



Public submission made to the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools

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Summary

The determinants of success lie not merely in funding, plant and equipment, or standards. Simple solutions involving all stakeholders, including children themselves, could be the key. It is vital not to add more administrative, legislative and policy demands on already-burdened education professionals but to look at how the burden can be shared across all sectors of society. Ultimately, a culture that shifts away from individualism and values families and communities, the foundation of a stable society, needs to be rebuilt. And, more importantly, educating parents and other stakeholders about the factors for success and empowering them to attain those factors, is what will help our children. Finally, a culture that values education and academic success, without the pressure on parents, children and teachers, needs to be created, where teachers can be respected and empowered to do their jobs in partnership with parents.

Main submission

1. What capabilities, skills and knowledge should students learn - social and emotional skills
2. How should school quality and educational success be measured - not results but also quality of life outcomes, eg: behaviour, quality of work, self-motivation, ability to problem-solve individually and collaborate with others, psychological and emotional health, are they receiving adequate career guidance
3. How could schools funding be used more effectively and efficiently - Shift emphasis from "hardware" such as plant and equipment; focus on human resources to support special needs - get parents and community involved more.
4. Are there any new or emerging areas for action which could lead to large gains in student improvement that need further development or testing? -

We should re-evaluate school starting age. Research from developed nations such as the US and UK shows that delaying school starting age until children are more able to self-govern is a predictor of schooling success. In QLD this is why many parents choose to delay their child's school starting. Parents should be given greater flexibility in this.

5. Are there barriers to implementing these improvements? - Parents and the community require greater levels of support such as parenting seminars, educating about the importance of home reading, and encouraging them to spend more quality time with their children. This would ensure that children's emotional needs are met; thus minimising on challenging behaviour in school which is often an attention-getting device for children. Greater connectedness between a child and his family and community also enables him to thrive and better understand his role in society. Children need to be taught to look beyond self and look for meaningful ways to connect and give to society. This builds a more gracious and compassionate nation.