



*An evening with FoE alumni on*

# **THREE SIMPLE STRATEGIES TO TRANSFORM OUR SCHOOLS**

with Pasi Sahlberg

Tuesday 19 November 2024





As Education Minister Julia Gillard and the Australian Education Union continue to lock horns over boycotts to national literacy and numeracy tests, neither has considered the key stakeholders. **CANDICE KELLER** and **LUCY HOOD** investigate what parents want.

# Parents: It's our turn to have a say on schools



**T**HE national teachers' union and Federal Government are behaving like schoolyard bullies caught up in arguments about what is in the best interest for students. But they forgot to ask parents - the key stakeholders - what they want for their children.

The rift between the Australian Education Union and Education Minister Julia Gillard reached fever pitch this week when teachers renewed their vow to boycott next month's NAPLAN tests.

Teachers believe the results are being used to "name and shame" students, teachers and schools. But parents want national literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) tests to go ahead, according to the South Australian Association of State Schools Organisation, the state's key parent body.

They also want comprehensive statistics and information about how their child - and their school - is performing.

"The more information the better," SAASSO director David Knuckey said.

"The attitude of most parents is that they want accurate, objective feedback about how their child is progressing at school.

"Sadly, parents aren't always consulted."

The tests, from May 11-13,

**“The attitude of most parents is that they want accurate, objective feedback about how their child is progressing at school. Sadly, parents aren't always consulted.”**

- SAASSO DIRECTOR DAVID KNUCKEY

would like to see three key additions to the website: financial data about schools, general details about the qualifications of school staff and opportunities for formal parent feedback. This, he said, would reveal a more complete and relevant story about what's happening within school grounds.

"When choosing a school, you're not just enrolling your children, you're enrolling yourself," he said. "You want to know about the culture and atmosphere of the school too."

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the Government body in charge of the MySchool website, has said financial data would be the next addition to the site by the close of 2010.

Further expansion, including parent comment, is still being negotiated.

Australian Primary Principals Association president Lonnie Trimper said, the current site needed to be made more accurate before plans were made to expand it.

"I'm sure there is thinking that it's a narrow body of data and perhaps we do need something to paint a fuller picture of schools, (but) how do you get this information and how will it be fair?" she said.

"We've taken the position that we have to get the current

give a good picture about what schools are doing," Mr Dalton

## The Advertiser

**A CASUAL BLOW ON HIS NEW LEADER**

**Farming in the lucky country**

Karl Zerner loves raising his son Charlie on the land at Eudunda. The Advertiser is launching its Bush Summit today to advocate for the regions.

