



# NEWS IN BRIEF

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The Federation of  
Parents and Friends  
Associations of  
Catholic Schools Qld

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## PARENTS RESPOND TO THE MASTERS REVIEW

After discussion of the Queensland Education Performance Review (QEPR) at the recent State Committee meeting, the Federation made its submission on the recommendations by Professor Geoff Masters in the review. Whilst the Federation was supportive of a number of the recommendations including additional professional development for teachers, it also had a number of concerns including the funding of the proposed initiatives and the omission of parents as significant partners in the reform process.

A short summary of the Federation's recommendations follows:

- The Federation believes that all teachers who graduate from a pre service training course should have the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and science and that it is the responsibility of the tertiary institutions to ensure that these skills are taught and examined during the course.
- The present testing regime is not exclusively related to the primary sector and the Federation would expect that all teachers, whether primary or secondary trained, would be required to reach an acceptable standard in oral and written literacy before graduation.
- The Federation is not supportive of introducing another test to an already overloaded testing system if it becomes another 'external' test. It should be the responsibility of the classroom teacher to be able to accurately assess and report on all subjects in the curriculum. Not all children progress at the same rate and the Federation would question the effectiveness of age related tests.
- Parents expect that teachers are able to continually assess their students and, in partnership with them, improve the performance of the student where it is below the required standard and to extend the learning of those students who can achieve at an advanced competency level. Basically parents wish to know at what level their student is operating and how they can assist in improving performance.
- The Federation believes that the establishment of authentic partnerships between the school and the home will have a much greater affect on performance than the introduction of more testing.
- The Federation has concerns with the cost of such initiatives if they are to be borne by the sector with no additional financial assistance.
- Parents wish to be engaged at all levels of responsibility for the education of their students for it is with them that the responsibility for their children's, and ultimately the nation's, future rests.



Prof Geoff Masters

The complete submission can be accessed on the Federation's website at: [www.pandf.org.au](http://www.pandf.org.au) and school communities are invited to discuss the implications of the recommendations for parents, teachers and students.

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### Issues On The Boil

- **Future Federal Government Funding Policy**
- **National Curriculum**
- **National testing**
- **Early Years' education**



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS JOIN WITH ST VINNIES IN ACTS OF KINDNESS

Queensland's Catholic schools are being encouraged to partner with their local St Vincent de Paul Society to support Queenslanders in need as part of Catholic Education Week (26 July-1 August) and the Sesquicentenary (150 years) celebrations this year. School communities are encouraged to participate in some act of kindness to highlight the values of social justice and compassion that are integral to their ethos. In association with the St Vincent de Paul Society's annual Winter Appeal, schools are being urged to coordinate a collection of basic requirements such as emergency money, personal hygiene products and non-perishable foods to assist people in their local communities. The collection will be part of the Act of Kindness activity that has become central to Catholic Education Week celebrations in recent years.

"Catholic schools have been contributing to the Queensland community since 1845 and continue to do wonderful work in the area of social justice in many different ways," Queensland Catholic Education Commission Executive Director, Mike Byrne said. "In 2009, marking the 150th year of both our Church and State, it seems fitting that Catholic school communities should make a united effort to support their fellow Queenslanders in need."



State President of the St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland, John Campbell, said Catholic schools throughout Queensland had loyally supported the good works of St Vincent de Paul since its establishment in Queensland since 1894.

## COMING EVENTS

June 21	Townsville Diocesan P&F Council Meeting
June 25	Brisbane Archdiocesan P&F Council /BCE Leadership Team Meeting
July 26	Catholic Education Week 2009
-Aug 1	Brisbane Archdiocesan P&F Council Annual President's Dinner
July 30	Cairns Diocesan P&F Council Meeting (St Michael's Gordonvale)
Aug 2	Rockhampton Diocesan P&F Council Meeting (Our Lady's Springsure)
Aug 8	Brisbane Archdiocesan P&F Council Meeting
Aug 20	Townsville Diocesan P&F Council Meeting
Aug 22	P&F State Committee Meeting (Cairns)
Aug 29-Aug 30	

## ACT OF KINDNESS cont ....

"We welcome this wonderful partnership with Catholic Education, and would hope that the spirit of generosity in our younger generations make the initiative a great success," Mr Campbell said.

