

**TAS ED
TALKS:**

Inspiring Years
9-12 Futures

Mission Possible Tasmania

“How Tasmania’s curriculum renewal project can improve performance of entire education system?”

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December 4, 2020

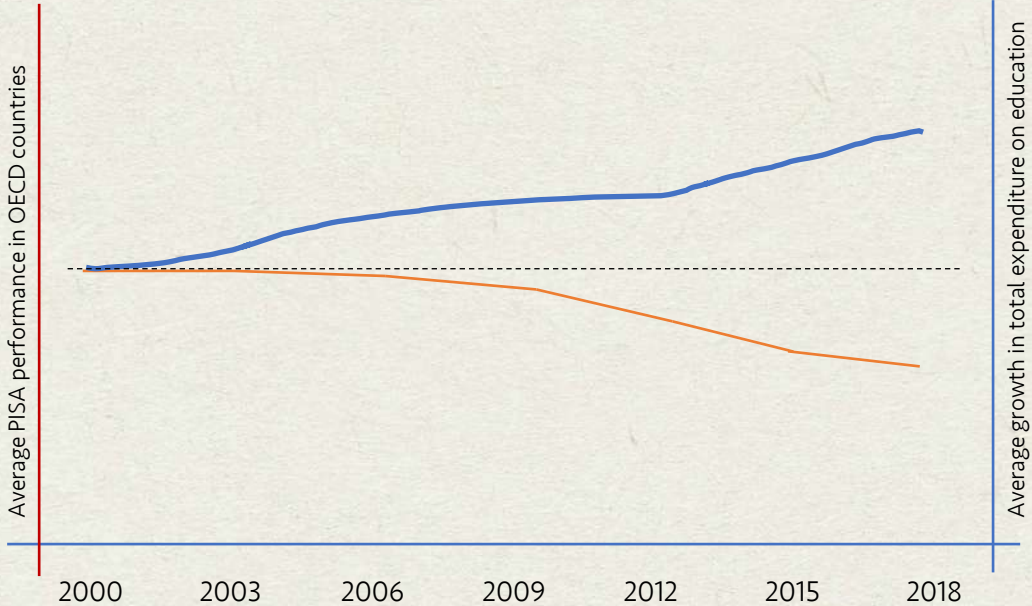


The Question

“Is **teachers and teaching** the most important single factor in improving quality of education.”