**FULL REPORTS PAGES 16-19**

**Asscud husband killer's bail**

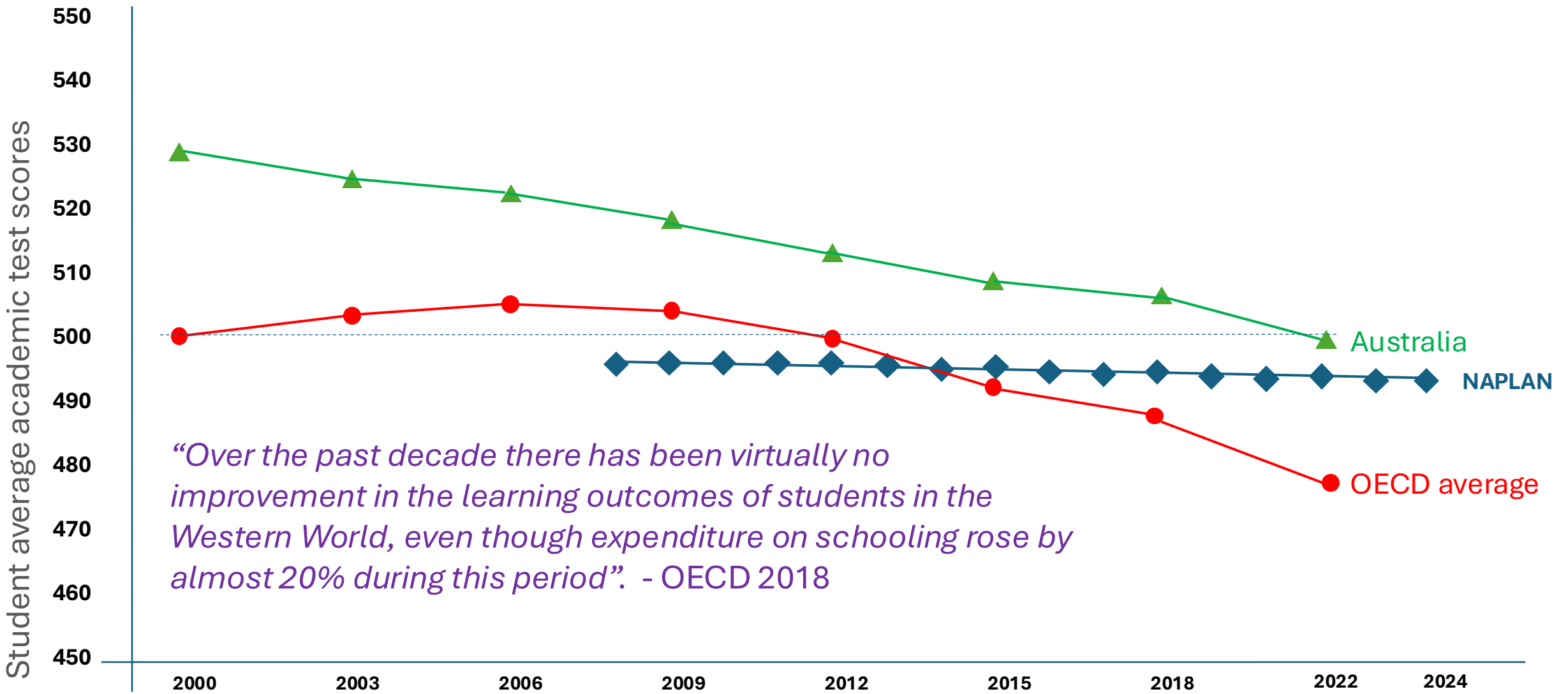
**NAPLAN fail: Upper case, commas bamboozle kids**