As a culmination to the project, schools are encouraged to coordinate with other Catholic schools in their district to deliver items collected to their local St Vincent de Paul Society branch on the Friday of Catholic Education Week .... Friday July 31.

More detailed information about the state-wide Act of Kindness can be found on the Catholic Education Week website at: [www.catholiceducationweek.com.au](http://www.catholiceducationweek.com.au) or the St Vincent de Paul Society Website at: [www.vinnies.org.au/act-of-kindness-qld](http://www.vinnies.org.au/act-of-kindness-qld)



## JOINT PARENT COMMITTEE (QJPC) MEETS MINISTER

The Joint Parent Committee which is composed of the peak bodies of parents representing state, Catholic and Independent schools and Isolated Children met with the new Minister for Education and Training, Mr Geoff Wilson on 4 June.

The topics discussed included the recent Masters review of student test performance, the national curriculum, reporting and assessment, drug testing in schools and cyberbullying.

The Minister was appreciative of the work done by the parent groups and the meeting was the first of a regular series of discussions with him.

## IF I HAD MY CHILD TO RAISE AGAIN

*If I had my child to raise all over again,  
I'd build self esteem first, and the house later.  
I'd finger paint more, and point the finger less.  
I would do less correcting and more connecting.  
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.  
I would care to know less, and know to care more.  
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.  
I'd stop playing serious and seriously play.  
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.  
I'd do more hugging and less tugging.  
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.  
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.  
I'd model less about the love of power, and more about the power of love.*

Diane Loomans



## TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN VALUES

Parents generally choose schools for their children that have a philosophy and a set of values which correlate with their own. Leading parent educator Michael Grose says that in many ways schools are a reflection of their parent community. In Catholic schools, the values of love, peace, hope and reconciliation should predominate.

It is true that children learn what they live and the view of the world that parents present is mirrored by their children. Adolescents will generally question their parents' values and may even challenge them. For them, a way of finding their own voice is by challenging and even rejecting the dominant voice they grew up with.

Children will also pick up the values of their peer group. That's why many parents become upset with the types of friends their children may choose. A mark of maturity is shown when children reject values that some of their peers project. Usually when this occurs they are falling back on the value system that they have learned at home. This places great responsibility on to parents. So what values do you live by? What values do you talk about and develop a vocabulary for at home? What place do specific religious values have in our lives?

Grose identifies five generic values that all parents in a civilized society should demonstrate and develop in children if they are to achieve their best, fit in with others and learn to stand on their own two feet.

**Respect:** When children respect themselves, other people and the environment they have a basic value that will help them achieve and also get on with others

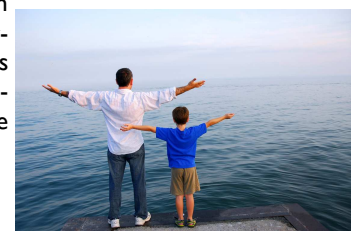
**Independence:** When independence of thought and spirit are valued, children develop a set of problem-solving skills that help them be autonomous.

**Perseverance:** By linking success with effort children learn that hanging in there or working tough pays off.

**Responsibility:** Taking responsibility for behaviour rather than making excuses or shifting blame is the mark of personal leadership. (Lack of responsibility is national problem at present!)

**Self discipline:** Those children who practise impulse control and learn that they can't always do, say or get what they want generally achieve more in the long run. A number of studies indicate that internal locus of control is an essential element for success.

You might start the discussion at your school as to the correlation between the values that are preached and practised at school and in the home.



