



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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Why Won't Julia Gillard Protect Students?

The Australian Education Union today called on Education Minister Julia Gillard to act after newspapers in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne used information from the My School website to publish damaging and misleading league tables.

AEU federal president Angelo Gavrielatos said the parents, principals and teachers had repeatedly warned that league tables would be created from the My School data.

"Julia Gillard says league tables 'create a misleading picture and make the job of principals and teachers that much harder' and yet she has done nothing to protect students and school communities from them," he said.

"We call on her again to act to stop the misuse of NAPLAN data to name and shame schools and students.

"It is not good enough to stand by and watch while schools are named and shamed and pretend that there is nothing that can be done.

"It is a sad day for education in Australia. Without action we are headed down the path of England and the United States where rankings and league tables have had a profound negative impact on education and school communities.

"League tables damage students and school communities. Branding schools as the worst in the state or failing on the basis of inaccurate data from snapshot tests gives them a reputation they don't deserve and makes it harder to deliver the education children in these schools desperately need.

"An overwhelming majority of parents with school age children say they want them banned.

"The minister has not only refused to listen to parents, principals and teachers she has provided the media with the information to create league tables.

"Teachers will not sit by and let students and school communities be damaged by league tables. If the minister won't act to protect students, teachers will."

"The national tests were never designed to be used to compare schools and are too inaccurate to do so.

"Many of the lowly ranked schools in these league tables are in small communities and have few students. Their results vary hugely between years because of the small number of students sitting the tests.

“The like school comparisons on the My School website show how fatally flawed the methodology used by the Federal Government is.

“One of the wealthiest schools in Australia, The Kings School is compared with Concord West Public School in Sydney and a public school in the small village of Gundaroo near Canberra.

“Geelong Grammar is compared with tiny public schools like Kangaroo Ground and Arthurs Creeks in Victoria.

“Holroyd High in Sydney’s west is compared with a school on the Cocos Islands. The elite Trinity Grammar school in Sydney is compared with Bulli High near Wollongong.

“The Dargo Public School in Victoria, which had one student last year, is compared with Brighton Grammar, Melbourne Girls Grammar and Camberwell Grammar.”

Further information:

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