

**“It’s times like these you learn to lead again”**

SAPPA-LEAP Leadership Conference

11<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Adelaide, SA



pasi\_sahlberg

## **Three current leadership issues:**

**Teachers and education quality**

**Standardised tests and school quality**

**Equity and quality of education**

# 1. FACT OR MYTH?

The most important single factor in improving quality of education is teachers.

**MYTH!**

1. "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers"
2. "The only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction"
3. "High performance requires every child to succeed"

Source: McKinsey (2007). "How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top."

# Education Minister blames 'dud teachers' for declining education results



By Lisa Visentin  
March 17, 2022 – 5:57pm

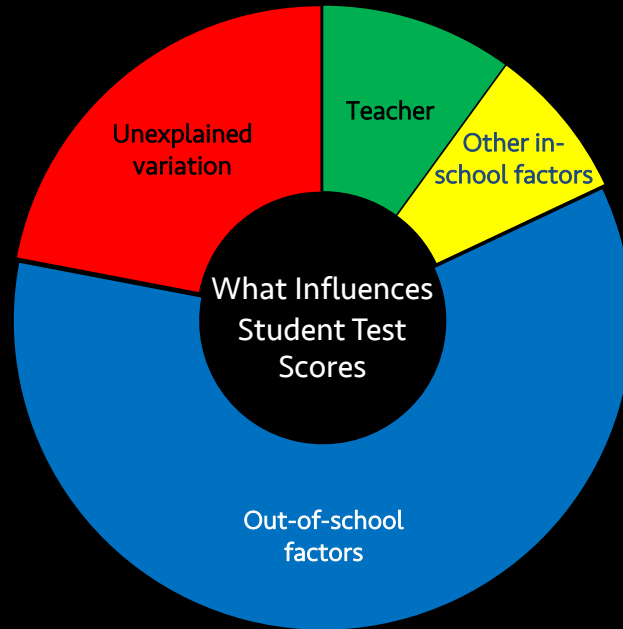
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Acting federal Education Minister Stuart Robert has blamed "dud teachers" for the decline in the academic results of Australian students while praising independent schools for employing only quality teachers and delivering a model example of education.

In a speech to an independent schools conference on Thursday, Mr Robert criticised a "bottom 10 per cent of teachers" who "can't read and write" as a key reason for Australia's plummeting performance in the international education benchmark tests.



# Teachers are important, but...



## **What does this mean?**

Teachers account for about 1% to 14% of the variability in students' test scores, therefore, the majority of opportunities for quality improvement are found in the system-level and other social conditions.

**How about finding the best and the brightest to teaching?**



# Teaching needs to attract best and brightest

By Tory Vidler  
Updated January 21, 2016 - 6:44pm, first published at 11:52am



When it comes to education nothing is simple, everyone wants the best and most stakeholders aren't satisfied. Australian students need to be internationally competitive and also globally aware and empathetic. Most importantly, every Australian student should appreciate and value their education and feel proud to be Australian. In order for this to happen we must ensure we attract the best and brightest minds to the teaching profession.

Judging from the release of the university placements on Wednesday and the La Trobe University Mildura campus ATAR cutoff of 51.8, this is not happening.

## TODAY'S TOP STORIES

**UNIVERSITY**  
The universities most reliant on international students for cash

**ABORTION**  
Pliibersek: 'Absolutely not OK' to ask Berejiklian on air if she'd have an abortion

**ROADS**  
Sydney's electric scooter trial hits safety bump

**GEORGE PELL**  
Archbishop, what have you done to find the 'real' culprit?



MINTH

# David Cameron plans to attract brightest graduates to teaching

David Cameron has set out plans to attract the brightest graduates into teaching and to pay off student loans and provide bonuses for those who perform best in the classroom.



