federation". But his reputation as a reformer in the colony of New South Wales pre-dated Federation.

His vision of nationhood was inextricable from the action needed to cultivate the capacity of citizens to think freely for themselves. In 1879, he had introduced the bill that became the NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880. This established a minimum period of compulsory schooling and a department of public instruction under a minister of the Crown.

I am a direct beneficiary of that system of schooling. Under the Australian Constitution, the responsibility for ensuring that every child received a minimum period of formal education was left to the states. Their primary obligation became the provision of free, public, secular schooling.

I was born into that common wealth that exists in a society that commits itself to the principle of providing education for its children in their own right, regardless of

what privileges or burdens they may have inherited from their parents, or even whether they have parents.

How remarkable it now seems that Sir Henry Parkes, this self-educated man, understood that “there can be no good school anywhere without a good teacher”. In recent times, we have seen the corporate world invest heavily in research to reach precisely the same conclusion; and to advocate greater public investment in teaching. Parkes spoke at length to an audience at Dundas in 1869 of the need for “a body of men and women trained for the profession of teaching, admitted to the several grades of the service by their merits alone”¹.

Parkes was speaking at the opening ceremony of a public school. In his role as President of the then Council of Public Education, he told the gathering that what they were doing on that day was “...one of the most important things that can at any time be done in a state of civilised society”. In his closing remarks, he drew the links between public education and the act of Federation to come:

Whatever may be our form of Government ... let us by every means in our power take care that the children of the country grow up under such a sound and enlightened system of instruction, that they will consider the dearest of all possessions the free exercise of their own judgment in the secular affairs of life, and that each man will shrink from being subservient to any other man or earthly power.

The obligation placed upon all Australians who have benefited personally from their public schooling is this: to use that education to think rationally about the significance of public education and its place in our society. It is a shared obligation that we have neglected in recent years. This is partly because the relationship between Henry Parkes’s two great legacies — the nation’s public schools and its federal system of government — has become unduly complex and dysfunctional.

One indicator of malaise is Australia’s persistently poor completion rates for secondary schooling or the vocational equivalent. Australia’s position in OECD rankings has slid to close to the bottom third in this regard. Those leaving school prematurely are concentrated in schools serving the poorest communities — the great majority in public schools.

Perhaps wide acceptance of compulsory schooling has blinded us to the need to think seriously about the responsibilities that governments embrace by making it so. These extend well beyond universal affordability. Access to schooling entails more than attendance, vital as this is. It raises the question of access to what?

Compelling children to attend school, in any decent democracy, obliges governments to provide what could be called “conditions of flourishing”. In this country, we have the capacity to equip all our public schools with the resources to assist students to learn about the world they share, to expand their capacity to consider how things came to be the way they are and what action they might take to improve their own lives and those of others.

As Henry Parkes told his audience at Dundas, it is the compulsory nature of schooling that obliges governments to provide secular schooling — “so that all children can be partakers of it. What right would the state have to direct the religious instruction of children? But it has a right, and it is its solemn duty, to see that the children of the country are instructed so as to understand the laws, and be competent to take an intelligent part in the work of civil society.”

There were, in Parkes’s day, those prepared to argue that their secular nature meant that public schools were operating in some morally empty space, or were by definition hostile to religion. Over recent years, we have heard this line of argument revived by some politicians and lobbyists.

The school place provided for me all those years ago was not in a charitable institution for those with careless or absent parents; it was not provided by the grace and favour of a private fee waiver. It was provided for me in my own right, as a citizen of the nation. The school was not where we met the children with whom our parents decided we should mix socially, and it was not there to save our souls. Its teachers had one primary mission — to assist its students to gain the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to learn to think for themselves. And, because Parkes and his colleagues had a canny grasp of the benefits for society of economies of scale, it was a school within a large system.

In my experience, the legal obligation upon schools to accept students from all walks of life produces in teachers a capacity for invention that is bred by necessity. That tends to create a disposition towards broadmindedness and a tolerance of diversity. Such virtues, however hard to sustain, are the lifeblood of a democracy.

To distinguish public, secular and free schooling from privately owned, fee-for-service schooling, religious and other, does not imply an attack on the legitimacy of either.

How can any democratic government ask us to believe, however, when its funding now covers the salaries of teachers in around 95% of all Australian schools², that the difference between public and non-government schools does not matter; or can simply be airbrushed away for political purposes?

How can there be no difference between placing those publicly-funded teachers in a system where their services are freely available to children without fees or religious tests, and placing them in schools where their services are available only to those that meet such tests, set privately by non-government authorities?

To fail to understand such differences, or to wilfully claim that there are none, is to put the future of our democracy at risk.

Parkes and his colleagues inherited long traditions of freedom and social equality; and through their reforms they positioned Australia by the early 20th century as one of the world’s most advanced democracies.

Over the years, central government’s powers have evolved well beyond its initial spheres of defence and trade. There are strengths in federal systems of government, but Australia has succumbed to a range of the recognised pitfalls. The Commonwealth has taken over collection of the bulk of taxation, while responsibility for much of the

expenditure on essential services remains with the states. Where the Commonwealth has become a partner with states in key spheres, such as health and education, roles and responsibilities are often poorly delineated, irrational and conducive to cost and blame shifting. The effects are poorly coordinated services with waste and duplication or gaps; artificial and contrived forms of accountability; as well as countervailing policies.

This has produced a fog over schooling in Australia and provided cover for policy moves that are radical by international standards. It has reduced schools funding to a policy imbroglio.

Few Australians understand, for example, that the recurrent grants from both levels of government to non-government schools now exceed the total salary bill for teachers for that sector³.

If a fair share and a fair go matter in schooling, then they matter most in relation to access to quality teaching. But governments have progressively ceded responsibility for allocating publicly funded teachers among students and schools to private school authorities. With few questions asked, a growing proportion of these teachers now work in schools where the price for access to their services is set privately according to what private authorities judge their market will bear.

The complexities of our federal system work against public scrutiny and understanding. It would be very difficult to sustain an argument that Australians knowingly voted for the shift of public funding that has effectively occurred from universities to non-government schools. And it is the more extraordinary that this happened in a system where the Commonwealth has formal responsibility for funding higher education, while responsibility for schooling rests with the states.

Over the decade 1997 to 2007, the schools sector as a whole received a windfall of close to \$6 billion — of which around 60% went to private schools. This was because of the imbalance that had developed in Commonwealth funding for all schools. By indexing its own funding to movements in states' funding of public schools, the Commonwealth delivered real funding increases for even those non-government schools operating at resource levels, from their private fees alone, well in excess of what could be justified on purely educational grounds.

History has shown that when such issues are raised in an election context, those with power and influence have been able to focus media attention on the interests of this small minority of schools, at the expense of the schools that serve the vast majority of students. One unfortunate by-product of Australia's federal system is that Commonwealth and state elections are held at different times, with the result that the country is, in a sense, permanently in election mode. This makes it difficult to find the political space within which to deal with politically complex and sensitive issues. The future of our public school system has become one of those issues.

There are many examples where the Commonwealth is reduced to political opportunism to create avenues for influence. This explains its tendency to make special purpose payments, with little respect for state priorities. Even when public funds are properly directed towards the most hard-pressed public schools, they arrive

as an ever-changing array of re-badged programs, each with hoops to be jumped through.

At worst, the deficit view of public schooling adopted by numbers of our national leaders on a bipartisan basis has, in the words of Richard Teese⁴, subjected them to the indignity of “scavenging on the scrapheap” of failed educational reform — flagpoles one year, league tables the next.

Flaws in our federal system of government are not, of course, the only factors that have affected the standing of our public school system.

Over recent decades, broad social, political and economic trends have taken us towards a two-tiered education system. The divides created by social geography have intensified social stratification among schools. Neo-liberalism has fuelled these trends, with arguments for reducing the role of governments, and increasing reliance on markets and commodification of services to achieve policy outcomes.

In this climate, spending public funds to expand private services can be justified as a means of achieving overall reductions in public spending. The Howard Government claimed that increasing Commonwealth funding to non-government schools would produce a shift in enrolments to the private sector with overall savings to the public purse. It achieved the first but not the second. From 1996 to 2006, non-government schools enrolled an extra 200,000 students. Had public schools accommodated these students, the additional cost to the public purse would have been around \$2 billion. The actual funding increase for non-government schools was more than \$3bn. This was a longstanding pattern that gathered momentum during the Howard years⁵.