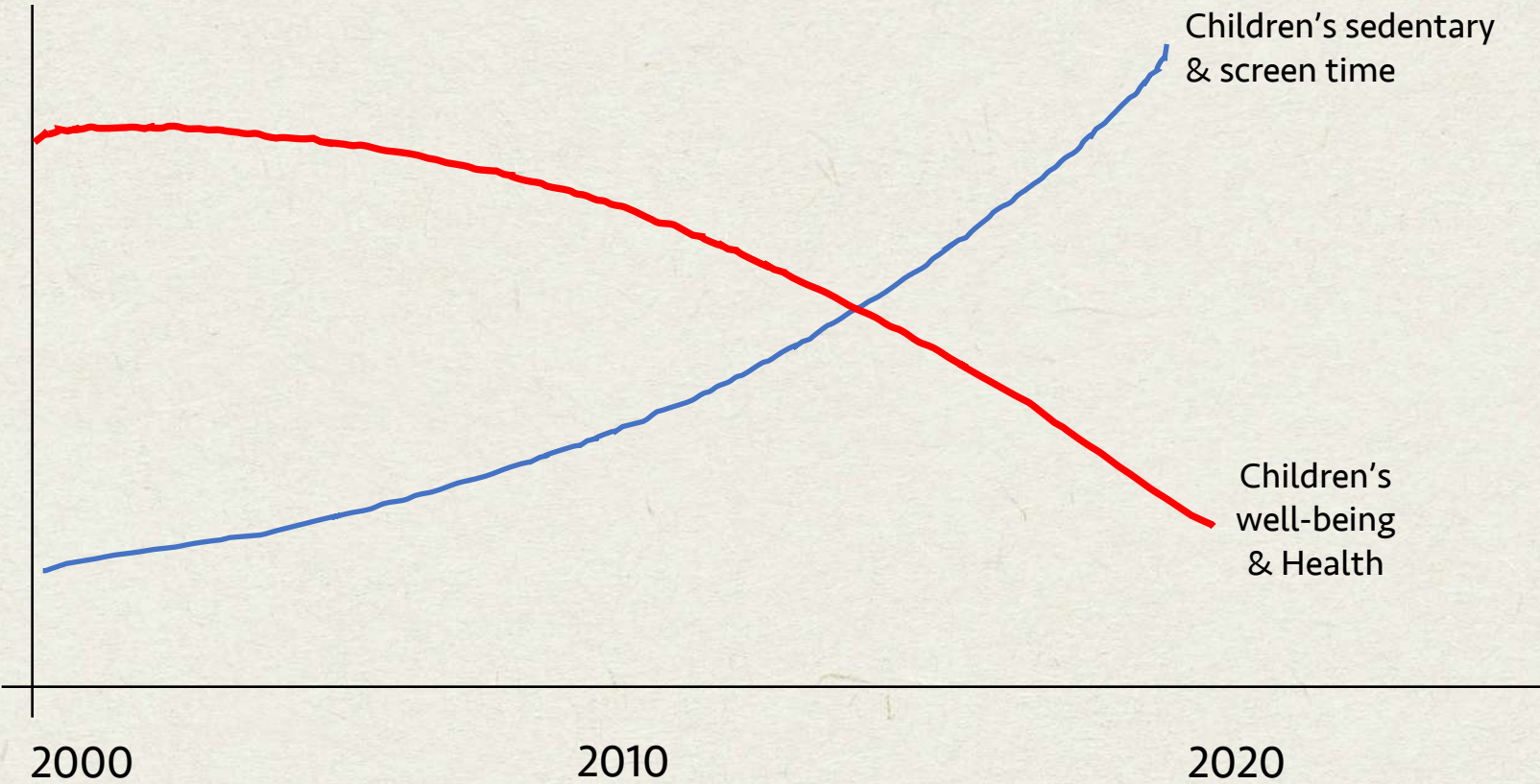
The Challenge

Global trend 1: Student learning