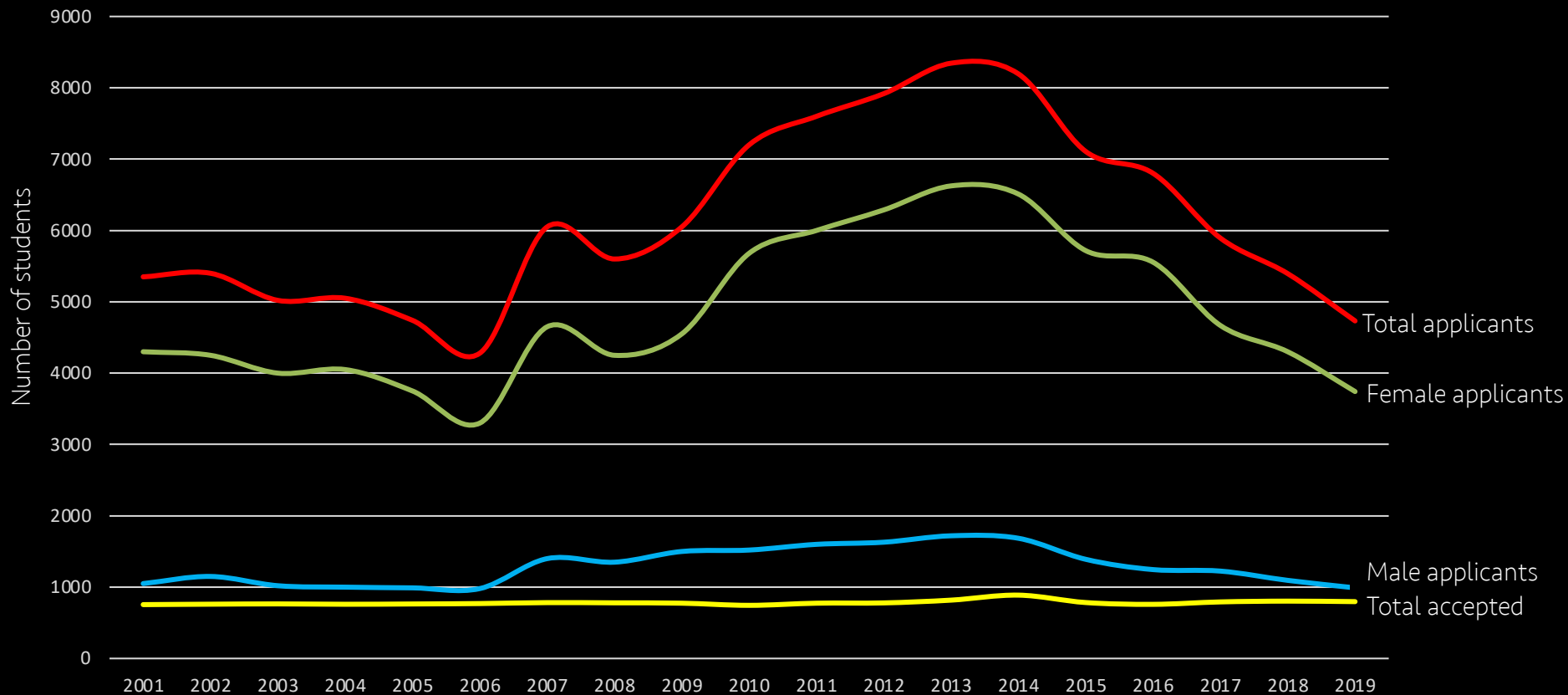
5:45PM GMT 18 Jan 2010

Launching the Conservative's draft education manifesto in south London, Mr Cameron said he wanted to take a "brazenly elitist" approach to improving teaching standards, by barring the profession to anyone who does not have a 2.2 degree or better and making it into "the noble

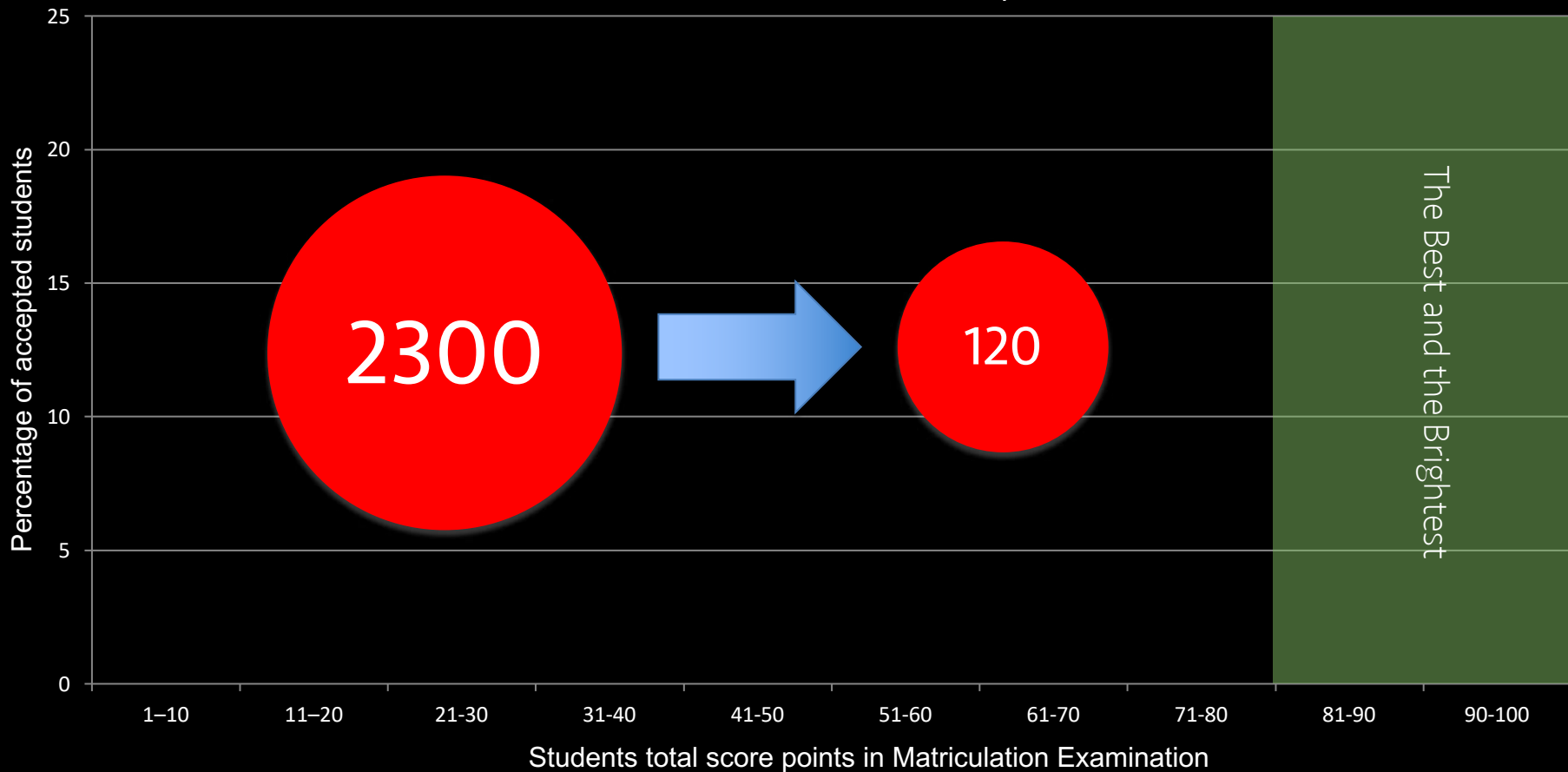
UK Politics Video  
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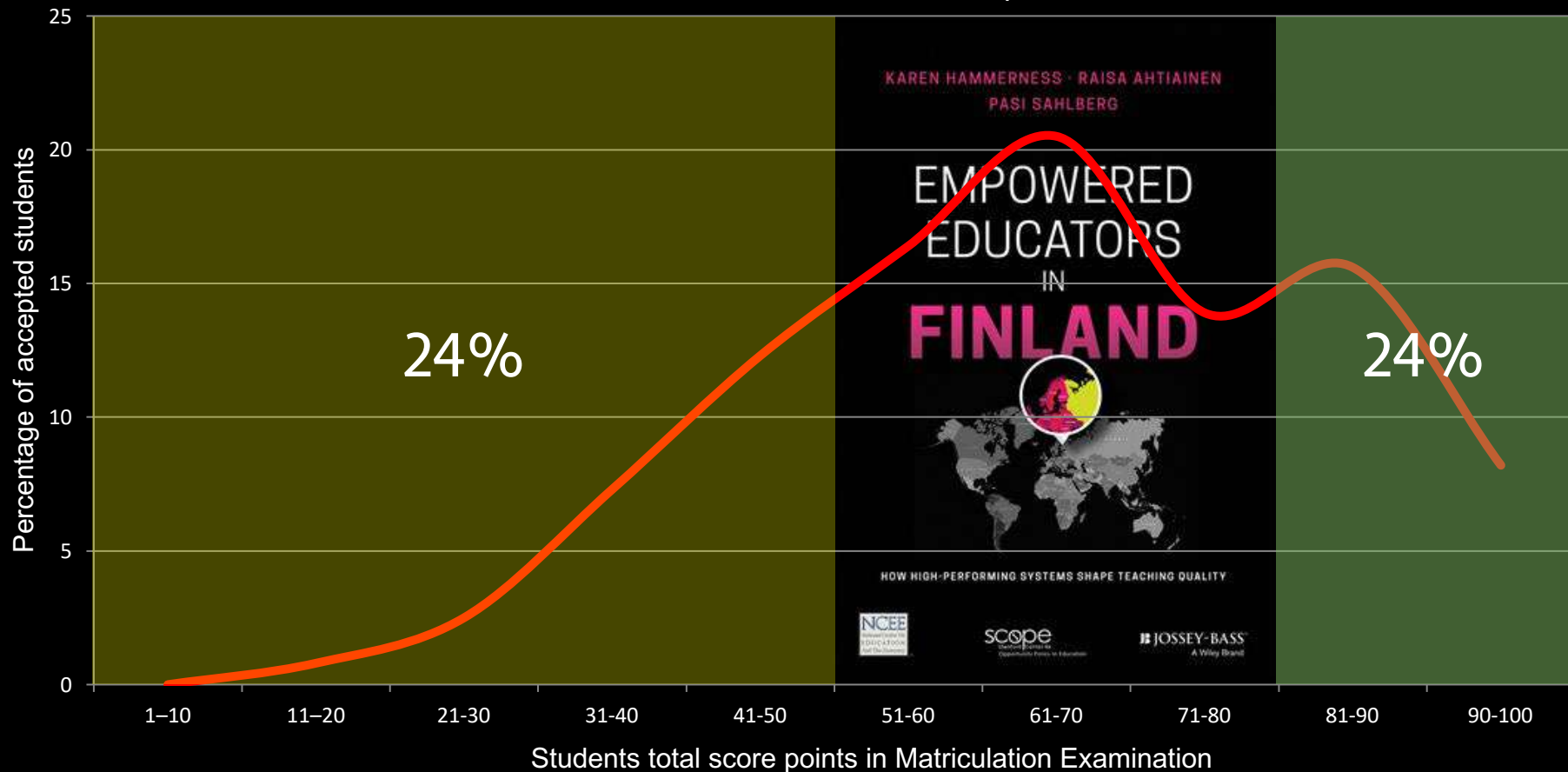
# Applicants to Primary School Teacher Education Programmes in Finland, 2001-2019