# cant Use, grammar

Notes

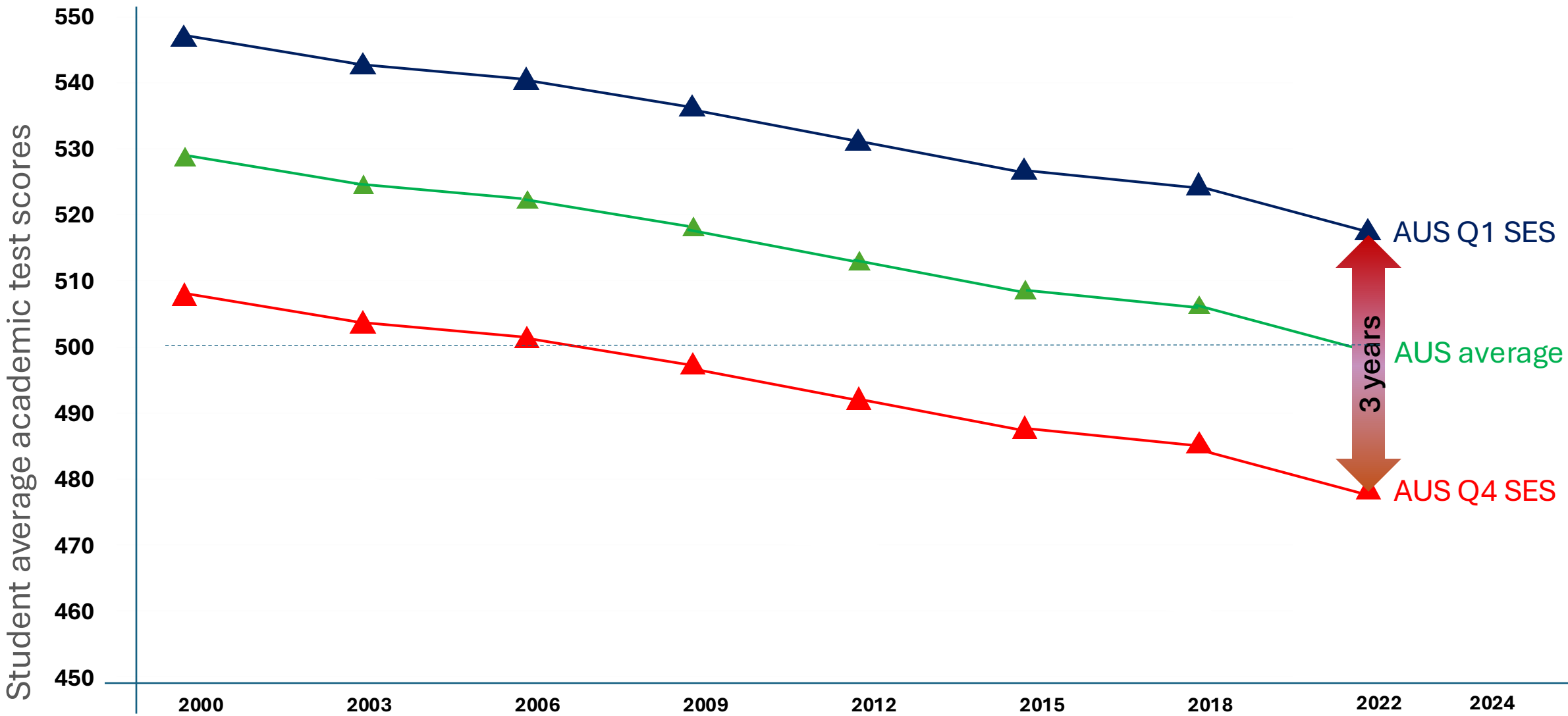


# Student achievement in Australia since 2000

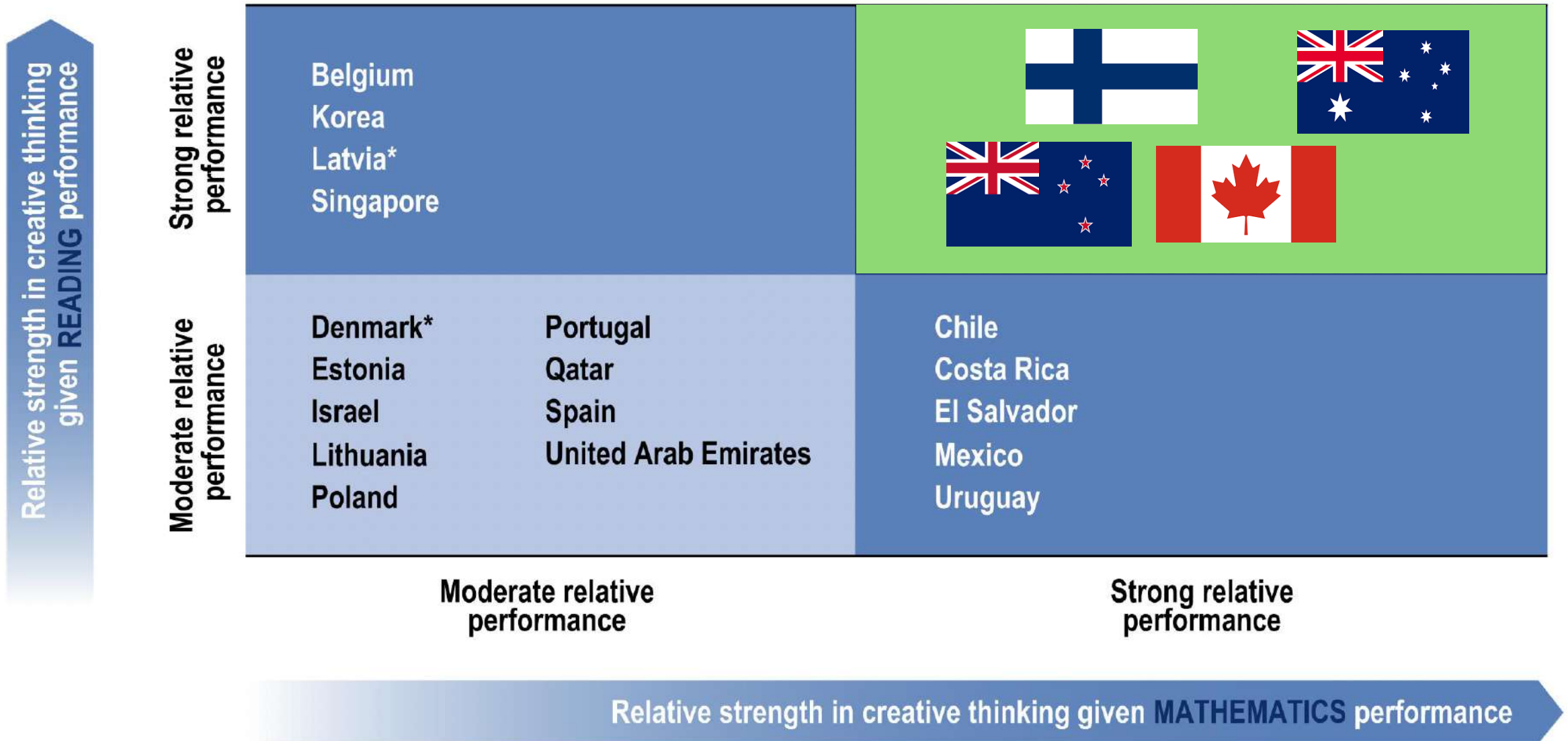


*“Over the past decade there has been virtually no improvement in the learning outcomes of