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Parents, Teachers and Principals Call for Action on School League Tables

Parents, teachers and principals have united in a call for the Federal Government to take action to prevent the creation and publication of misleading and damaging school league tables.

The call is contained in a joint letter to the Education Minister Julia Gillard from the Australian Education Union, the Independent Education Union, the Australian Council of State School Organisations, the Australian Parents Council, the Australian Government Primary Principals Association and the Australian Secondary Principals Association.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said the fact that all the organisations had signed the letter indicated the depth of concern about the possible misuse of school test data that the Federal Government plans to post online within months.

“Parents, teachers and principals are united in their view that the Federal Government must take action to prevent the naming and shaming of schools in league tables,” Mr Gavrielatos said.

“The minister cannot simply say she opposes league tables and then do nothing to prevent them being created from the data she supplies.

“Ranking schools in league tables has profound negative consequences for students, teachers and parents. Those schools that do not achieve high scores and are unfairly dubbed as “failing” or the “worst schools” are often those in the most disadvantaged areas.

“Unfairly branding schools as failing does immense damage to the confidence and self-esteem of students, undermines the relationship of trust between teachers and parents and makes teaching and learning much more difficult.”

“The letter points out that the NAPLAN test data the Government will post on its new website was never designed to measure school performance and is not accurate enough to do so.

“It also points out that the publication of school comparisons and rankings is not necessary to identify schools in need of additional support with that information already available.

“The letter calls for Ms Gillard to reveal the conclusive evidence that the Government used to decide that the publication of comparative school data would assist rather than impair education.

“It also calls for her to outline what steps she will take to ensure simplistic league tables will not be created and published.”

Media: A copy of the letter is available at www.aeufederal.org.au/LT/LTlet171109.pdf

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