# Academic achievement Profile of Accepted Primary School Teacher Students in the University of Helsinki in 2014



# Academic achievement Profile of Accepted Primary School Teacher Students in the University of Helsinki in 2014



## What can you do?

- Learn more what research says about what influences student learning.
- Launch an educational campaign so that your colleagues, parents of children understand what are the most effective system level conditions for quality improvement.
- Be a champion of upgraded initial teacher education.

## 2. FACT OR MYTH?

Standardised tests can be used to measure the quality of schools.

**MYTH!**

## **A standardised test is any form of assessment that:**

- (1) requires all students to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from common question bank, in the same way, and that
- (2) is scored in a standard or consistent manner, which makes it possible to compare the relative performance of individual students or groups of students.

**PURPOSE OF  
STANDARDISED TESTS**

	NAPLAN census	PISA sample
Monitoring education system performance	yes	yes
Accountability	depends	no
School improvement	no	no
Individual student learning and growth	no	no
Information on school quality	no	no



# Why standardised achievement tests should not be used to evaluate the quality of school/education?

1. The mismatch between what is taught at school and what is tested through standardised tests;
2. Tests must permit meaningful comparisons among students from only a small number of items. Best test questions spread out students' test scores so that they are answered correctly by 40 to 60 percent of the students;
3. Student performance on standardised tests is mostly influenced by three causative factors of which only one is linked to instructional quality:
  - (a) a student's native intellectual ability,
  - (b) a student's out-of-school learning, and
  - (c) what's taught in school.

# Campbell's Law



**Donald Campbell**

The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor. (in 1975)

## What can you do?

- Learn more about what standardised achievement tests are and how to use them well.
- Launch an educational campaign so that your colleagues, parents of children in school understand what the educational shortcomings of standardised tests can be.
- Develop different and more appropriate ways of assessing student learning and school quality.

# 3. FACT OR MYTH?

The highest performing education systems are those that combine quality with equity.