students in the Western World, even though expenditure on schooling rose by almost 20% during this period”. - OECD 2018*

# Student achievement in Australia since 2000



# Exceeding expectations in creative thinking



# What if...?



**We can't keep doing the  
same thing and expect  
different results.**

*"I want you to find a bold and innovative  
way to do everything except the same way  
it's been done for 25 years."*

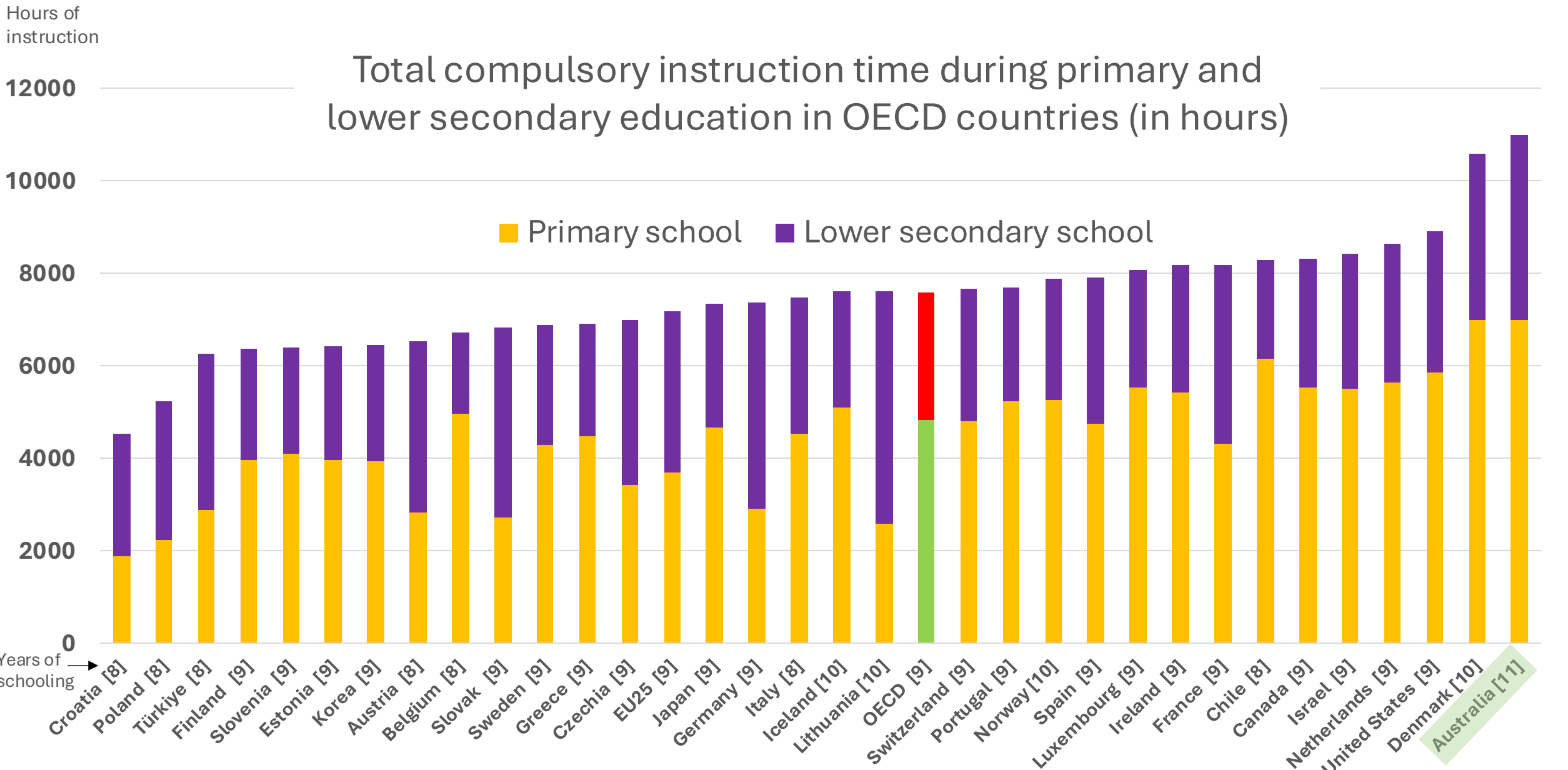
# How about longer schooldays?