Many countries have adopted neo-liberal policies. But none has split responsibility for funding public and non-government schools in a way so inimical to the health of public education. Australia sits around the middle of OECD countries in terms of per capita investment in schooling. It now ranks third-lowest, however, in the developed world in terms of the public funding it allocates to public schools; and fourth highest in terms of the share it allocates to non-government schools⁶.

This is no counsel of despair. Australia’s schools generally perform consistently well by international standards. But our system is heading in dangerous directions. The effects of inequalities now built into our school system are most damaging for those young people who most need the sustained and mindful support of government. And they threaten social mobility and feed a situation where too many young people leave school prematurely or without useful credentials — while the country faces a mounting skills shortage.

Australia’s federal system has evolved in ways that are making it a toxic environment for public schooling.

But talk of public education becoming a “residualised” system is misleading. In our hybrid system, the public school system is, to borrow a biological metaphor, the host organism. Public schools could exist in the absence of non-government schools. But non-government schools as currently operated are only viable because public schools exist. They exist in a parasitical relationship with the host.

I use this biological metaphor to illustrate that the future health of the public school system is the key to the health of the school system as a whole.

By all means, let us celebrate our cultural diversity. But let us agree this should not mean aspiring to a class-stratified school system where choice and competition are driven by gross resource disparities among schools. Let us not confuse disparity with diversity.

Henry Parkes dreamed of a country in which “each man will shrink from being subservient to any other man or earthly power”. But in the very year — 1879 — he introduced his Public Instruction Bill in NSW, a certain Mr Downer was striking a very different note in South Australia. A lawyer and one of that state’s largest landowners, Mr Downer pronounced that to provide high schooling for people who had no business with it was to interfere with the very laws of nature⁷.

It is time to ask which of our many traditions we want to honour, to sustain and to advance.

I do not believe we can sustain a democracy without a commitment to a high quality, public school system that provides a framework of equal opportunity for all our children and young people to learn.

Urgent action is needed to put to right the relationship between the two great legacies of Henry Parkes: public schooling and our national system of democratic government. For both are critical to our common wealth. We now need statutory action.

The time is right for a Henry Parkes Act.

It would set a clear legal standard making explicit that, in all its dealings with schooling, the primary obligation of the Commonwealth is to maintain and safeguard strong and socially representative public school systems of the highest standard, open without fees or religious tests to all children and young people. State and territory governments would also need to incorporate this principle in new or amended Acts.

Complementary legislation of this kind could follow from discussion and agreement between governments in national forums, especially the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The enactment of such legislation across the nation would be an important step towards restoring the vital connection between public education and the democratic federation envisioned by Henry Parkes.

This essay is adapted from the 2010 Henry Parkes Oration.

NOTES

- 1 Speech of Henry Parkes MP, President of the Council of Education entitled "The Public Schools Act", on opening the public school at Dundas, on Thursday, September 4, 1869.
- 2 Governments cover the costs of teaching in all public schools, in all Catholic systemic schools and in at least half all independent schools. Taken together, this means that governments are providing teachers, or the public funding equivalent, in around 95 per cent of all Australian schools.
- 3 *The National Report on Schooling 2008* reveals that governments, Commonwealth and state together, provided around \$8.3 billion in public funding for non-government schools. That same report sets out the total expenditure of \$6.6 billion for teaching staff salaries in those schools.
- 4 Teese R. "Suffer the children left behind", *The Age*, 16/8/2010.
- 5 When significant Commonwealth funding started to flow to schools in 1974, about 70% went to public and 30% to non-government schools, approximating their share of enrolments. By the end of the Howard years, this 70-30 split was reversed. The shift of enrolments over that period was only 12 percentage points.
- 6 Patty A. "Bad mark on school funding", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 September, 2010.
- 7 Miller P. *Long Division: State Schooling in South Australian Society*. 1986.

Issues for the Review of Funding for Schooling

BARBARA PRESTON

THIS ARTICLE IS based upon my submission to the national Review of Funding for Schooling. The submission was not intended to be comprehensive, but to draw on my research to offer a perspective and information that I hope will be of some value. I first provide some historical background on government policies — the context, debates and struggles around them, and their consequences. These illustrate the difficulties in formulating and implementing good policies on the management of relationships between public and private schools. I then briefly discuss several discrete matters: the impact of overall enrolment fluctuation and boarding and distance education allowances.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN VICTORIA

More than 100 years ago, Frank Tate, the director general of education in Victoria, fought against the powerful opposition of private schooling interests for the establishment of public secondary education providing matriculation access to the

University of Melbourne. He graphically portrayed the nature of the problem as he saw it, and in his 1905 annual report he wrote:

(Those who reject full state secondary schooling do so) because they regard such an extension as an attack upon their own class interest and privileges . . . At present we merely throw out a few ropes from the upper storey (to selected pupils, whereas what should be provided are) broad stairways for all who can climb. (Selleck 1982, p157)

Tate returned to the theme in his 1908 *Preliminary report of the Director General upon observations made during an official visit to Europe and America, with recommendations referring to state education in Victoria*, in which, according to his biographer, Dick Selleck, he “gave Victorians credit for some idealism and concern with social equality, but ... rebuked them for their apathy and financial meanness” (Selleck 1982, p185). Tate wrote:

At present we have no intermediate schools of the higher elementary type, and the secondary storey is locked against the mass of the people, and can be entered only by private stairways for which a heavy toll is charged. ... We need a broad open stairway accessible to all. (Selleck 1982, p186)

The private school lobby argued against public secondary education because “state secondary schools would always be inadequate because they could not provide effective character training” (p183), and there was a real competitive threat to some private schools in the establishment of low-fee and fee-free public schools in the same locality (pp188–9). And, of course, for the Victorian legislature, the establishment of state secondary schools would involve an increase in state expenditure (p183).

Legislation allowing general public secondary schooling in Victoria was eventually passed in 1913. However, there were restrictions: public secondary schools could not be located where they would be in direct competition with existing private secondary schools. That heritage has remained live in Victoria.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT ERA

For almost a century, public school enrolments were around 80% of all Australian school enrolments. Then, from the early 1980s, this rapidly changed, and now public school enrolments are less than 66% (Table 1). Not only have enrolment shares changed, but so has the social composition of the respective sectors, with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds increasingly concentrated in public schools, and students with higher socio-economic backgrounds increasingly concentrated in Catholic and independent schools (Preston 2007, p9).

In the 1970s, a vicious circle of residualisation of the public school system was established.

TABLE 1. Percentage share of all school enrolments in public and private schools, selected years, 1890 to 2010

Year	Public	Private
1890	83%	17%
1900	80%	20%
1940	79%	21%
1954	78%	22%
1964	76%	24%
1971	78%	22%
1976	79%	21%
1981	78%	22%
1986	74%	26%
1991	72%	28%
1996	71%	29%
2001	69%	31%
2006	67%	33%
2010	66%	34%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, various publications; recent decades: Cat. No. 4221.0 Note: 2010 public sector share: 65.6%

The fall in the public sector's share of enrolments and the changing balance of social makeup should have come as no surprise. Matters such as "choice" play only a small part, and disguise the reality: individual families (and communities) make decisions about schooling within the context of history and the framework of policy — including capital and recurrent funding levels and conditions, and regulation and accountability requirements.

These developments in enrolment share and social makeup were anticipated in widely read government reports. In 1972, in the report that laid the foundations for the current system of public funding of private schools, the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission wrote:

There is a point beyond which it is not possible to consider policies relating to the private sector without taking into account their possible effects on the public sector whose strength and representativeness should not be diluted. ... As public aid for non-government schools rises, the possibility and even the inevitability of a changed relationship between government and non-government schooling presents itself. (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel Committee) 1973, para. 2.13)

The Commonwealth Government ignored this caution — largely because of the power of the Senate during the Whitlam years, and the political orientation of the Fraser Government.