**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING AUTHORITY (ACARA)  
MEMBERSHIPS ANNOUNCED**

ACARA will be chaired by Professor Barry McGaw, presently the head of the National Curriculum Board (NCB) which has been replaced. The representative from Queensland is Ms Lesley Englert formerly on the staff of Education Queensland. The representative of Catholic Education is Mr Brian Croke, the current CEO of the NSW Catholic Education Commission. The federal government believes that achieving world class education standards requires the close alignment of curriculum, assessment and accountability to set high expectations for all students and to reinforce a focus on improving student outcomes. The government maintains that ACARA will enable that combined focus, including more effective transparency and accountability mechanisms that meet the needs of students, parents, teachers and the broader community.



**PUBLICATION OF SCHOOL TEST DATA**

Many parents would have seen the recent publication of the 2007 state test data in the Courier Mail. Parents understand that external test results are merely one small indicator of the education being received by children and results for individuals and schools will vary from year to year. Children being tested do not learn at the same rate nor are they created equal.

Parents want to know how the child is progressing at school and how they can be of assistance. They recognize that one of the most important ingredients in a child's performance at school is that relationship which develops between the student, the teacher and the parent.

It is of some value to know where their children stand in relation to other children in their age but what is more important is how they perform on learning tasks in the class situation at their ability level and how this information can be used by teachers and the school administration to identify student needs. Parents rely on teachers having the ability to assess the child's daily progress and, with appropriate resources, to adopt methods which will improve performance and have the child achieving to potential. It assumes a strong relationship or partnership between the home and the school.

There has been little consultation with parents on the introduction and extent of national testing. Parents do not see particular value in comparing test results between schools and certainly do not wish to see external testing dominating the school curriculum which has been in evidence in some schools recently.

Catholic schools, like all Queensland schools, publish annual report data, including state and national test results, on their websites.



**ADVICE ON HUMAN SWINE INFLUENZA**

There have been a number of confirmed cases of the H1N1 Influenza A (Human Swine Influenza) virus in the state and two Catholic schools in north Queensland have recently been closed for a week. It is a new flu virus that is infecting people and spreading from person to person in the same way seasonal influenza and other common respiratory infections spread. Human Swine Influenza virus is not spread by food and you cannot get the flu from eating properly handled and prepared pork or pork products.

Being in close contact (e.g. within a metre) with an infected person while they are talking, coughing or sneezing puts you at risk of becoming infected. Virus-containing droplets can land on the surfaces of the mouth, nose and throat of people close by. The virus may also be spread through contact with infectious respiratory secretions on the hands of an infected person or other objects and surfaces.

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of seasonal influenza, including fever and any one of the following: cough, sore throat, runny nose or nasal congestion.

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to:

- Stay home when you are sick
- wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand gel
- wash your hands prior to touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and nose with disposable tissues which should be disposed of immediately
- not share items such as cigarettes, glasses or cups, lipstick, toys or anything which could be contaminated with respiratory secretions
- maintain at least a one metre distance from people who have flu-like symptoms such as coughing or sneezing
- consult your doctor if you have a cough and fever. Follow their instructions, including taking medicine as prescribed.
- telephone beforehand if attending a medical practice or hospital Emergency Department so that they can arrange for you to be seen away from other people.

For further information contact your local doctor, population health unit, ring 13HEALTH (13432584) or visit the Queensland Health Website at: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/swineflu>.

You can also download the Department's [Infection Control Guidelines](#) and visit the Department's Influenza website at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/healthpromotion/influenza.html>



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### STATE COMMITTEE MATTERS

The State Committee met in Brisbane on 24 May before attending the annual joint Parents and Friends Federation – Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) meeting on 25 May. Issues discussed at the joint meeting included funding and finance, parental engagement, communication, student protection and curriculum.

State Committee members from the country dioceses attended a parliamentary function hosted by QCEC at Parliament House on 3 June. The function provided the opportunity for parents to meet their new and re-elected local members of parliament. The function was addressed by the Premier Anna Bligh, the Leader of the Opposition Jean-Paul Langbroek, Archbishop Bathurst and the Executive Director of QCEC, Mike Byrne. Thanks to the Directors of Catholic Education for including the parents in their representation.

