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POLICY LESSONS

In concluding, this section now seeks to draw out the key points and lessons from the Australian experience for the benefit of member countries, particularly those who may be in similar federal-state contexts:

- The road to My School commenced and was secured by agreement at the highest levels of government in the Australian Government (the Prime Minister) and the states and territories (the Premiers and Chief Ministers). Determining the details for the reporting agenda was then delegated to the education Ministers.
- The significant political task can be seen by considering that each of the nine governments had to gain internal agreement before agreement could be reached by COAG.
- A significant injection of additional funds by the Australian Government at the same time as giving the states and territories more flexibility to use funding as they saw fit in return for outcomes and greater levels of reporting.
- Strong ministerial leadership by both the then Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister in the face of opposition gradually achieved complete agreement by all governments. Once agreement was reached with the other ministers, they provided public support for the initiative.
- At the same time, the Australian Government, despite not owning or running schools, maintained its momentum in advocating to the community about their rights to have public information about the performance of schools.
- Particularly given the complexities of operating in a federal-state system, long lead times were necessary with the outcome of My School worked towards over a number of years.
- Marshalling independent expertise in both the development of NAPLAN and the development of indicators for school-level reporting added weight and authority to government policy directions.
- Establishing an independent authority allowed the states and territories a level of comfort they would not otherwise have felt in providing their data for national access.

MY SCHOOL UNDERPINS OTHER SCHOOL REFORMS

For the first time in Australia's history, the policy challenge of delivering equitable funding to schools irrespective of the sector they are in can be informed by comprehensive national data on each school that not only provides a rich dataset for policy makers, but also places the same data into the hands of the public.

A number of key policy reforms can now be informed by this new data, including a major review of Australian Government funding that is underway and efforts to implement in schools the kinds of governance arrangements and teaching practices that international analysis like that from PISA shows make a difference including school autonomy and school evaluation practices.

In August 2010, the Prime Minister announced a suite of further school reform initiatives. School Reform - Making Every School a Great School announced nine reform programmes, some of which build on the new national school data and My School.

The key initiatives in this package that rest in some way on My School are:

- Rewards for Great Teachers - initiative will recognise and reward quality teachers in Australia through a reward payment scheme linked to the National Professional Standards for Teachers. Teachers who become certified at the highest levels of the Standards will be rewarded with a one-off payment to acknowledge their skills and commitment in achieving this level of certification. The first reward payments will be made in 2014.
- Online diagnostic tools - progressively from 2011, will provide access to tools that enable individualised assessments, provide feedback on areas for development, and link to learning activities tailored to each student's needs. Tools will be progressively linked to the national curriculum and national assessment programmes.
- Reward for school improvement - reward payments to individual schools who show the most improvement in a range of areas.



References

REPORTING AND COMPARING SCHOOL PERFORMANCES

Masters, G. N., G. Rowley, J. Ainley, and S. T. Khoo. (2008), *Reporting and Comparing School Performances, Assessment and Reporting Projects*.

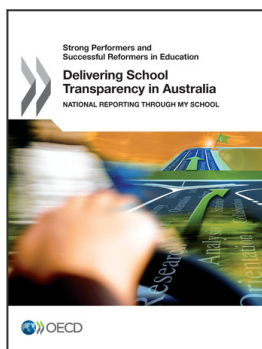
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Abstract: This report provides advice on the collection and reporting of information about the performances of Australian schools. The focus is on the collection of nationally comparable data. Two purposes are envisaged: use by education authorities and governments to monitor school performances and, in particular, to identify schools that are performing unusually well or unusually poorly given their circumstances; and use by parents/caregivers and the public to make informed judgements about, and meaningful comparisons of, schools and their offerings. Our advice is based on a review of recent Australian and international research and experience in reporting on the performances of schools. This is an area of educational practice in which there have been many recent developments, much debate and a growing body of relevant research.

REPORT ON THE GENERATION OF THE 2010 INDEX OF COMMUNITY SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE (ICSEA)

Barnes, G. (2010), *Report on the Generation of the 2010 Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)*, ACARA Technical Paper. www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/2010_Index_of_Community_Socio-Educational_Advantage_Generation_Report.pdf

Abstract: At the request of Ministers of Education, ACARA investigated the possibility of using student-level data to compute ICSEA as opposed to indirect census collection district data. The modelling indicated that using direct student-level parent occupation and education data submitted as part of NAPLAN testing, it is possible to obtain a more accurate measure of SES in most cases.



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