# Instruction time

Total compulsory instruction time during primary and lower secondary education in OECD countries (in hours)



Source: OECD (2023)

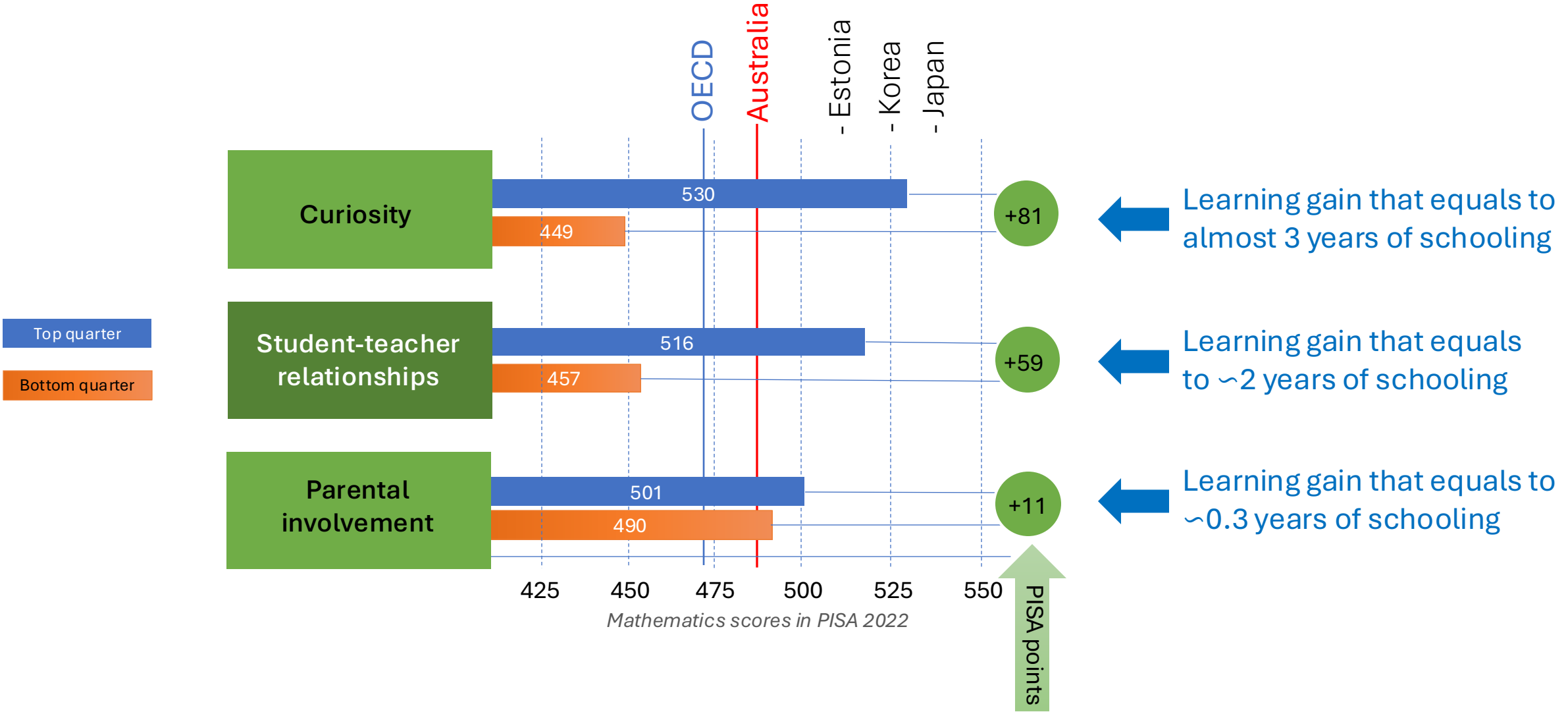
**What could we do instead?**

**Build positive  
relationships.**

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# The role of student & school characteristics



# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

1

## Teacher looping

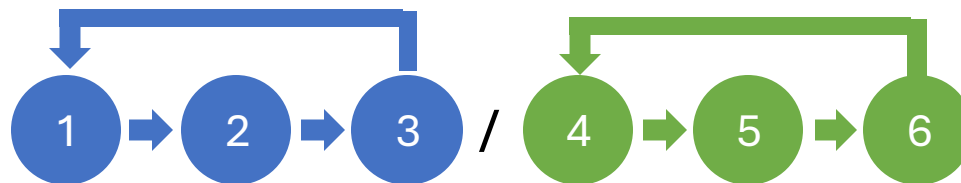
‘Looping’ is an old educational practice in which whole class is taught by **the same teacher in two or more sequential years** in school.

*“I have looped in two school districts with marginalized students. Looping is so powerful! The relationships that you build with student and families are lifelong. I wish all schools would consider this powerful move.” – Cherri Schrick, Math coach and teacher in the U.S.*

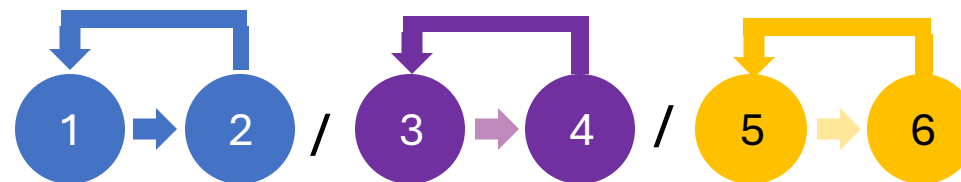
# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

## 1 Teacher looping

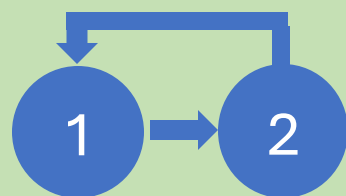
Two 3-year loop:



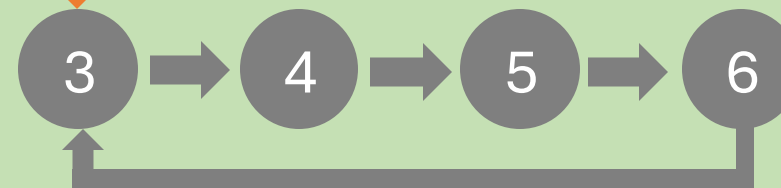
Three 2-year loops:



One 2-year loop:



One 4-year loop:



The Finnish Model

# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

## 1 Teacher looping

### Benefits:

- 1) Healthier peer and student-adult relationships
- 2) Improved student engagement, wellbeing and learning
- 3) Better teacher job satisfaction

### Challenges:

- 1) Student and teacher don't get along well
- 2) Additional planning and design work for teachers
- 3) Parents' expectations

# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

2

## Restructured school day

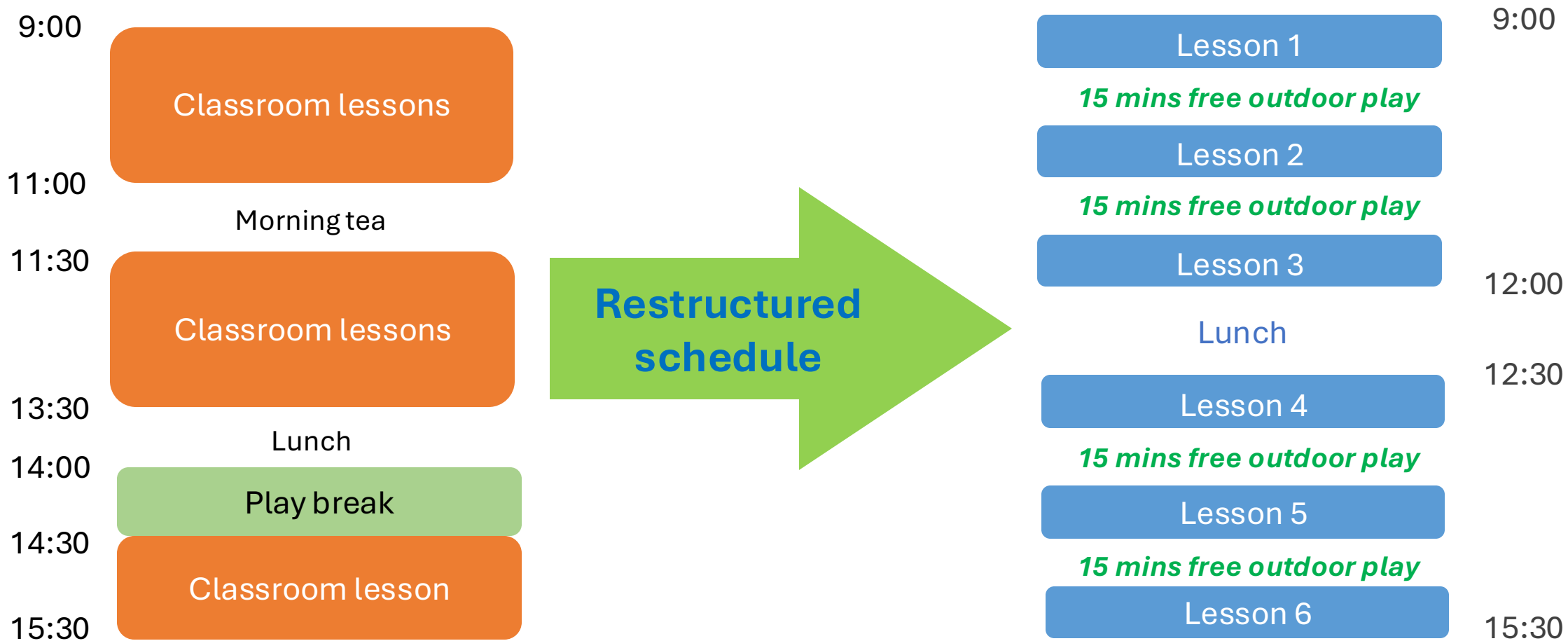
Child development studies suggest that the time for which a child typically can maintain **attention on cognitive tasks** (e.g., reading or mathematics) in primary school ranges from about 10 mins to 30 mins. After that, most children need a recess. School schedules should be adjusted to children's ability to learn and their natural need to play.

“A primary cause of the rise in mental disorders is a decline over decades in opportunities for children and teens to play, roam, and engage in other activities **independent of direct oversight and control by adults.**” (Gray et al., 2023).



# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

## 2 Restructured school day



# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

2

## Restructured school day

### Benefits:

- 1) Opportunities to build better student-student relationships
- 2) Improved student engagement, health and learning
- 3) Time for teachers to recharge

### Challenges:

- 1) Traditions and current structural regularities
- 2) Building culture of trust and responsibility in school
- 3) Parents' expectations

# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

3

## Free healthy school meals for all

Healthy food is an essential element for children to learn well and be well. Students with regular access to healthy meals together with their friends and adults during school days have shown better wellbeing and learning, and consequently greater overall positive relationships in school.

*“Schoolwide free-meal programs fuel better classroom outcomes for students.”*  
(Brookings Institution, 2021)



# 3 simple ideas to healthier relationships

3

## Free healthy school meals for all

### Benefits:

- 1) Opportunities to build healthier relationships
- 2) Improved student health, wellbeing and learning
- 3) Understanding the importance of healthy nutrition and sustainable development

### Challenges:

- 1) Practical arrangements when facilities are missing
- 2) Cost (estimated at \$1000-\$1500 per student annually)
- 3) Parents' views and expectations

# Thank you!



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