



## ***Australian Education Union - Federal Office***

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### **Parents Support Ban on League Tables**

Almost two thirds of parents with children at school want the Federal Government to pass new laws preventing the creation of damaging league tables that rank schools based on raw test scores, a new national poll has found.

Australian Education Union Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said 63 per cent of parents with school age children said the government should pass laws and 30 per cent said they should not. A clear majority of all respondents in the telephone poll of 1,000 people also supported new laws (59 per cent in favour, 34 per cent against).

"Parents understand that naming and shaming schools in league tables is damaging to students and school communities and therefore must be prevented," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"Already people can access a wealth of information about school performance. What must be stopped is the misuse of national test scores to publicly rank schools in league tables.

"The Education Minister Julia Gillard has an obligation to protect students and school communities from the harm that is caused by damaging league tables.

"Parents, teachers, principals and educational experts all oppose league tables and want national laws that will prevent their creation.

"League tables are the modern equivalent of the dunce cap for schools. Instead of lifting up struggling schools it pushes them down.

"There is no evidence that league tables improve academic performance. The focus in schools becomes test results not the best education for students. Teachers are put under more pressure to teach to the test, limiting time for other subjects outside the tested ones and ensuring students receive a less well-rounded education.

"The best way to improve academic performance is to invest more in our teachers and more in our schools.

"Governments have the information they need to identify which schools are under-resourced and need assistance. Allowing schools to be named and shamed will only make the job of helping struggling schools harder."

The poll, conducted by Labor's pollster UMR between August 28 and 31, also found:

- Investing more in teachers to ensure we can recruit and retain the best people in schools was rated as the highest priority for the Federal Government in education (93 per cent said it should be a top priority).
  - 62 per cent of people said publishing more information online comparing schools should not be a top priority.
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- The most convincing argument against league tables was that in schools that are lowly ranked there can be a huge loss of confidence among students and teachers and it was hard to throw off the label of being a poor school (83 per cent found it a convincing argument).
- The second most convincing argument was that the Federal Government could already identify schools that were struggling and put more resources into them without needing them to be named and shamed (80 per cent found it a convincing argument).
- 72 per cent of people said data on school performance from the Federal Government's planned new website should not be able to be reproduced in any form without the government's express permission.

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