**FACT!**

# EQUITY OF EDUCATION

Individual perspective: **ADEQUATE EDUCATION**

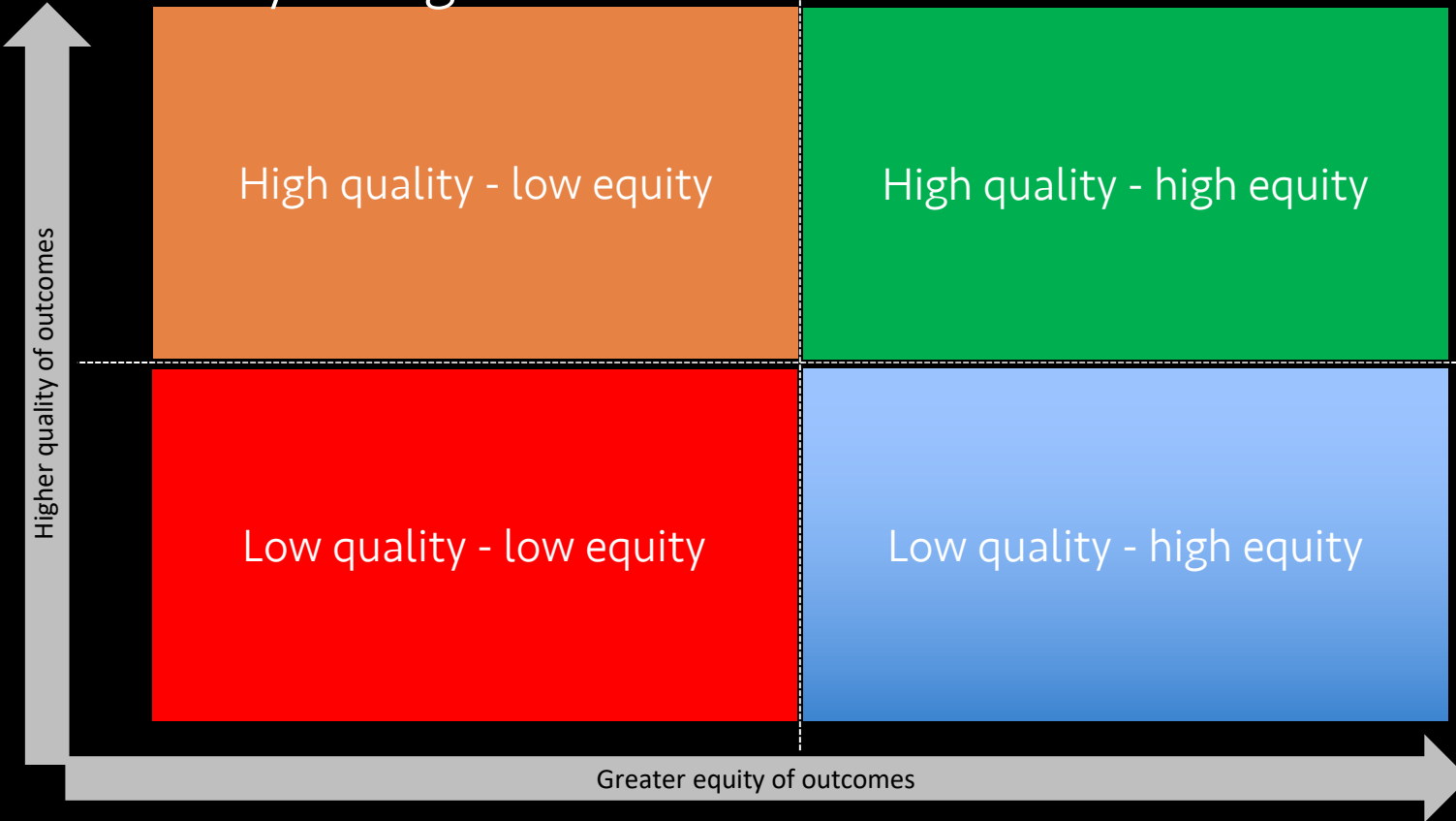
All children receive an education that enables them to realise their talents and fully participate in adult society in a way of their own choosing.