The next State Committee meeting will be held in Cairns on the weekend of 29-30 August



### SCHOOLS FIRST AWARDS

Schools First is about bringing together students, teachers, parents and community members, to support each other and help improve student outcomes. With a prize pool of \$5 million every year for three years, Schools First is a national awards program that provides:



- Financial recognition of success in establishing effective school-community partnerships; and
- Financial support to build stronger school-community partnerships.

And it's open to all Australian primary and secondary schools. The awards include up to 60 local awards of \$50,000 each and up to eight state awards of \$100,000 each. One outstanding national award recipient will receive between \$500,000 - \$1 million.

Application Packages (including application forms, guidelines for preparing applications, terms and conditions and other relevant information) will be available from the website at: [www.schoolsfirst.edu.au](http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au) for download.

**Applications open on Wednesday 1st July 2009 at 9.00am, and will close on Friday 14th August at 5.00pm.**

You can also access the information from the Federa-

### NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCED

The federal government has recently announced a fourth national partnership: **The Jobs and Training Compact – Youth Attainment and Transitions.**

This partnership will provide up to \$644 million over five years across Australia, to assist young people to complete year 12 or an equivalent qualification and enter the workforce.

The NP is to support bringing forward the COAG 90% or equivalent educational attainment rate target from 2020 to 2015.



### INDUSTRIAL AGE v KNOWLEDGE AGE

How is the learning practice going in your school? Is the learning environment changing and how are you supporting the changes?

#### INDUSTRIAL AGE

Teacher as director  
Teacher as knowledge source  
Curriculum directed learning  
Time-slotted, rigidly scheduled learning  
Primarily fact based  
Theoretical, abstract, principles and surveys  
Drill and practice  
Rules and procedures  
Competitive  
Classroom focused  
Prescribed results  
Conform to norm  
Computers as subject for study  
Static media presentations  
Classroom bounded communication  
Tests assessed by norms

#### KNOWLEDGE AGE

Teacher as facilitator, guide consultant  
Teacher as co-learner  
Student directed learning  
Open, flexible on-demand learning  
Primarily project and problem based  
Real world, concrete actions and reflections  
Inquiry and design  
Discovery and invention  
Collaborative  
Community focussed  
Open ended results  
Creative diversity  
Computers as tool for all learning  
Dynamic multi-media interactions  
Worldwide, unbounded communication  
Performance assessed by experts, mentors, peers and staff

### CARMEL'S CORNER

#### Our website

Have you been to the Federation website? ([www.pandf.org.au](http://www.pandf.org.au))

We look for many ways to communicate with parents and this can be a very effective way to do so if parents are aware of the site and what information it contains.

It is also a place for us to gather opinions on various issues. From time to time we conduct a poll where you can read some current information and vote on a question about that topic. Another is the ability to *have your say* which will usually be by way of a survey. These are very important pieces of information for us to have in order to represent the views of parents. It is not the only way we gather this information but it adds to an informed representation. We also provide information from time to time about new grant opportunities and other useful websites (eg [www.yourtutor.com.au](http://www.yourtutor.com.au).)

You can subscribe to our newsletter and receive it online and you can also have up to date information about what the current issues are for Catholic Education and latest news. We hope the website gives you up to date information which you could use for discussion at your P & F meeting. This would give everyone an opportunity to be aware of the website, aware of the issues and hear others points of view.

There is also other information about P&F – running a meeting, roles and responsibilities of executive members, Structure of Church and Education bodies, Dispute Resolution etc.

The website also offers the opportunity to have online information about your Arch/Diocesan P & F Council. Each of the diocese have their own pages which lists executive members and information about meeting dates, contact details etc.

The site also lists events that the Federation is engaged in e.g. Meetings with State Education Minister etc so that if you have any issues you could let us know in time for us to maybe have these included in the agenda for these meetings.

There is also information about the Federation, useful information for you at your local level, resources which include some parenting tips, information and links about health, school transport etc. as well as links to other education and parenting websites.

If you browse the website and become familiar with it you could then encourage other parents to participate in polls, surveys by advertising these in your school newsletter and that way more parents will be aware and better informed. We also encourage you to provide any feedback about the website and tell us if there are other things you would like to see added.

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