



## ***Australian Education Union - Federal Office***

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### **Students Must Be Protected From League Tables**

The Australian Education Union said today it was happy to discuss improvements to the My School website with the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the need for a ban on league tables.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said teachers would engage in any consultative process around the improvement of the website.

“We would welcome a process that allows the profession to be consulted on the My School website. To date consultation with the profession has been totally inadequate,” Mr Gavrielatos said.

“Giving more information to parents and engaging them more in the education of their children is a laudable objective.

“But it must be done in a way that is not damaging to students and school communities.

“The creation and publication of damaging league tables remains our primary concern.

“The first thing we would say to Mr Rudd is to ensure that information published on the My School website cannot be used to create damaging league tables that rank schools on the aggregated test scores of individual students.

“Teachers, parents and principals warned the Federal Government that this would happen and it has. Newspapers in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and the Northern Territory have produced misleading and simplistic league tables.

“Education Minister Julia Gillard has repeatedly said league tables are damaging and make the job of schools and teachers that much harder.

“The union agrees with this and would like to see action taken to ban league tables.

“Ranking schools in league tables is simplistic and misleading and in no way reflects the many successes and achievements of schools that do not have high average scores.

“Naming and shaming schools is damaging for students and school communities and makes the job of educating students harder.

“The profession’s other concerns regarding the My School website centre on the invalid school comparisons that have been produced.

“Elite private schools with selective entry policies are being compared with local public schools – some with school populations of as few as one student.

“Public schools in western Sydney are being compared with schools of the air, in outback areas or those on remote islands.

The website has no information on the total resources available to a school. Throughout the course of last year Julia Gillard said repeatedly that this was vitally important information.

“There are also problems with the accuracy of the data being used to compare schools. The fine print of the website shows the scores of schools with small grades are wildly inaccurate and yet they are being ranked and judged next to schools with much larger populations.

“NAPLAN scores in some small schools move by 80 points or more in a year because of the different groups of students.

“Parents need to treat these results with extreme caution and understand that the NAPLAN tests were never designed to be used to rank and compare schools.

“In most states year 7 students are tested after only three months in high school. How can that be an accurate guide to the performance of a high school?”

Further information:

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