+

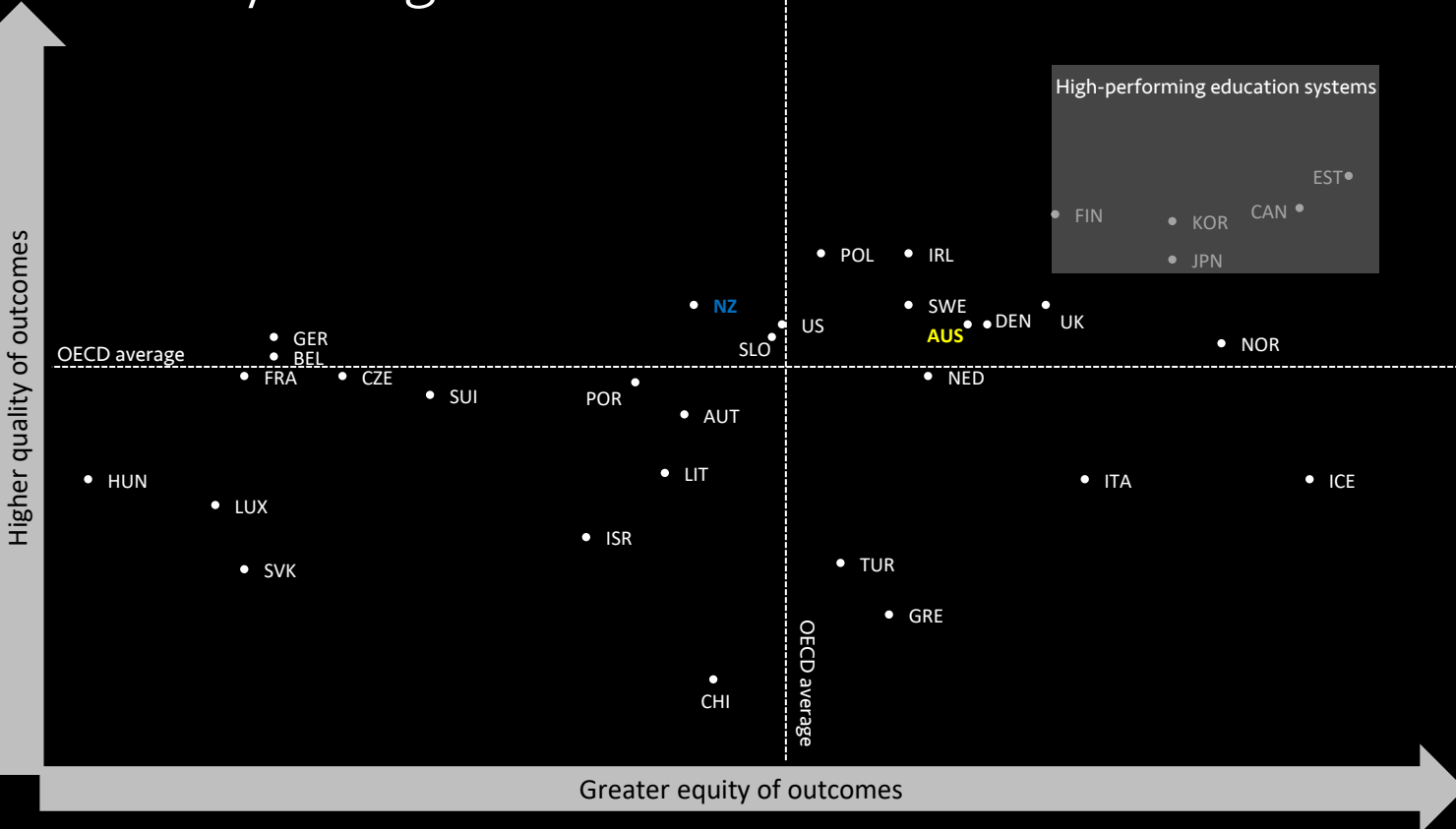
Social perspective: **SOCIAL EQUITY**

Children from different groups because of their gender, class, race, ethnicity and domicile achieve similar education outcomes to ensure non-discrimination.