vs. education spending

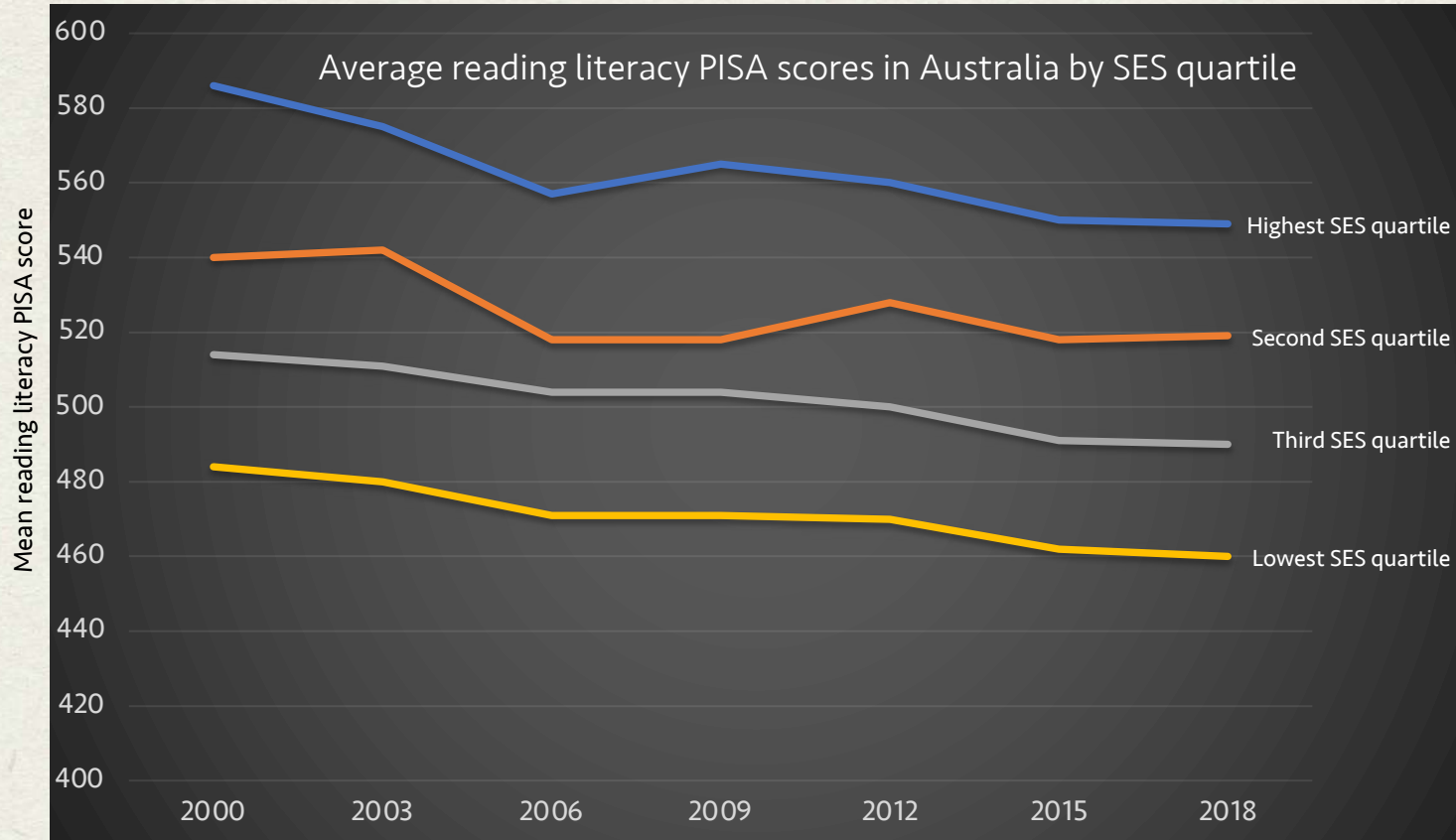


Source: OECD database (2020)