A little over a decade later the Schools Commission again expressed a warning:

A continuing significant decline in the government school sector's share of overall enrolment is likely to change substantially the social composition of the student population in government schools, with potentially

significant negative consequences for the general comprehensiveness of public school systems. The cumulative effect of these financial, educational and social consequences could, in the long term, threaten the role and standing of the public school as a central institution in Australian society. Such a development would be unwelcome to most citizens and is inconsistent with the stated policies of governments, as well as the major school interest groups, government and non-government. (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1985, para 20)

The Hawke Government sought to take some action in response, and was in small part successful with the implementation of the New Schools Policy, which had some constraint on the establishment and expansion of private schools where they might damage existing public and private schools. But this paled beside the impact of private school interests in Victoria around 75 years earlier.

The constraints of the Hawke and Keating Governments were terminated by the Howard Government, and the residualisation of public schooling gathered pace. The recommendations of the Review of Funding for Schooling will lay the groundwork for the next era.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: OVERALL ENROLMENT FLUCTUATIONS

The responsibility and accountability to the wider society of private schooling is an inherently difficult matter to determine and to develop policy on. Matters of financial audit and adherence with regulations on curriculum, teacher qualifications, health and safety of students and employees, and so on, are relatively simple. But much more difficult are those matters involving an impact on public schooling (or other private schools) and subtle, but no less profound, impacts on society.

Such difficulties are indicated by the respective sectors' responses to overall enrolment fluctuations resulting from a change in school starting age and the progressive movement through the grades of a small cohort. Such a change began in Tasmania in the early 1990s, and more recently in Western Australia. In both states the public sector has borne far more than its share of the disruption, with significantly greater reduced share of overall enrolments in the successive grade levels of the small cohort. In addition, the private sector has usually ratcheted up its advantage, maintaining a greater-than-trend enrolment share after the enrolment trough has passed through (Preston 2008, pp131–3).

The small WA cohort passed through Year 8 (the first year of secondary schooling) in 2010. Overall enrolments fell by 38.6%, but substantially more in the public sector (44.2%) and less in the Catholic and independent sectors (30.5% and 31.8%). The public sector share fell from 57.1% in 2009 to just 51.9% in 2010 (Table 2). If all sectors equally shared the impact of the fall in enrolments there would be no change in the three sectors' enrolment shares.

ISSUES FOR THE REVIEW OF FUNDING FOR SCHOOLING

TABLE 2. Percentage of all Year 8 enrolments, government, Catholic and independent sectors, Western Australia, 2006 to 2010

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Change in enrolments 2009 to 2010
Government	59.9%	58.2%	57.6%	57.1%	51.9%	-44.2%
Catholic	20.3%	21.1%	21.0%	20.8%	23.6%	-30.5%
Independent	19.8%	20.7%	21.4%	22.1%	24.5%	-31.8%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) *Schools Australia*, Cat. No. 4221.0

Such large fluctuations in school enrolments can be very disruptive. They have occurred on a larger scale and over a longer time period as localities have experienced demographic change as green fields suburbs of families with young children mature. In the early years, first primary schools, then secondary schools, can be overcrowded, with temporary buildings and other difficulties. As the age bulge moves beyond school age, enrolments shrink, curriculum offerings become limited, and there is pressure to close schools — with all the conflict that entails. Private schools do not have to take all comers during the expanded enrolment years, thus forcing the public sector to take more than its share of the burden. Similarly, private schools can increase marketing efforts and other strategies to maintain a desirable enrolment level as overall student enrolment numbers shrink. We have seen this pattern repeat over and over again as new areas are opened up and mature — especially on the fringes of the metropolitan cities, and throughout Canberra.

The Review of Funding for Schooling should consider how such a lack of responsibility (however unintended) should be responded to in terms of public funding and regulation. There are parallel issues in the advantage private schools and sectors can take from their market position in the recruitment of teachers, including recruitment, induction and support of first year out teachers, for which the public sector undertakes a disproportionate responsibility.

INEQUITABLE FUNDING: BOARDING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION ALLOWANCES

The matter of boarding and distance education allowances appear not to be within the narrow scope of the Funding Review. However, these Centrelink benefits have significant implications for educational equity, and should be considered by the Review Committee.

The arguments are complicated. I will just make the following major points here:

- The basic (not income-tested) boarding allowance is substantial: \$7,141 pa (2011 rate — the additional means tested allowance is \$2,366 pa).
- There are very few boarding facilities for school students that do not require high tuition fees and high boarding fees. Therefore the large majority of those who are in a position to take advantage of boarding allowances are able to afford very high fees.
- The geographic isolation rules are very generous (and have not changed, other

than metrification, since the allowance was introduced in the early 1970s) — at least 16 kilometres from the nearest public school and at least 4.5 kilometres from the nearest available transport service (or 56 kilometres in total from the nearest public school, irrespective of transport services).

- Given the generous criteria for “isolation”, it is quite possible (and quite common) for those who have no difficulty getting to a country primary school to be classified as too isolated to get to the secondary school in the same town, and thus receive the boarding allowance as a substantial subsidy for attending the high-fee independent school they would have attended irrespective of the allowance.
- The distance education allowance is only \$3,570 pa.
- Distance education is the only option for the large majority of genuinely isolated students who cannot afford a very high-fee independent boarding school.
- Quality distance education involves much more than the computer hardware and software, books and other materials that can be bought for \$3,570 a year. For example, substantial travel for excursions, camps and residential educational events should also be supported, and senior secondary students must have ample opportunities to get to know first-hand post-school educational institutions.

In summary: boarding allowances generally provide a very substantial payment to the high income/wealth families of students who would have attended high-fee independent schools irrespective of the accessibility of appropriate local public schools. In contrast, the distance education allowance is quite inadequate for the educational needs of lower SES, genuinely isolated students who have no choice.

These allowances provide a stark example of differences in public funding for educational opportunities that are a result of differences in political power and influence, augmenting differences in wealth, income and possessions.

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The National Curriculum: A case study in policy catch-up

ALAN REID

THE CURRENT NATIONAL education agenda has a nasty case of “policy catch-up”. By this I mean that as problems with the policy platform are encountered — problems that have emerged as a result of the tendency to simplify complex issues or to construct policy without adequately consulting the profession — so too are there hastily constructed responses which seek to paper over the cracks. Usually these policy responses are accompanied by a post hoc justification for actions that have been already taken. The problem is that the original policy announcements have determined the policy direction and so any subsequent action is invariably educational Spakfilla. This haphazard approach to policy development and implementation makes it difficult to deal with the complexity of educational issues. The national curriculum is a good case study of this process at work.

In January 2008, then Education Minister Julia Gillard announced the Federal Government’s intention to pursue the development of a new national curriculum, comprising four subjects: maths, science, English and history, to be developed by the end of 2010 by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and implemented in 2011 by the states and territories. It is hard to believe that at that stage the Government seriously believed that a national curriculum could

comprise four subjects, but there it was — no sense of whether other learning areas were to follow, no argument about why these four subjects were chosen, no overall curriculum plan. Naturally the professional communities of the less favoured subjects began to complain and lobby and so began an unseemly jostling for position to claim the remaining space in the new national curriculum. Geography, languages and the arts made it into the hastily constructed second phase of the national curriculum (ready for implementation from 2012); and, after another round of lobbying, protesting and schmoozing, a third phase with “the rest”, including such learning areas as design and technology and health and physical education, was announced (ready for implementation from 2013).

By this time, of course, ACARA was telling us that this had always been intended since it was spelt out in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008), conveniently ignoring the fact that the goals had been agreed to almost 12 months *after* the first decisions were made about the curriculum. In any case this post hoc rationalisation skates over the fact that the “big four” subjects had set the template for the learning areas which follow. The rest have to pick up the scraps from the national curriculum table, after such matters as time allocation are determined. The lack of curriculum design here is breathtaking.

The date for implementation of Phase 1 in 2011 was always impossible and it was not far into the process before the deadline was quietly shifted to “*from 2011 and by 2013*”. Each of the subsequent phases had a similar two-year time frame, resulting in the final year of implementation for the compulsory years of schooling being 2015, eight years after the initial announcement. Surely it would have been possible to work with the profession to conceptualise and design the whole curriculum, before breaking up the development phase into stages, and thus to complete this work well before 2015? That is, the rush to speed up the process has resulted in slowing down the process. It also means that ACARA is constantly having to play policy catch-up.