# Strength of relationship between achievement and family background

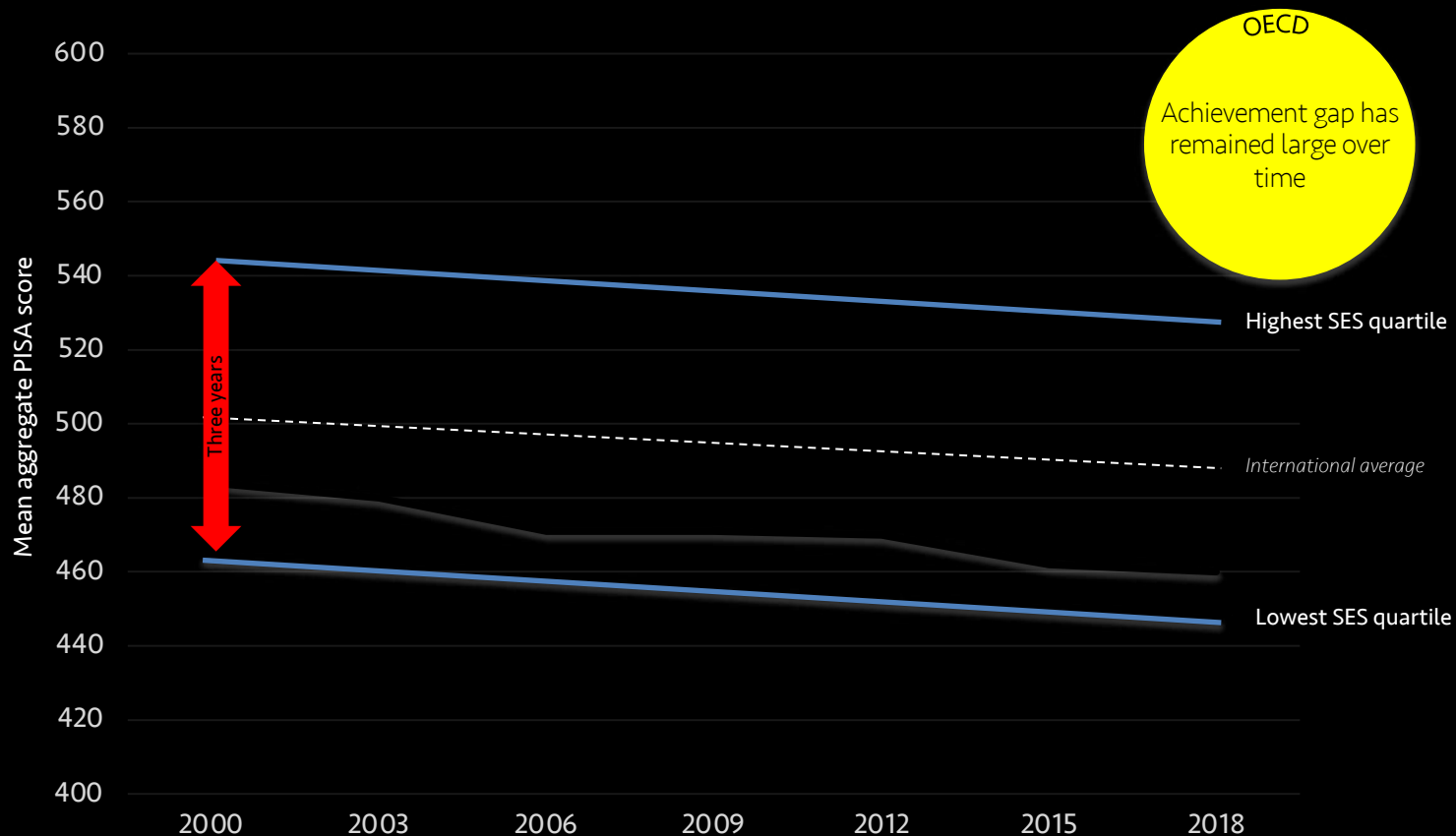


# Strength of relationship between achievement and family background



Source: OECD, 2019

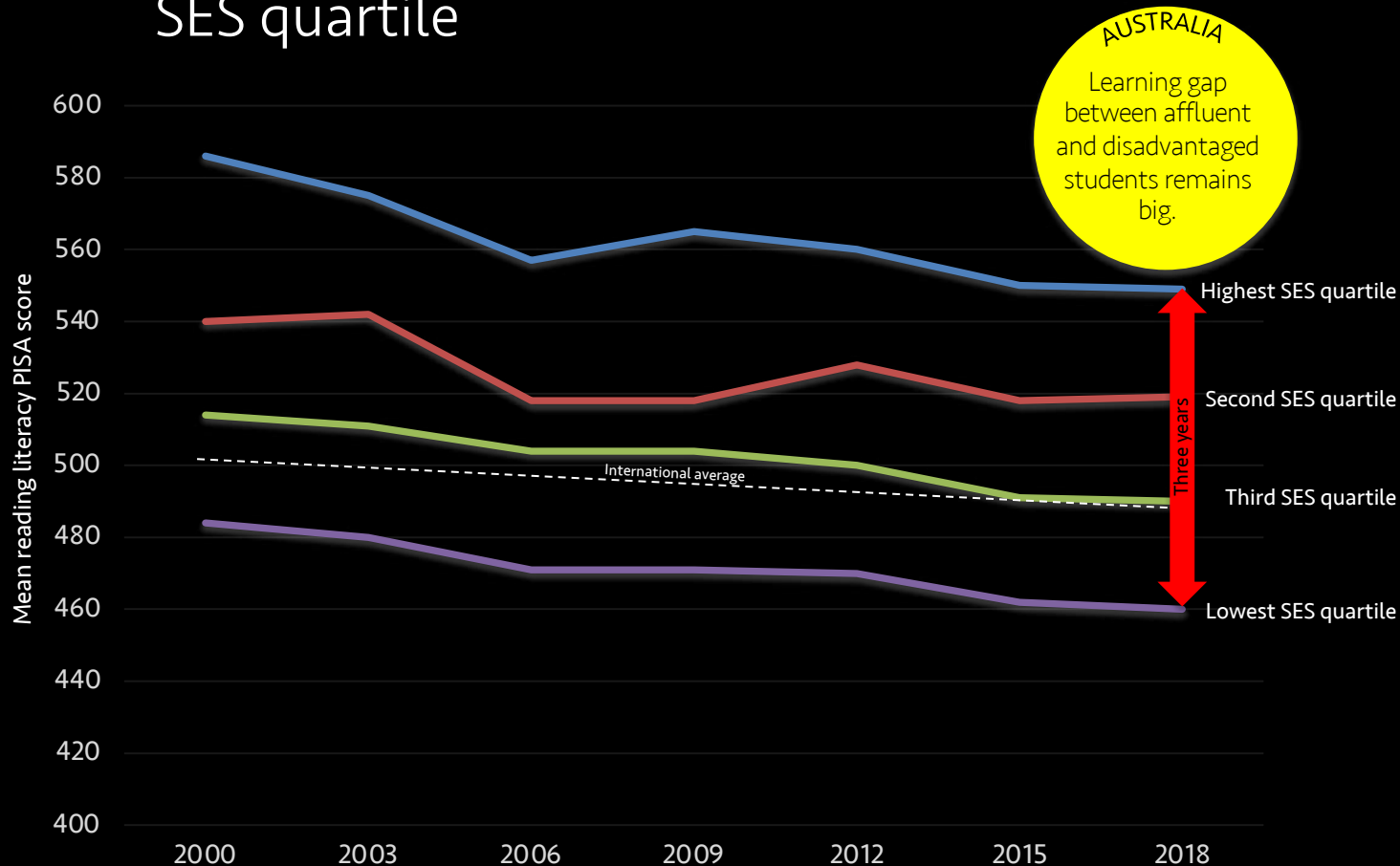
# Average student academic achievement in OECD by socioeconomic (SES) quartile