Global trend 2: Student wellbeing vs. sedentary time



National trend: Growing inequality

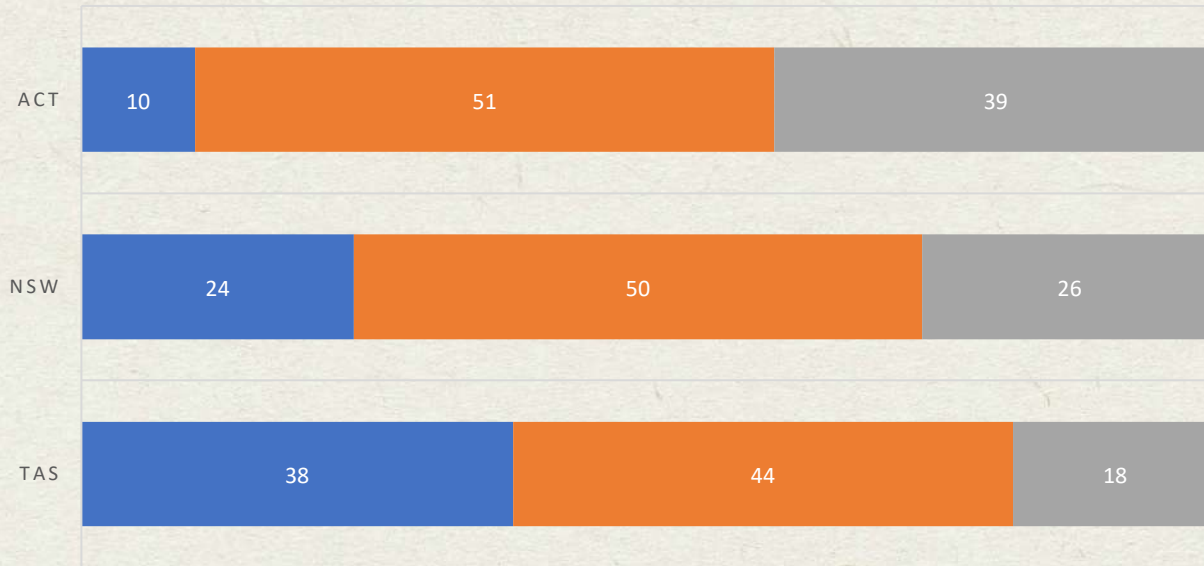


Source: ACER (2019)

National trend: Growing inequality

Proportion of students in equity groups

■ Lowest SES ■ Average SES ■ Highest SES



Source: ACER (2020)

The Mission

Achieving Educational Excellence



70% believed that supporting underachieving students is a way to achieve educational excellence in Australian society.

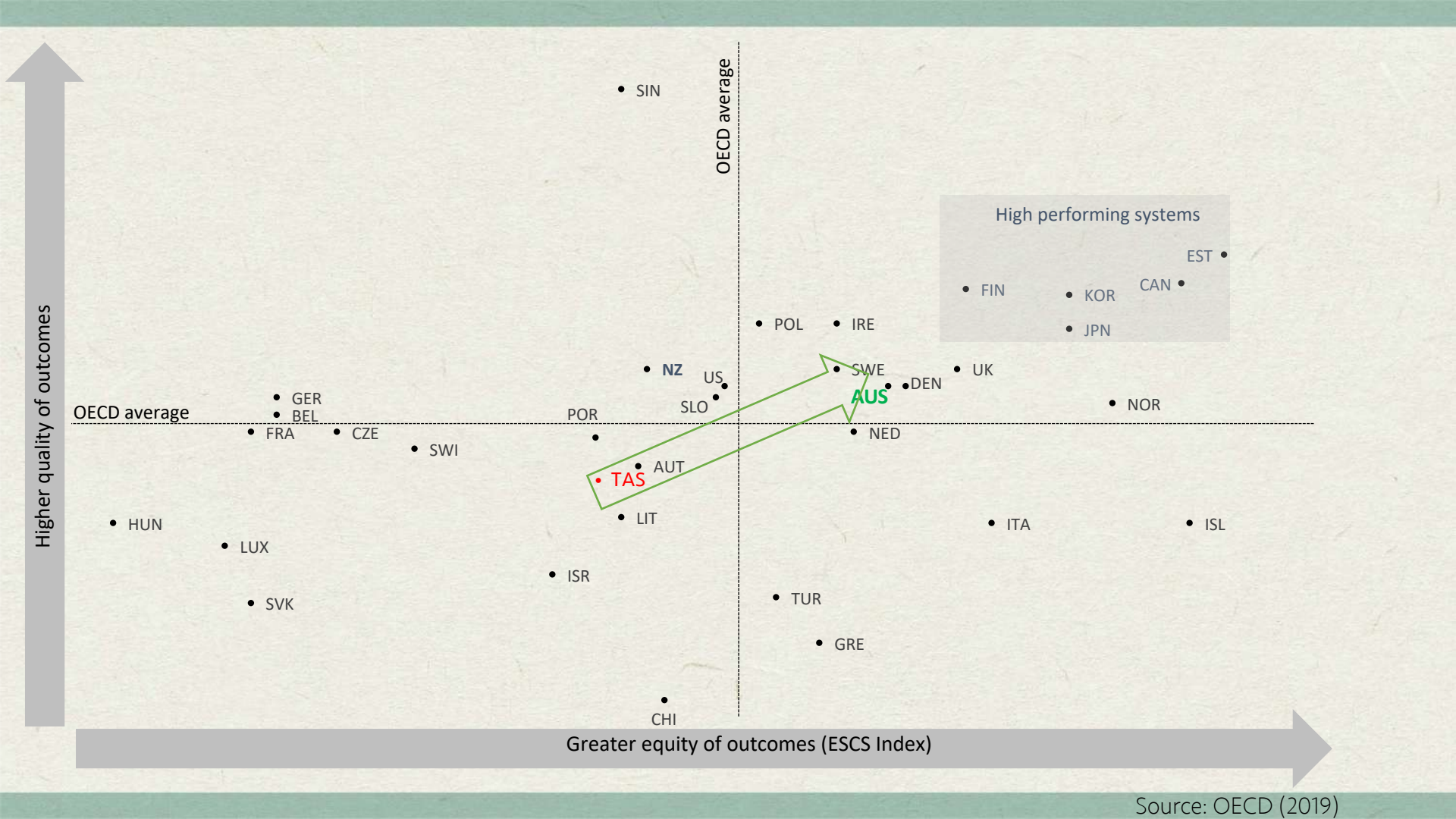
Our research shows that Australians want better investment in public education, and targeted help for struggling students, as opposed to specific programs which only help disadvantaged students.