The process of policy catch-up has resulted in a number of problems. Most obviously, it has meant that the new national curriculum has no view of “curriculum” other than as being a collection of subjects or learning areas. As a consequence of starting the process by focusing on four subjects, the opportunity to conceptualise a number of important non-subject areas was lost and so in each case, *despite the fact that the Phase 1 subjects have been completed, published and are now in the implementation stage*, catch-up work is proceeding to fill in the obvious gaps. This is an impoverished approach to a so-called 21st century curriculum. I will give four examples of the problems which still need to be addressed in the catch-up process.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

When the first draft of the first four learning areas was released, it was apparent that very little thought had gone into understanding and defining the nature of “achievement standards”. Not surprisingly, the various writers in each learning area interpreted these differently, and so when the drafts were released, there was no common approach within subjects, let alone between them. Despite the fact that the first four subjects

are now being implemented, there are still many problems with the achievement standards. In some cases, for example, although the documentation tells us that the standards are designed to capture the quality of work expected at each year level, they appear to be little more than summaries of the content. As a result, catch-up work to validate the completed and published achievement standards is now underway.

THE GENERAL CAPABILITIES

In the very first drafts of the learning areas of maths, science, English and history, the claim was made that this was a world class curriculum. One of the major reasons for this was the presence of the general capabilities:

However, 21st century learning does not fit neatly into a curriculum solely organised by learning areas. Increasingly, in a world where knowledge itself is constantly growing and evolving, students need to develop a set of skills, behaviours and dispositions, or general capabilities that apply across subject-based content and equip them to be lifelong learners able to operate with confidence in a complex, information-rich, globalised world. The Australian Curriculum focuses on the development of general capabilities in addition to discipline-based learning areas. (ACARA, 2009)

It might be imagined that such an innovative feature of the new curriculum might receive the same focus and emphasis during the development phase as the learning areas themselves. Questions such as how the content of each of the seven capabilities might be sequenced at different stages of schooling; the curriculum role of the capabilities; and whether or not the capabilities are to be assessed and reported on separately: these are the kind of issues that needed to be addressed right from the start. They weren't. The writers of the four learning areas began work *before* there was any agreed understanding about such basic issues. Not surprisingly, the general capabilities became an afterthought, even a distraction, tacked on disparately to learning area content. At the time of writing, I understand that catch-up work is now happening and that more detailed outlines of the general capabilities are to be released soon. But this of course is *after* the first four subjects have been completed and so once again there will be need for some speedy catch-up work.

THE APPROACH TO EQUITY AND THE CURRICULUM

During the development of the first four learning areas, equity in the curriculum meant little more than setting high standards and expecting all students to achieve them. There was no attempt to theorise an approach to equity which would inform the writing process, using the rich research literature in this area. Issues such as the relationship between official content knowledge, pedagogy and assessment; the ways in which the official curriculum has tended to privilege the cultural capital of certain groups and marginalised that of less powerful groups; and how particular curriculum structures have tended to create hierarchies of knowledge, are all equity questions that were

ignored. Of course these are complex issues and the national curriculum was never going to be able to resolve them. But our first national curriculum should have begun with a consideration of what has been learned so far and developed some principles to guide the learning area writers. I understand that, at the time of writing, ACARA has commissioned some papers on equity. But the insights from these can only partially inform the already completed learning areas. Once again we will be in catch-up mode.

INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK

The various drafts of the national curriculum invariably use the term 21st century learning to describe what follows. If this term has any meaning, it would surely include interdisciplinary work. And yet there has been no sophisticated attempt to build this into the new national curriculum. It is weakly represented in some learning areas where the knowledge from one discipline is used to illuminate the knowledge from another discipline. But there are no obvious ways by which students can start with, say, a social or environmental issue or problem and draw on insights from the various disciplines to explore it. Of course, this might still be possible at the level of individual schools. But the point is that the official curriculum does not facilitate this work, through, for example, the use of a mechanism to trigger interdisciplinary pedagogy. Rather, the new national curriculum sends the signals that such work is not valued, especially when it seems to represent little more than a collection of stand-alone learning areas. No doubt these issues will be picked up in the implementation phase, but by then the frameworks will have been set and any attempts to promote interdisciplinary learning will once again be done in catch-up mode!

CONCLUSION

I have no doubt that the development process for the national curriculum will muddle through with this catch-up work. Each of the four examples I have given (and there could have been many more) will be dealt with in the usual ad hoc way with the usual post hoc justifications. However, the irony of policy catch-up is that so often, in seeking to remedy the problems caused by policy haste, it ends up taking longer than a thoughtful, well researched and consultative approach would have taken.

Instead of the rush to claim world class curriculum status for draft documents, it would surely have been preferable to have established a definition of curriculum and conceptualised the whole of the official curriculum, and the relationships within it, before rushing to work on its component parts. In the absence of such work, it has been necessary to engage in policy catch-up. This has diminished the possibility for an innovative and creative approach. Australia's first national curriculum could have been so much more.

Trust the Teaching Profession with the Responsibilities of a Profession

LAWRENCE INGVARSON

IN 1973, A major national report on education (the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973) called for a more active role for the teaching profession in developing standards for practice and in exercising responsibility for professional development. Noting that teacher organisations had been more concerned with industrial than professional matters, it argued:

A mark of a highly skilled occupation is that those entering it should have reached a level of preparation in accordance with standards set by the practitioners themselves, and that the continuing development of members should largely be the responsibility of the profession. In such circumstances, the occupational group itself becomes the point of reference for standards and thus the source of prestige or of condemnation. (p123)

Movement toward this vision, of a profession that speaks on equal terms with governments and other employing authorities on professional matters, has been slow over the past 40 years, although it has quickened over the past decade. Nearly 20 professional associations have developed their own standards for accomplished

teaching in their specialist fields and they want to use them to provide a certification system for those who meet them.

The present question is whether the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) will enable the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to build on this resource and allow teachers and their associations to take the major responsibility for developing and implementing a voluntary standards-based professional certification system, which will be essential to the latter's success.

LOOKING BACK AT PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

When I was a raw young maths and science teacher, teaching in a small West Australian wheat belt town in the early 1960s, the superintendents used to visit the school each year for several days. I can't say I looked forward to their visits. They looked closely over just about everything from course plans and lessons to examination papers. And they would be making judgments that affected my career.

However, I had to admit that they knew their professional business. They had been successful teachers. They were very active leaders in their subject associations. They had travelled internationally and were familiar with innovations in teaching and curriculum. They had higher degrees in education and were familiar with the latest research in their field.

Their evaluations depended on their professional judgement, but they were in a position to make informed, comparative assessments. And it was part of their job to ensure that every high school was well staffed and providing adequate maths and science programs.

Occupying senior positions in the Education Department, they were expected to provide professional leadership in a broader sense than school leadership. This included efforts to recruit sufficient numbers of good graduates, and to ensure they were trained well. They also played a major role in updating and revising the curricula. They were strong advocates for quality teaching and resources.

If you asked maths and science teachers where they got new or useful ideas from, they would almost certainly have rated these people as significant; certainly more significant than principals. They were in a better position to evaluate the quality of my teaching than my principal, a former history teacher.

Of course, this model of professional leadership had all but died by the late 1980s. As a method of teacher evaluation it relied on subjective ratings. Its reliability and validity were never tested.

However, a new model of professional leadership has yet to emerge to replace the old. By the early 1990s, managerial models of accountability were increasingly replacing leadership based on professional expertise. At the school level, generic teacher appraisal and performance management schemes replaced evaluation by experts in the relevant field, and, partly as a consequence, were generally rated as innocuous.

During the 1990s it became ever clearer that the status and attractiveness of

teaching as a career was declining; paradoxically, evidence was at the same time steadily accumulating that students' achievement depended significantly on the knowledge and skill of their teachers. Yet this was not reflected in salary structures and career pathways. Credible systems for identifying accomplished teachers were poorly developed.

Teachers had few defences against this trend. By the mid-1990s several teacher associations started to examine a broader role that they might play in offering professional leadership, by developing their own standards for high-quality teaching, promoting development toward them and providing their own systems for assessing and certifying those who reached them.