Source: OECD database

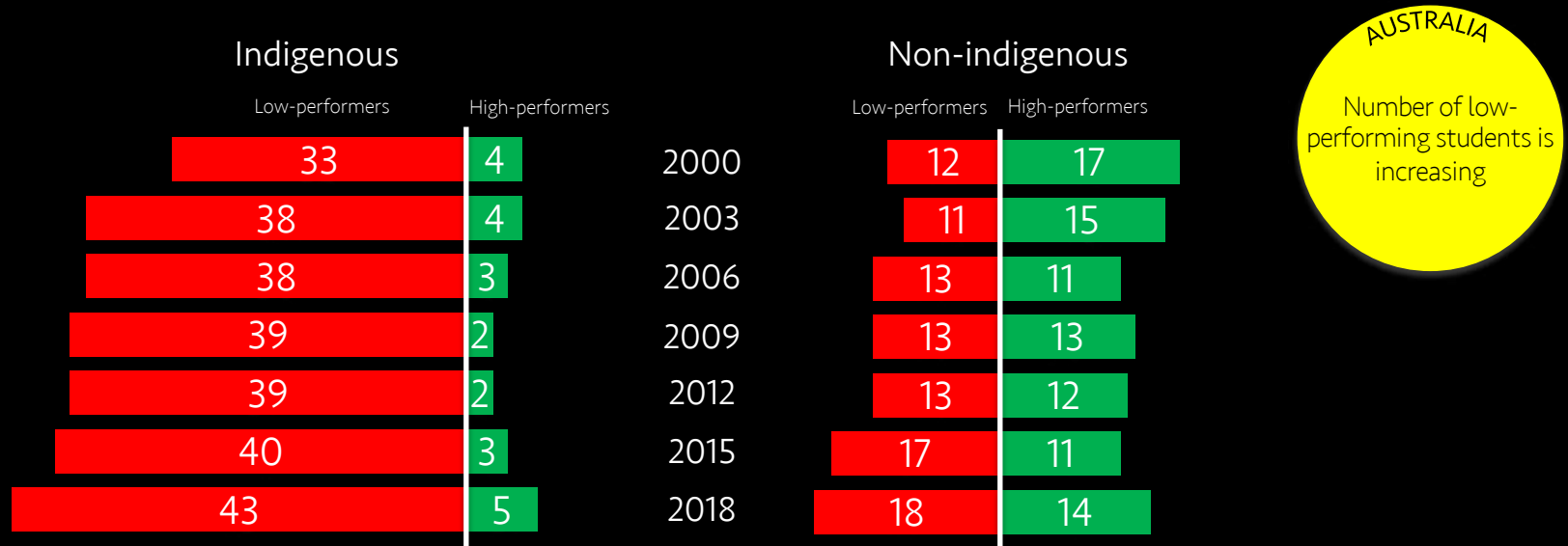


# Average reading literacy PISA scores in Australia by SES quartile

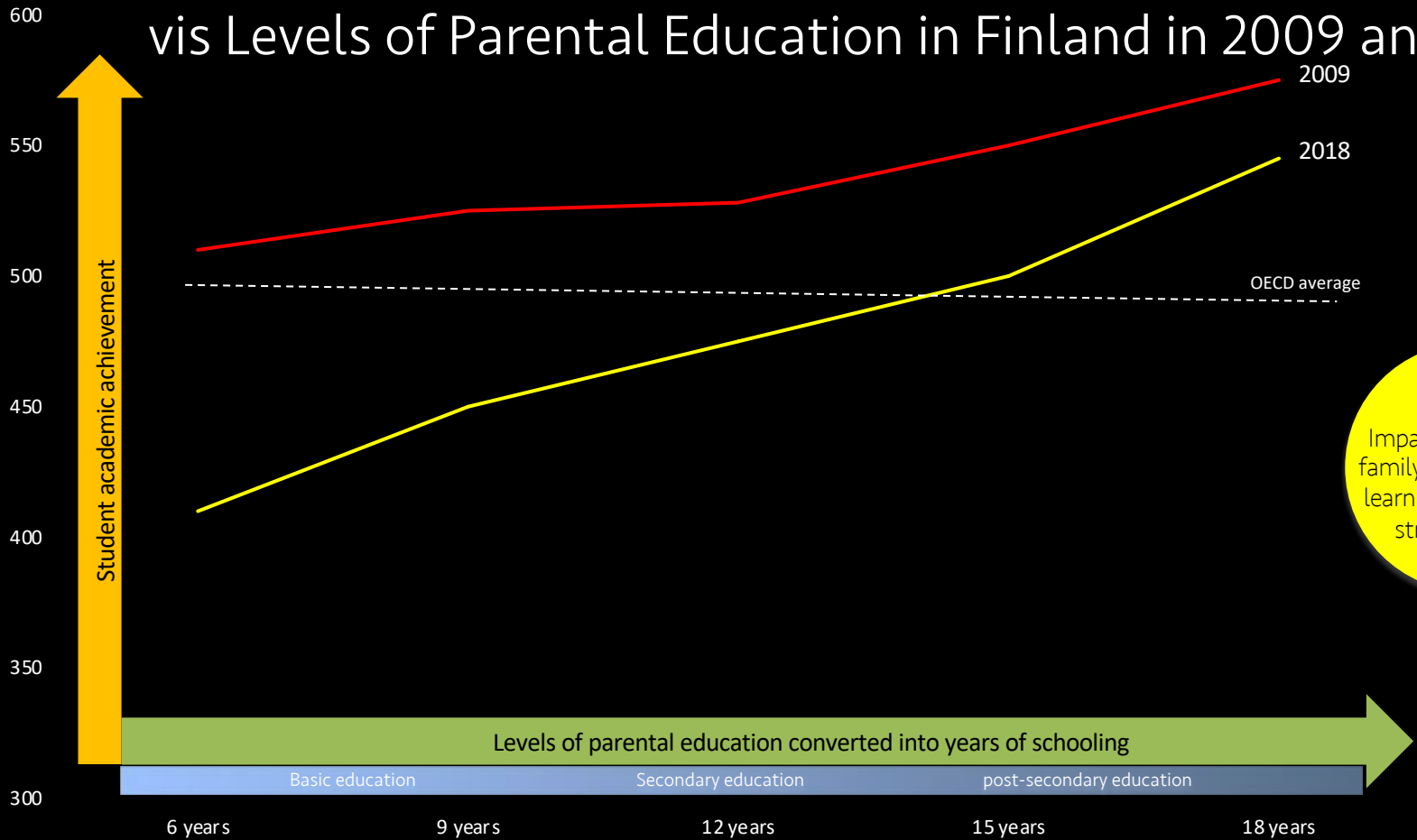


Source: ACER, 2020

# Proportions of low and high performers in Australia on the PISA reading literacy proficiency scale by Indigenous background