Educational Equity and School Resources



70% strongly agreed or agreed that large inequalities in school resources are unfair

Source: Gonski Institute (2019)



The Solution

Strengthen equity of education

Understand what equity is and its links to new curriculum.

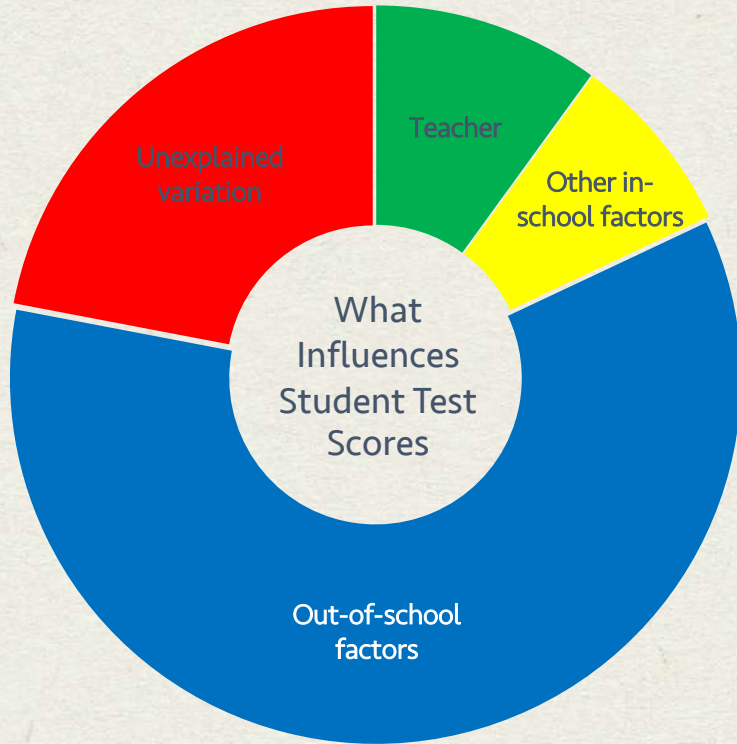


Build special education in mainstream curriculum.



Integrate student wellbeing and health in curriculum.

The Answer



Because teachers account for about 10 to 15% of the variability in students' measured achievement, the majority of opportunities for improving quality of education outcomes are found in the system-level conditions.

Mission Possible: Fix Inequalities

Australia has a world class education system – but not for everyone. National data and international comparative reviews show that educational inequality is perhaps the most significant threshold that separates us from the pack of leading education nations in the world today. We deserve better as a nation, but moreover, we need to educate all our children so that they are given the tools to thrive and are capable of coping with the challenges that they may face in their lives. Some say that effecting meaningful change in an education system is too complicated and slow. We disagree and urge that as parents, caregivers, education stakeholders, policymakers, teachers and leaders, that we all can do better than we do now. But it takes all of us together to work for that better future and to implement small, but meaningful changes in our ingrained systems. Here are some examples what we all can do.