At a time when there was heavy emphasis on reorganising school management as a means to improve teaching, the status of teaching and the academic quality of applicants for teacher training nosedived to such an extent that the Senate had to establish an inquiry into the status of teaching.

The resulting report, *A Class Act* (Senate Employment, Education and Training Committee, 1998), had one main theme — to strengthen the profession, especially its role in the development of standards. It called for a national system for professional standards and certification:

A system of professional recognition for teachers must be established which is based on the achievement of enhanced knowledge and skills and which retains teachers at the front line of student learning. Such knowledge and skills should be identified, classified and assessed according to criteria developed by expert panels drawn from the profession. Education authorities should structure remuneration accordingly. (p7)

Some form of advanced certification is common among most professions, but teaching had no organisational structure for providing such a service. The Senate report recognised that developing and operating a certification system is properly the responsibility of an independent national professional body. At the same, creating a strong demand for nationally certified teachers was the responsibility of governments and employing authorities. If a certification system was to be rigorous and effective, both these responsibilities needed to be fulfilled.

While the report did not gain support from the government of the day, several other reports followed making much the same recommendation. By the mid-to-late 2000s, it was becoming clear that traditional modes of industrial bargaining were failing to produce competitive salaries for teachers in the market for able graduates.

WHICH ROLE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP?

Any serious government policy designed to promote good teaching in all schools must lift salaries to levels whereby teaching can compete successfully with other professions for the best graduates. This is what astute countries such as Finland and

Singapore are doing very well. However, there is no way that the level of investment required will gain the support of the Australian public without some guarantee of increased quality.

There is general agreement that this requires more reliable and valid systems for recognising and rewarding successful teachers than we have at present. These systems aim to benefit students in two main ways: by attracting and retaining effective teachers; and by promoting successful teaching practices.

How best to do this? With the advent of AITSL in 2009, we have been presented with a stark choice.

On the one hand, Julia Gillard, the then Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, charged AITSL with developing and implementing a voluntary, nationally consistent system for the certification of highly accomplished teachers. The present minister, Peter Garrett, reinforced this in February when he launched the new National Professional Standards for Teachers. This work would draw on the standards developed by teacher associations.

On the other hand, the Labor Government has asked AITSL to support the introduction of an annual bonus pay scheme, *Reward Payments for Great Teachers*, by 2013, by developing a performance management system to identify 10 per cent of the “top performing teachers” each year for a bonus of around \$8000. All 250,000-odd teachers would be required to participate each year. The assessments would be conducted at the school level by panels including the principal, a senior regional staff representative and an independent third party. Assessment would be based on a range of methods, including:

- Lesson observations
- Analysis of student performance data (including NAPLAN and school-based information that can show the value added by particular teachers)
- Parental feedback
- Teacher qualifications and professional development undertaken.

This has to be one of the silliest performance pay schemes I’ve ever heard of. It ignores the lessons from over 30 years of research. The methods listed are completely undeveloped. The latter two cannot provide reliable and valid assessments of teaching quality. Nor can NAPLAN be used to evaluate individual teachers. The scheme would be very expensive and a huge burden for schools, and would have a negative effect on staff relationships.

Quite apart from the fact that this scheme would fail, it would appear to place AITSL in an awkward, if not contradictory, position. Is its main role to engage the profession in establishing a voluntary profession-wide system of portable certification, or is it to provide school managers with procedures for their performance management and annual bonus pay schemes? The latter seems a very odd thing for a government to do.

The two schemes are incompatible. It is important to be clear about the distinction between a professional certification system and performance management. National professional bodies run certification systems, independent of particular employing

authorities. When teachers support each other to gain certification, the research indicates that this promotes the most effective kinds of professional learning.

In contrast, performance management systems are rightly and properly the responsibility of employing authorities and have a different function. Both are important, and can be complementary. In fact performance management systems frequently incorporate arrangements that encourage relevant staff members to seek professional certification. However, when performance management systems are combined with competitive one-off bonus pay arrangements, negative consequences for staff morale and relationships usually follow.

Recent correspondence with the quality teaching branch of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations indicates that the Government intends to proceed with *Reward Payments for Great Teachers*, with the performance management scheme based on the new national professional standards.

A WAY FORWARD: GIVE GENUINE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PROFESSION

Australia has had a succession of national bodies for the teaching profession; each was perceived as failing to embrace one or more of the main stakeholders. Although representatives from the jurisdictions and the Catholic and independent education sectors dominate AITSL membership, the new body may avoid this fate. AITSL is the first to have been established with clear support from all governments and employing authorities to play their part in rewarding nationally certified, highly accomplished teachers. The challenge ahead is to gain the trust and commitment of teachers and their associations to make it work.

We are in a very good position to achieve this. During the 1990s and early 2000s, consistent with the Senate report mentioned above, successive Commonwealth ministers for education on both sides advocated that teachers should play a stronger role in articulating their own standards and promoting excellence in teaching and learning. Professional associations gained funding for the complex work of developing and validating teaching standards; subject associations in English, literacy, mathematics and science were the first to gain grants from the Australian Research Council.

The depth and quality of their standards is generally greater than standards developed by employing authorities and state registration bodies. At the launch of the Australian Science Teacher Association (ASTA) standards in Adelaide in 2002, for example, a senior state government educational administrator said: "We would not dare to develop standards as high as these for our school system."

The Commonwealth Government has put millions of dollars into supporting this work, by more than 20 professional associations, including subject associations, level-specific associations such as the Early Childhood Association, support associations such as the Australian School Librarians Association and associations for school principals. Why it has funded this work, yet not pressed for its outcomes to be used, is puzzling.

Two associations, the Australian Association for Mathematics Teachers and ASTA, have developed their standards and assessment methods to the point where they provide a potentially valid basis for a national certification system — one that employing authorities could draw on with confidence. All associations, except one, want their standards to be used in a national system to recognise accomplished teachers.

In no other country, other than the USA, have professional associations mobilised themselves in developing professional standards to the extent they have in Australia. Indications are that the profession is ready to take up the challenge of playing a major role in developing and implementing a national certification system.

Members of professional associations in Australia believe passionately that the profession should take the primary responsibility for setting and administering professional standards. They recognise that this responsibility must be shared with employer and teacher unions, if teachers who gain its certification system are to be rewarded financially and in career progression.

It is obviously in the interests of governments and employing authorities to foster this commitment among teachers. A majority of teachers are members of at least one professional association and many are members of more than one. A strong sense of ownership for teaching standards among practising teachers is an indispensable condition for their acceptance and effectiveness.

While it is not appropriate for governments to tell teachers how to teach or to decide what counts as accomplished teaching, it is appropriate for governments to ask the profession to show that it can be trusted to provide a rigorous teacher evaluation system if the profession expects expertise to be rewarded. It is worth noting here that the most rigorous and respected system for assessing teachers for professional certification, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the USA, is governed and operated primarily by highly accomplished teachers.

FINAL COMMENTS

Few things could be more central to developing your credentials as a profession than showing that you can define what you mean by good practice and demonstrating that you can make valid and reliable judgments about whether your members have attained those standards. Most professions would find the extent to which governments and employing authorities have played the major role in developing standards for the teaching profession very odd, even inappropriate.

It is time for the profession to be entrusted with this central responsibility. Professions certify excellent practice — wise employers reward it.

My prediction is that AITSL's success will depend, in large part, on the extent to which MCEECDYA ensures that teachers have a strong sense of ownership of its certification system and a major responsibility for ensuring its rigour and professional credibility. AITSL's ability to do this will, in turn, depend on whether the ministers give priority to their primary role of ensuring high quality education in all schools over their secondary role as employers of teachers.

At present it is unclear whether AITSL's role will primarily be to provide each employing authority with a performance management and bonus pay system, or whether it is to provide a profession-wide certification system for recognising highly accomplished teachers. The research is clear that competitive bonus pay schemes do not work for teaching; schemes that recognise professional development and reward for professional certification do.

While there is a lot of talk about infrastructure reforms in this period of recovery from the global financial crisis, the infrastructure that matters most in education is the infrastructure that makes teaching an attractive profession to the ablest graduates, promotes their professional development and rewards those who attain high standards of professional performance. The research evidence indicates that a national, profession-wide system of voluntary certification entrusted to the profession offers the best way to build that infrastructure.