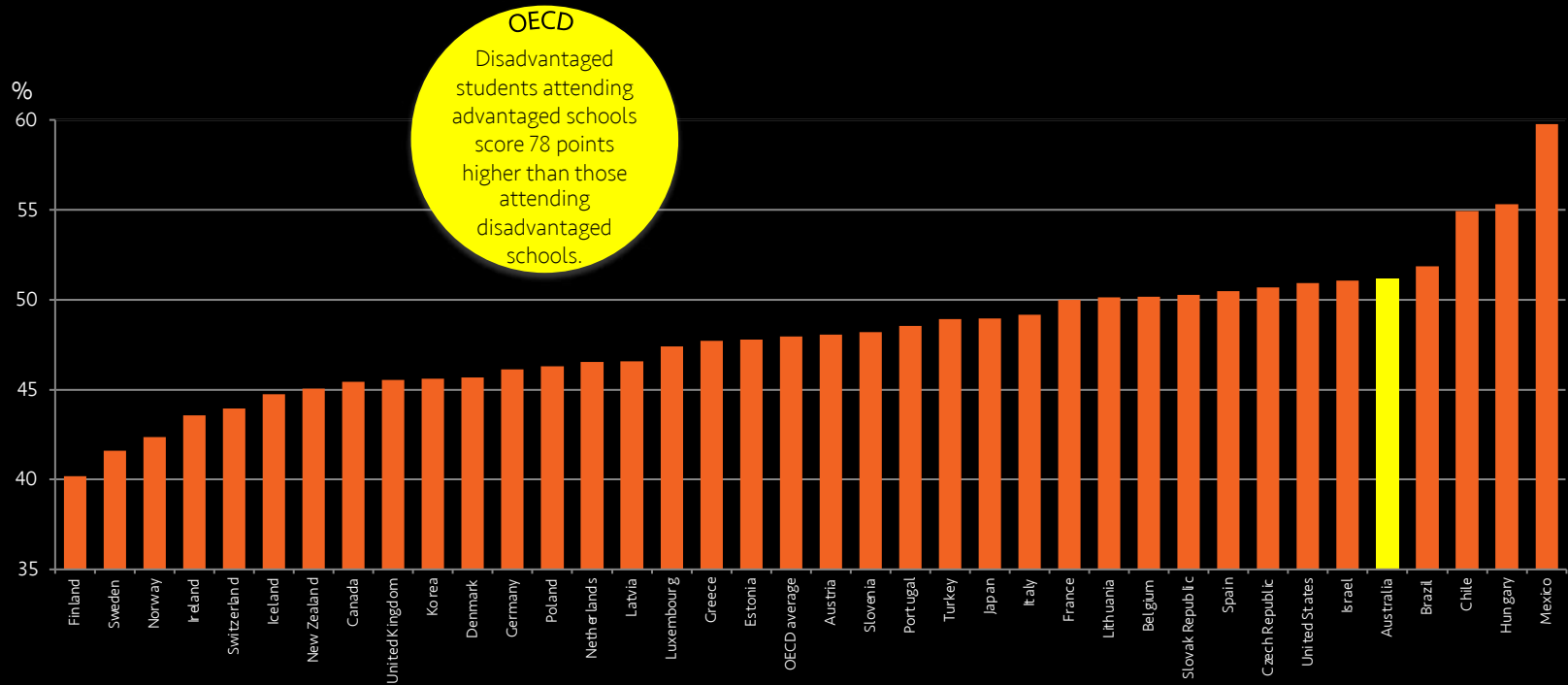


# Average PISA Score in reading, mathematics and science vis-a-vis Levels of Parental Education in Finland in 2009 and 2018

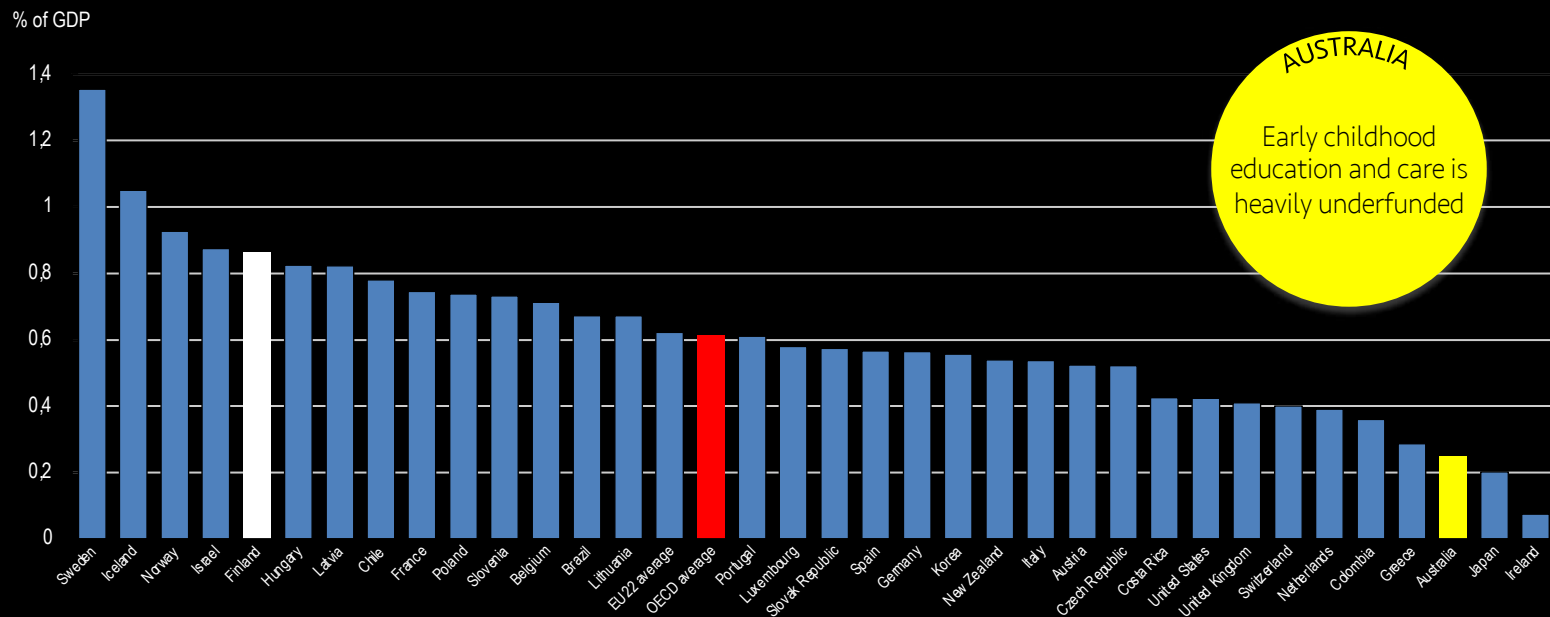


**FINLAND**  
Impact of children's family background on learning outcomes is strengthening.

# Proportion of disadvantaged students in disadvantaged schools



# Investments in early childhood education and care in OECD countries



**WHAT CAN WE DO?**

1

Create shared understand of what equity means, why it matters, and what you can do about it?

*“A child's learning is a function more of the characteristics of his classmates than of those of the teacher.”*

- James Coleman (1966)



2

You can't fix the inequalities alone

*“One of the persistent challenges confronting societies is how to reduce inequalities in the educational and occupational attainment of students from different socioeconomic, ethnic and race group backgrounds.”*

- Kevin Marjoribanks (2002)





3

Prevent rather than jus repair.

*"The conclusion that family background is far more important than people realized has remained a solid empirical finding for 50 years."*

- Stephen Morgan (2016)

# THANK YOU!



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Download this presentation from: [www.pasisahlberg.com](http://www.pasisahlberg.com)