

As a parent I am extremely intrigued as to why the government think that parents, on the whole, are incapable of determining whether the school that their children attend or the teacher their child has is either good or bad.

I am even more intrigued that the government persists with the completely ridiculous notion that all families have a choice about education. In an ideal world it would be nice to believe this but unfortunately – this is not a reality.

Some families can barely afford to put food on the table in this country yet the government would like to believe that all Australians have a choice about the schools they send their children to. We are fortunate to live in an area that has an excellent public school within walking distance. Regardless of the NapLan outcomes of that school it is where our children do and will go.

I know the outcomes of the students at our local school in terms of the NapLan results. They are not the best and they are not the worst. I also know what the NapLan results do not take into account. They do not take into account the very essence of what is important to me as a parent. They do not measure the effort and commitment of the teachers my children have, nor the level of resourcing of the school, nor the complexities of the students at the school including cultural and language backgrounds. The tests do not consider the size of my children's classes compared to the lovely private school down the road. They do not take into account the lack of support for teachers in the classroom, in particular those teachers that are catering for the variety of intellectual and physical disabilities of the students that have been routinely turned away from the lovely private school down the road.

If the government wants to measure the success of individual schools, they need to first have a control base from which to work. Any successful science experiment begins with an initial control group. It is insulting for this government to promote a system that compares and labels schools that could not be further apart when it comes to basic facilities and resources. When my children get a teacher for every 16 students, facilities and resources that are state of the art, school support officers in every classroom and teachers with adequate planning and preparation time then I will expect and demand the same results as the elite private schools.

Unfortunately this government does not want a truly genuine comparative system that actually bases the comparison on useful data. Instead, they prefer to base their comparisons on totally irrelevant local community data, which is completely useless for comparing schools with schools. Give us a more realistic picture of the actual schools including Aboriginal and ESL enrolments, special needs students, class sizes, physical resources and school income and wealth and then I might be able to compare apples with apples.

Better still, why doesn't the government give a little less to the rich elite schools with obviously influential lobby groups; and a little more to the schools that need it the most – the PUBLIC SCHOOLS! Answer – the politicians send their children to the private, elite, and rich schools so they are never going to even up the balance when it comes to funding and resources. It's called the haves and the have-nots!