Teacher education buzzwords in a new era:

What does it all mean?

DIANE MAYER

HISTORICALLY, REGULATION OF the teaching profession in Australia has been managed by states and territories. Entry into the profession and ongoing registration of those in the profession have been the responsibility of various teacher registration authorities, as has the accreditation of initial teacher education programs which are accredited in order for graduates to be eligible for teacher registration in that state or territory. Registered teachers are granted registration in other states and territories through mutual recognition procedures. But the landscape is changing. The Commonwealth is now playing a much greater role. How? What are the implications?

As part of the Commonwealth Government's 2009–2013 *Smarter Schools — Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership* (TQNP) program, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) recently endorsed new national professional standards (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011a) and new processes for accrediting initial teacher education programs (AITSL, 2011b). This marks another significant milestone in the increasing federalisation of education and schooling in Australia. While program accreditation will continue to be carried out by the relevant state and territory authorities, they will use the new national graduate teacher standards and the new national accreditation processes.

Support for an Australia-wide accreditation of programs for the professional preparation of teachers is not new (eg Australian Council of Deans of Education, 1998; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007). However, it is only now that such moves have materialised into more than suggestions and recommendations.

What does this mean for teacher education and the teaching profession more broadly? This article focuses on two areas — national professional standards for teachers, and the use of those standards in an outcome-based system of accreditation of initial teacher education which requires teacher educators to provide evidence that graduates can demonstrate professional knowledge, practice and engagement as outlined in the new standards.

But first, why has this happened? As in many developed countries, teacher education in Australia is currently being positioned as a “policy problem” (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Grimmett et al, 2009) with the view that the most appropriate policies and practices for teacher education should be decided according to empirical evidence about value they add in relation to school student achievement. Of course, no teacher educator would argue against the idea that enhanced student learning and achievement should be the ultimate outcome of preparing highly effective beginning teachers. It is the way in which this is determined that causes much discussion and debate.

In the USA, this is often done using standardised tests, asking, for example, which teachers from which teacher education programs achieved the highest student test scores. In Australia, we have so far resisted such flawed and narrow determinations of successful teacher preparation. However, we do need to engage in authentic ways of determining effective teacher preparation. Indeed, for some time, government inquiries into teacher education have recommended large-scale research projects investigating the value of teacher education (eg, Education and Training Committee, 2005) However, as yet, few large-scale studies of this sort have been conducted. This is not surprising because major research grants are rare in the field of teacher education, and as a result teacher educators often study their own programs, producing a wide variety of studies, many of them small scale and unconnected. While these studies provide a useful research base for informing practice, a significant gap remains for large-scale research into teacher education to inform policy.

With this policy focus and without a broad evidence base demonstrating the effectiveness of teacher education as it is currently provided, the Commonwealth Government has moved to take increasing control over teacher preparation and the regulation of the profession as part of the TQNP agenda. Among other things, this has involved the establishment of Teach for Australia, Australia’s first alternative pathway into teaching, and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), a national agency with responsibility for developing and implementing national professional standards for teachers and school leaders and for regulating national accreditation of teacher education programs and teacher registration.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS: WHAT SHOULD TEACHERS KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO?

Teaching is complex, and therefore defining quality teaching in statements of professional standards is complex. Challenging curriculum expectations and more diverse learners mean that teachers have to be more sophisticated in their understanding of the effects of context and learner variability on teaching and learning. Instead of implementing set routines, teachers have to be ever more skilful at evaluating teaching situations and develop responses that are effective in different circumstances. Teaching is intellectual work requiring professional judgment.

Despite these challenges, there has been rampant growth in the development of professional standards in Australia in the past decade. State teacher registration authorities have developed their own versions of professional standards for graduates from teacher education programs as well as standards for more competent professional practice linked to full and ongoing registration. In addition, some jurisdictions have created standards against which they make employment and career stage decisions, while the Commonwealth Government created a national professional standards framework in 2003 intended as an overarching framework for all standards statements across the country.

Alongside this, subject associations have developed standards for accomplished teaching in English language and literacy, mathematics, science, and geography. We have ended up with a quagmire of standards, often unrelated to each other and regularly used in different ways. While statements of professional standards are intended to create a shared and public “language of practice” that describes how the specialised knowledge of teaching is used in practice and also act as a vehicle for assessing and judging professional activity (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 2000), the professional standards landscape in Australia to date has been somewhat fragmented and uncoordinated.

However, with much Commonwealth political and financial backing, the involvement of MCEECDYA and the establishment of AITSL, all that has changed. A common set of national professional standards for teachers has been endorsed. Now the question is, how will they be used, by whom and for what purpose?

The standards are grouped into three domains of teaching — Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement — and include descriptors of four professional career stages — Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. The graduate and proficient levels will be used for teacher registration purposes in determining provisional registration after completion of an accredited teacher education program and full registration after a period on induction into the profession. Indeed, the graduate standards have quickly been incorporated into the new national system for accreditation of initial teacher education.

However, because of the related industrial issues, the highly accomplished and lead levels — and how they might be used — are prompting much discussion and debate across the country. The recent announcement by the Prime Minister of funding for Australia’s first national system of pay bonuses for high performing teachers is the next stage in this arena.

PROVIDING EVIDENCE OF WHAT BEGINNING TEACHERS KNOW AND CAN DO: TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

I now pick up the issue I posed above: the importance of considering how the professional standards will be used. I will focus on the graduate standards because of the outcomes focus highlighted in the new national accreditation of initial teacher education and the requirement for teacher education providers to “include evidence that graduates of the program have achieved the Graduate career stage of the National Professional Standards for Teachers” (AITSL, 2011b, p18).

At the moment, we do not have an outcomes-focused system for the accreditation of initial teacher education in Australia. Usually, judgments are made about the quality of a program by paper review involving a panel of stakeholders deciding on the likelihood that the program will prepare a competent beginning teacher. Then, employers and teacher registration authorities use proxies such as completion of an accredited teacher education program, grades in university subjects or practicum evaluations and observations of teaching to make a judgment about a graduating teacher’s level of professional knowledge and practice — their readiness to teach.

However, with the introduction of the new national system of accreditation of initial teacher education, the focus is moving to outcomes and to measuring the ability of graduating teachers to demonstrate the graduate teacher standards. This is the issue with which we in the academy and in the teaching profession more broadly need to engage. It is not unrelated to considerations for measuring the ability of teachers to demonstrate highly accomplished levels of performance. Systems for providing evidence of what teachers know and can do for recognition at each standard level should be aligned and draw on similar frameworks reflecting learn-to-teach and teacher proficiency as ongoing and part of a continuum, not as idiosyncratic, predictable and discrete stages that are somehow end-products in their own right.

So, how do we judge teacher performance authentically? Can we? A variety of approaches are currently used by universities in Australia to collect evidence for the assessment of graduating teachers, including: i) observation protocols that include teacher educator-developed evaluation scales linked to professional standards for graduating teachers; ii) portfolios documenting pre-service teachers’ professional knowledge and reflection on their professional practice; and iii) teacher and/or student work samples. The strength of these approaches is that they can be used in formative ways to support teacher learning. However, when the determination of teacher quality becomes a state and national priority and a way in which decisions are made about graduating teacher proficiency and teacher education program effectiveness, the bar for addressing issues of reliability and validity is significantly raised.

Portfolio assessments are widely used in teacher preparation programs, most often as a form of “capstone” or culminating assessment. They can be structured portfolios, but most often are unstructured portfolios. Structured portfolios are those that require pre-service teachers to submit specific artefacts of teaching and responses to standardised prompts related to professional standards and the work of teachers in authentic educational settings. These artefacts and responses are then assessed in

a standardised way by trained assessors using a common evaluation tool, usually a rubric. In the USA, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards portfolio is an example of a highly structured portfolio. An example of a structured portfolio that has been used for high stakes licensure decisions in California is Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT). A range of authentic assessments of the actual professional practice of teachers in the workplace, incorporating multiple measures and focussing on the impact of teachers on student learning, are being explored across Australia, both in teacher education and in school systems. We have much to learn from this work as it is published.