Mission for policymakers

Make equity a priority in education policy

Equity doesn't happen by chance. Effective and targeted policies can drive better practices. Policies should ensure that all schools have sufficient resources and enough trained personnel to make teaching and learning happen. Policies can also make clear what more equitable education would require schools to do. We know that quality education is easier to have with stronger equity. Consider these: High quality early childhood education for all, wellbeing as an essential outcome of schooling, and special needs education as an inclusive service to all children.

Mission for schools

Make wellbeing a cornerstone of a great school

Children learn better when they are healthy and happy. In recent times, the wellbeing of young Australians has been in steady decline. Similarly, teachers and principals are increasingly stressed, tired and burned-out. Health and wellbeing are particular concerns among underprivileged children. Therefore, care for children's health and mental wellbeing should be part of the work of every school. Sufficient time for recess, physical activity, music, arts and play can positively affect students' and teachers' wellbeing in school and make it a better place for all.

Mission for parents and caregivers

Host a school improvement BBQ

All parents and caregivers want to send their child to the best school. In Australia, unlike many other countries, much time and effort is spent selecting these best schools. What is best for one child may not be for others. Parents and caregivers play an essential role in supporting the school and can make significant contributions to the school community. Supporting your child's school could be as easy as organising a fun gathering with friends to talk about how ways of improving the school to better serve different children, not just your own child/children. Challenge each other to do one concrete thing for the school community.

Mission for businesses

Ask for excellence and equity

Employers know it. Well educated employees are the heart of successful business. This often leads to expectations for schools to raise levels of excellence at any cost. But inequality can be very expensive for companies and taxpayers. Advocate for high quality education in your local community. Don't stop there, insist that education system must deliver these high results in equitable ways. Establish new partnerships with high performing schools in both quality and equity of learning outcomes.

Mission for teacher educators

Give all new teachers a course: "Equity in Education 101"

Teachers play a key role in schools to make all students learn beyond expectations. Initial teacher education can provide new teachers with a broader mindset and approach to student learning in school. Design a course for all students in initial teacher education that provides new teachers with the basic knowledge, values and skills to work in a school and education system that promotes greater equity.

Mission for children

Look after one another

Because we all are different, so are the children in our schools. Some students find school a comfortable place to be and learn, others don't. We can do much better in every school to help each and everyone to think that school is their favourite place. Find someone who looks lonely and doesn't have many friends in school. Go and talk to a fellow student you don't know yet. Create a culture in your school that ensures helping everyone to succeed is the norm.

Mission for journalists

Tell the success stories

Media plays an important role in improving education systems. Too often however, bad news stories are reported because this content seems to garner more attention. Australia has world class education writers who not just report the news of others but often investigate their own information for their stories. Write a story about a school or a community that has done extraordinary things in helping all children succeed in school, collect real stories from children and parents and encourage inspiring school leaders and teachers to communicate what is possible in our schools.

Mission for artists

Help every school to become an art school

Australian schools have a long tradition of teaching children about the rich culture of arts, music and drama. Still, success in school is determined by grades or test scores in a select few academic subjects. Arts subjects offer most children opportunities to actively engage in learning in school and that is a condition for greater equity in education. Work with students to teach them the work of an artist. Create a project with a school to use traditional storytelling and music that includes all children. Make every school in your community an art school.

Mission for politicians

Listen to the experts

When the going gets tough, we often turn to expert advice. When politicians in Australia were coping with the global health pandemic in 2020, they systematically relied on the experience of health specialists and the top national and international scientists. Now, when you continue to develop Australian education systems to provide world class teaching and learning for all our children, make your decisions after listening to the advice of your top experts and practitioners. Communicate to schools and school leaders an overall direction and trust them to lead the way. Equitable education can't be created by force.

Thank you.

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