

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION
2010 ANNUAL FEDERAL CONFERENCE:
19 JANUARY 2010

DECISION: LEAGUE TABLES

Given the irrevocable damage to the provision of quality education as a result of the narrowing of curriculum and a deepening inequality and segregation of schooling, the creation and publication of league tables represents one of the greatest challenges to the profession in the history of education in Australia. The creation and publication of league tables has united the profession in a way not seen before in Australia.

Noting, despite their often stated opposition to league tables and the simplistic ranking and comparison of schools, the refusal of governments to take action to prevent the further creation and publication of league tables.

Recognising that league tables and other forms of simplistic ranking and comparisons of schools are

- Misleading: Publicly ranking schools based on students' results in mass standardized tests presents an invalid and misleading picture of school performance.
- Inaccurate: The NAPLAN national tests were never designed to be used to compare schools. Margins of error and distortions created by student attendance / absence accentuate the inaccuracy.
- Damaging: Schools where students do not do well in mass standardized tests will be unfairly branded as 'failing' schools.
- Demoralising: It takes schools many years to throw off the tag of a 'failing school' and it is demoralising for students, teachers and parents. It makes it much harder for those schools to improve the performance of their students.
- Unnecessary: Politicians don't need schools to be publicly ranked to know which ones need help and more resources. Parents can already access relevant information on school performance by directly contacting schools.

Given our ethical and professional responsibility to our students and broader school communities, the Federal Conference of the AEU resolves that

- the profession cannot and will not cooperate in the implementation of NAPLAN unless satisfactory measures are introduced to stop the further creation and publication of league tables.
- the AEU together with its Branches and Associated Bodies will allocate its full resources to
 - mobilize and organize the profession in support of this campaign, and
 - provide the necessary information to parents and the broader community about the
 - critical importance of stopping the further creation and publication of league tables. The AEU will continue to work closely with the parent movement to achieve this.

A special meeting of the Federal executive will be convened on April 12 2010 to assess the extent to which the government may have heeded the concerns and calls of parents, teachers and principals to introduce appropriate measures to stop league tables.