However, if the portfolio is to be used to support a graduation or registration decision, then the design and the development of the assessment must be well thought out and highly structured. Wilkerson and Lang (2003) detail the legal and psychometric issues involved in using teacher portfolios as a teacher certification assessment:

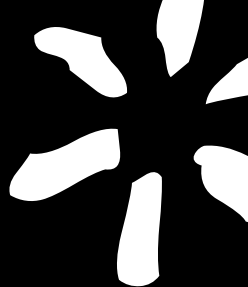
[A teacher's portfolio] can be used as a summative evaluation tool, but to do so requires a much more structured process and a complex set of assessment strategies. The assessment component requires clear criteria, an established set of reliable and valid scoring rubrics, and extensive training for the evaluators in order to ensure fairness and reliability. These considerations can all be met, but they are often beyond the capacity or the will of a local university (pp 94–95).

Therein lies our collective challenge.

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Linda Darling-Hammond
on accountability,
equity and following
America



INTERVIEW BY JOHN GRAHAM

LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL EDUCATIONALISTS, CHARLES E DUCOMMUN PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY AND A FORMER ADVISER TO BARACK OBAMA. SHE RECENTLY VISITED AUSTRALIA AT THE INVITATION OF THE AEU. THIS INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED IN MELBOURNE AFTER HER ADDRESS TO OVER 300 AEU MEMBERS.

JG: What do you see as the big issues in education now?

LDH: One of them is the whole issue of equity in the provision of education. It divides societies around the world. There are some places that have become very committed to equitably and adequately resourcing schools, not just financially but also with well-qualified and well-supported teachers and leaders and with thoughtful well-supported curriculum; in other words with the range of the supports that students need to be successful. Other places have not done this, so we have some places which have become

more inequitable and others becoming much more equitable. It really has huge effects on societies today.

I think a second issue is the extent to which societies are focused on what I would call meaningful learning. That is, learning that really enables people to be prepared to be productive citizens and problem-solvers, to be engaged in the kind of work and ongoing education that will be necessary in the knowledge-based world that we now live in.

Again, I think some societies are focusing on the rapidly changing skills and knowledge base that are needed and others are stuck in a concept of education that is 100 years old, and those two things are kind of in tension with each other around the world.

We should be focusing right now on ensuring that all kids are getting access to a curriculum and support system that will enable them to solve problems that we haven't even envisioned yet, using technologies that haven't even been invented yet and using the capacity to access intellectual and human intangible resources to collaboratively invent things and solve problems. Many schools are still focused on the mastery of a body of knowledge and the regurgitation of a set of facts that anyone today can just go and Google.

JG: *The Australian Government has chosen to implement several*

policies it explicitly sources back to education systems in the United States: what it believes are "success stories" from the US. Two examples are the accountability system in New York and Teach for America. Do you have any comments specifically on the accountability system in New York or more generally about the "accountability" movement as a whole and how it is affecting the quality of education?

LDH: I am not going to comment specifically on New York's accountability system but I will comment on the accountability movement in general. Our accountability movement started out 20 years ago with some notion of standards-based reform. It identified the goals for student learning, developed curriculum and assessment to measure those goals, created support for teachers to learn how to teach to those goals and then put resources in place to enable people to accomplish that vision.

What we ended up with instead was "No Child Left Behind"*, which was testing without much investing in an equitable system and it was focused on punishments rather than capacity-building. That approach to accountability has been problematic. In the last presidential election, all of the candidates for president as they went around the country got earfuls not only from educators but from parents and community members

about their dissatisfaction with that approach to schooling.

It resulted in a narrowing of the curriculum not only to just the subject areas tested — in our case reading and maths — but to the format in which the tests are delivered, which is multiple-choice testing. Kids are spending hours and hours and weeks and weeks of their schooling learning to pick the best answer out of five, when they should be reading literature, writing essays, engaging in research and so on, things that are beginning to disappear in the United States, particularly from low-income schools.

What we have basically learnt is that you can't flog people into excellence. You can apply more and more sanctions and more and more punishments but at the end of the day you've got to build the capacity in schools for people to be able to offer an education and that education has to be focused on what you need to be able to do in the real world. No Child Left Behind is currently being debated for re-authorisation for a page turn. I think there is a common understanding in the United States that there have to be major changes made in the way that we conceptualise accountability. There is also a very big push from civil rights groups and others who represent low-income children and communities for the resource investments that need to accompany the expectations for improved outcomes.

JG: And that didn't happen when No Child Left Behind was introduced; the resources weren't there?

LDH: There was some money put into the federal law at that time and that was noticeable, but the federal budget is only 10% of the education budget in the United States. The rest of the money is so inequitably distributed, with very big differentials between schools serving rich kids and schools serving poor kids. That little bit of investment was swamped by the rest of the inequalities and it has since disappeared. So now we are looking at a much more modest federal investment, much heightened expectations for student learning and little capacity in the system to achieve those expectations in the highest needs schools.

JG: Has the US performance in international testing such as PISA created any accountability issues?

LDH: The United States does relatively poorly in PISA. But if you look at white students and more affluent students, they are doing well. They score well above the OECD average. African American and Latino kids, who are increasingly in schools of concentrated poverty and segregated settings with much fewer resources, are doing so much less well that the average of all kids is brought down. The fundamental issue of that inequality cannot be corrected simply by telling schools

that they will get punished if they don't get their scores up.

JG: What would be the features of a good accountability system?

LDH: We were actually en route to a pretty thoughtful accountability system in the 1990s, before No Child Left Behind. There was an effort to articulate more thoughtful expectations for curriculum and for student learning. Many states developed new assessment systems that were performance-oriented and included many authentic opportunities for demonstrating learning. A number of places actually put more resources in and equalised their spending to a substantial extent, sometimes because of court cases and sometimes because of enlightened leadership.

There was a huge set of investments in upgrading teacher and leadership training and investing in professional development. There was public reporting of results, and expectations for looking at how schools were doing and how kids were doing — the data was seen as important. But the model was to use the data and then to figure out where to make other investments, where to build capacity, how to use information for informed and enlightened investments and for continual improvement of the system. There was a lot of research going on about what was working and what wasn't working. The

National Education Goals panel was working in states that were making progress. They studied what these states were doing, for example with new teacher mentor programs and new professional development strategies. The data which came back was used to inform continual improvement.

That's a form of accountability that takes a holistic approach to how you inform and educate a system and how you focus on not just the learning of individual students or individual teachers or the progress of individual schools, but also the expectations for districts about how to behave in more productive ways and for states to behave in more productive ways. In some ways it's like what the Finns call "intelligent accountability".

JG: And Finland does really well, certainly above Australia, in all of the international assessment programs.

LDH: The Finns are an interesting case in point. They don't do external testing except for some sample assessments at two grade levels; but they do a lot of evaluation. They are always evaluating and researching everything — individual classrooms, school evaluations, system evaluations — and using an evaluation culture to continually examine what's working and what's not working as part of continual reform. I think that in our context we were building up more widely available data about

student learning; and this was productive. We hadn't narrowed the curriculum; it was in balance.

Where we went wrong was, rather than using information to build greater capacity and greater learning in the system, we used data primarily to mechanically apply a set of rewards, punishments and sanctions. Basically that model says that people are motivated only by carrots and sticks and that everyone knows what they need to know and that there are no capacity problems in the system. That's really the path that took accountability from what was a productive approach to one that has been increasingly unproductive. We now label more than 80% of our public schools as failing under No Child Left Behind. It has become a mockery. This was completely predictable when it was enacted but it has had to play itself out for this number of years before people have been able to be clear about the need for change.

The other thing that has happened is the enormous exclusion of students from school. While we have driven scores up, we are also graduating fewer students than we were. We are probably one of the few nations in the world that has a declining graduation rate, which is pretty low to begin with, only about 70–75%, so we keep our scores up by getting rid of the kids who score poorly. But that doesn't in fact help the society.

JG: They don't go to work either do they?

LDH: No, they go to prison.

JG: Conservative forces in the media in Australia have been pushing this notion of the teacher being in some way the problem with schools and if only you had some form of competitive incentive for teachers to do better, for example if they were competing against each other for bonuses, things would improve. Unfortunately this has also become a mantra used by certain politicians.

