

Dear Mr. Carter,

RE: EXTERNAL TESTING

This is a great improvement to the Australian Education system. When external testing was introduced here in Victoria, there was an overnight improvement in the attention paid to literacy and numeracy.

There may be high-achieving schools that claim they don't need it, but

- it is wise to maintain a check and provide external feedback to any school, and
- the children in low-achieving schools will benefit from the system.

It is of course essential that the RESULTS of the external assessment always go HOME to the parents. Otherwise, the pressure will be off, and it will be a waste of time.

RE: CURRICULUM

I support the national curriculum initiative. I hope that

- PRIMARY ENGLISH includes phonics, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- SECONDARY ENGLISH restores a love of great literature. Scouring works just for examples of sexism, racism and classism is a blatant indoctrination exercise.
- HISTORY returns to a factual narrative, so that the next generation has some idea of what may be in store for their future. If you don't teach them what went wrong before, they will merely repeat the same mistakes.
- The national curriculum does not need to be EXHAUSTIVE. Have a core curriculum. And let schools ADD items of curriculum according to their values.

RE: SCHOOL FUNDING

The SES model is the fairest we've ever had. It is the first system that has ever assessed family need. But there is still a long way to go. The SES formula is only applied to independent schools. The system still discriminates between state-run and other schools. Even millionaires qualify for 100% funding if they use state schools.

And even the poorest Australian only qualifies for 70% funding if they use a non-state school. (The richest may qualify for as little as 13.5%)

RE: THE PRIVATE CONTRIBUTION DISCLOSURE CLAUSE

The school funding bill has a new clause that all schools (except state-run schools) shall have to reveal to the government whatever funds they may receive by way of donations or fundraising, and that these figures may be published. It is hard to see what this information could be used for, except to reduce funding to such schools.

This would have bad effects on society. The community would be less willing to support their schools. This would increase the burden on the taxpayer. And it would suppress the natural inclination of families to be involved with their children's needs.

Given that we are already funding people according to their SES, why would we then want to financially punish those people who choose to devote more of their income to children's education? We do not consider punishing people for other personal spending choices – except vices and luxury cars!

RE : THE NON-FINANCIAL AUDIT

Did I hear rightly when listening to parliament that the Minister will be able to cut off funding to a school if it does not pass A NON-FINANCIAL AUDIT? If you had any idea what hostile inspections non-govt schools are subject to, you would understand why we find this idea terrifying.

You must know that State education departments are controlled by very political senior staff, who have hostile feelings towards the values of parent bodies of various non-govt schools. There is no rule of law if you let this clause through. It will be ideological bullying.

Yours,

Philip O'Carroll

Co-Founder, Fitzroy Community School