Victoria, through an agreement with our federal government, is presently trialling forms of performance pay with teachers and schools competing against each other for bonuses. The Federal Government is also proposing to introduce a national performance pay system. Do you think performance pay makes teachers more effective, ie produces better outcomes for students? Are there any forms of performance pay which do work?

LDH: Forms of compensation that work are those that incentivise teachers to develop greater knowledge, skills and capacities and give them recognition for doing that. They may also recognise teachers for taking on responsibilities for sharing their expertise with other teachers. They drive more investment in the system and we have got some evidence that they can be salutary. Teachers may take on additional qualifications or degrees, for example taking on

a second certification of special education, so they can better meet the needs of students, or bilingual education for meeting the needs of immigrants, or they become national board-certified where they're demonstrating their capacity in a performance-based system that also helps them to become better at their work. Those are built into salary models and they become the base pay of teachers. We have some experience that teachers do get more skilful in their work if they are rewarded well for sharing that expertise with others as master teachers or mentor teachers. There are some very interesting cases of these approaches in the US.

More recently there has been a resurgence of an old idea which has actually come and gone many times since the 1850s. About every 30 years we get another round of merit pay discussion. It came and went in the 1850s, in the 1880s, in the 1920s, in the 1950s, in the 1980s and we are back at it again. This idea that if you just pay teachers some bonuses for either getting a better rating, or now we're talking about their kids getting better test scores, that those individual bonuses will somehow motivate them to try harder and do better. That approach has a much more chequered history and really no evidence of useful outcomes.

The whole country of Portugal did something like that recently and there was an academic study that came out that showed that the part of the country that put the most

intense emphasis on test-based pay for teachers actually reduced their test results relative to the part of the country where they did not emphasise that approach to performance pay.

JG: What have been the effects on teachers and schools of these types of merit-based pay schemes in the US?

LDH: What we are finding is two things. One is that they are not particularly focused on helping people learn how to do a better job of teaching. Secondly, they create competitiveness inside the school, encouraging teachers not to work collaboratively and collectively with each other. This tends to reduce the amount of sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise in the school rather than to enhance it. We have had two very recent studies, just reported in the past six months, that have found that these bonus-based pay systems have not resulted in gains in achievement in the districts where they were tried and where they were studied.

Teachers tend to be motivated by whether they are doing a better job with their kids, and by having good colleagues that they can work productively with to become more efficacious, and that's the kind of driver for learning and motivation. You need to pay attention to what is known about what enables teachers to be more effective if you want to provide real incentives that actually produce the

behaviours you hope to produce. Fake incentives are incentives that somebody thinks might actually produce better behaviours but actually end up not doing so. You'd think that after a 100 years of trying these kinds of scheme and watching them fail we might have learnt something, but apparently we have not.

- * The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) requires all government-run schools receiving federal funding to administer a statewide standardised test annually to all students. The students' scores are used to determine whether the school has taught the students well. If the school's results are repeatedly poor, then a series of steps are taken to improve the school — ranging from labelling the school as "in need of improvement" to the wholesale replacement of staff and school closure.

NEXT ISSUE

In the second part of this interview Linda Darling-Hammond discusses teacher education, Teach for America and professional standards.

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contributors

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LYNDSAY CONNORS is Honorary Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Sydney and a Member of the Order of Australia, awarded in 2006 for services to education policy at state and national levels. In 2000, she chaired the Victorian Government's Review of Public Education. She has been a forthright advocate for public schooling and for the equal entitlement of all Australians to high quality education, free from barriers arising from their social background or sex. She has published a variety of reports and articles, jointly and individually, on schooling and on the teaching profession.

LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND is Charles E Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University and a former president of the American Educational Research Association and member of the National Academy of Education. From 1994–2001, she was executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, whose 1996 report, *What Matters Most*, led to sweeping policy changes in teaching and teacher education. In 2006, the report was named as one of the most influential affecting US education and Dr Darling-Hammond as one of the decade's

10 most influential people in education. She led President Barack Obama's education policy transition team.

JOHN GRAHAM is a research officer at the AEU Victorian branch, with responsibility for researching curriculum and professional developments in education and training. He has written extensively about curriculum change, teachers and teaching as a profession, developments in education at an institutional, state and federal level, and on other matters from funding to organisational review. John has been a teacher in Victorian government secondary schools, a researcher and writer for a national equity program, and a project manager and policy developer for the Department of Education.

LAWRENCE INGVARSON began his career as a science and mathematics teacher, teaching in WA, Scotland and England before undertaking further studies at the University of London. He has held academic positions at the University of Stirling in Scotland, Monash University and the Australian Council for Educational Research. He is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators and a recipient of a Distinguished Service Award from the Australian Science Teachers Association (2001).

DIANE MAYER is Head of the School of Education at Deakin University. She worked as a school teacher for 13 years and has been an academic for more than 20 years working in Australian and US universities. Professor Mayer's current research and scholarship focus on the policy and practice of teacher education, examining issues associated with the professionalism of teaching and what that means for teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning.

BARBARA PRESTON is an independent researcher specialising in analysis of the labour markets of school teachers and registered nurses, professional regulation and education, and investigating diverse education policy matters. She worked as a research officer for the Victorian and federal teacher unions for a decade before moving to Canberra in 1991. She has also carried out research into the systematic bias of ICSEA and similar area-based measures of socio-economic status. For a copy of her funding submission, email barbara.preston@netspeed.com.au.

ALAN REID is Professor of Education at the University of South Australia. He is involved in a range of national and state professional organisations. His research interests include educational policy, curriculum change, social justice and education, citizenship education and the history and politics of public education. He is also involved in policy development at the state and national levels.

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The following back issues are still available, free to AEU members from aeunews@aeuvic.asn.au. Non-members and institutions can order them for \$10 each using the form overleaf. These and other issues can be found online at www.aeuvic.asn.au/pv.

PV8.2: Partnerships with Parents: This edition of Professional Voice examines the relationship between schools and families - the ways and reasons why parents and carers are involved in schools and their role in teaching and learning.

PV 8.1: The Naplan Debate: The genesis of the Winter 2010 edition was a national symposium held in Sydney. Its title was "Advice for Ministers and ACARA on NAPLAN, the use of student data, My School and league tables". Contributors include Alan Reid, Margaret Wu, Allan Luke and Brian Caldwell.

PV 7.3: New Challenges for Leadership: A look at the shifting ground of leadership, including Andy Hargreaves on the "Fourth Way", John West-Burnham on thinking beyond the school gates and Bill Mulford on tapping our most experienced leaders.

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PV 6.2: Early years education: The second part of our three-issue survey looks at developments including the new early years framework, effective literacy programs and the national reform agenda, plus analyses of early intervention and phonics programs.

PV 6.1: Post-compulsory education: The first of three issues on the phases of education takes on developments in TAFE, higher education, and VET, including Simon Marginson on Howard's funding legacy for higher education; Alan Reid on the need to re-vision post-compulsory education; and Pat Forward on privatisation in TAFE.

PV 4.3: Education & Social Action: Our focus on equity includes case studies from schools and programs around Victoria, an analysis of paternalism in Koorie education initiatives, links between Australian and East Timorese schools and a New Zealand adult education program. Contributors include US academic Bob Peterson and Deakin University Institute of Koorie Education.

PV 4.1: Teacher quality and quality teaching: Includes Andy Hargreaves on teaching in the knowledge society, and the implications for schools of globalisation; Leonie Rowan and Chris Bigum on the challenges of measuring quality in teaching and education; and Lyndsay Connors on the part that class still plays in education.



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PV 3.3: Leadership: *PV's* look at developments in school leadership includes Alan Reid on the need for school leaders to move beyond managing by embracing research and inquiry; Roma Burgess on the challenges facing women in becoming leaders; and collaborations between schools in the UK.

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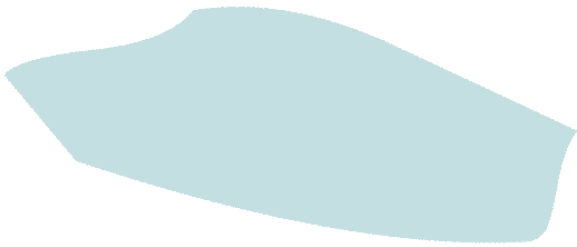
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