



University of
South Australia

Centre for Islamic
Thought & Education

8th Annual Australian Islamic Schooling Conference

Islamic Schooling Renewal: A Focus on Assessment

Why, What and How We Assess
in Australian Islamic Schools?

16th-17th August 2025

Australian Islamic College Thornlie,

17 Tonbridge Way, Thornlie WA 6108



**Beyond the Test:
“Reclaiming purpose and
possibility for flourishing
learners”**

**Pasi Sahlberg
16 August 2025**



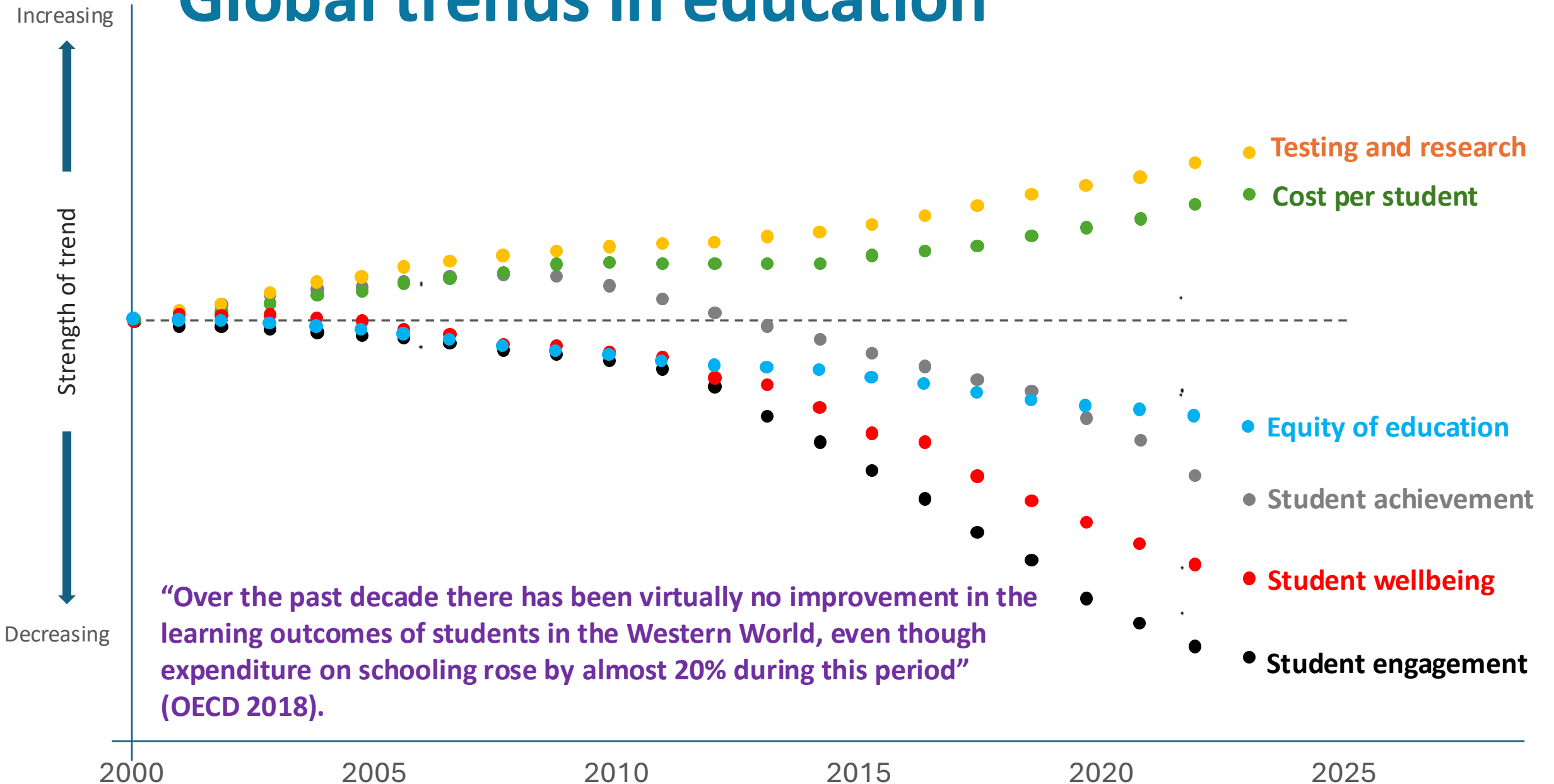
Islamic Schools
Association of Australia



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Global trends in education

Global trends in education





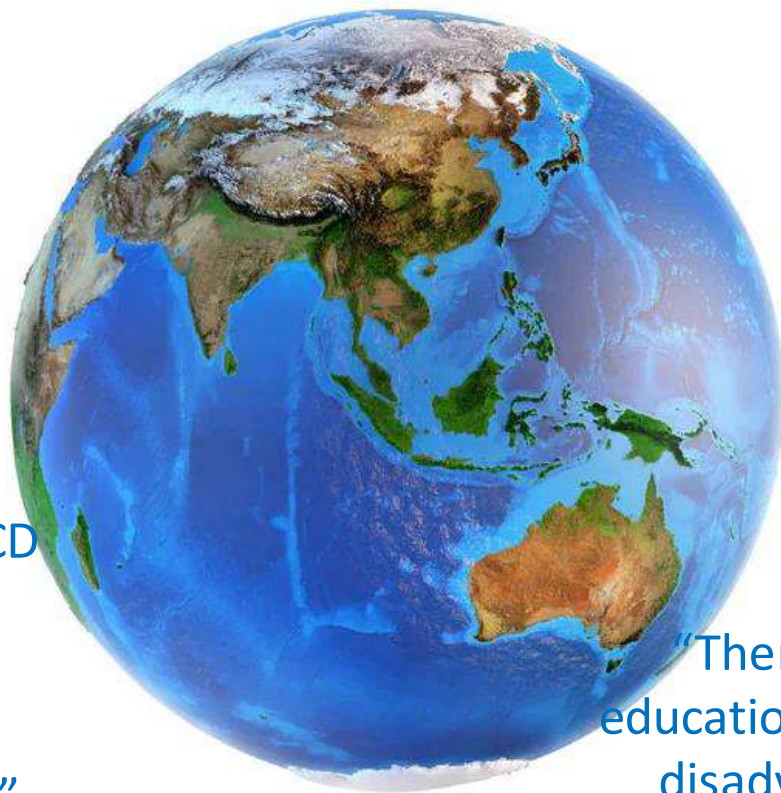
“260 million children, adolescents and youth are **not at school** – just half of them achieve the basic level of proficiency required.”

– Global Education Monitoring Report 2020



“**The achievement gaps** across the OECD countries between the most socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged 15-year-old students is equivalent to over 3 years of schooling.”

– PISA 2018



THE WORLD BANK

“There is **a global learning crisis** that amplifies educational inequalities that severely hobbles the disadvantaged youth who most need the boost that a good education can offer.”

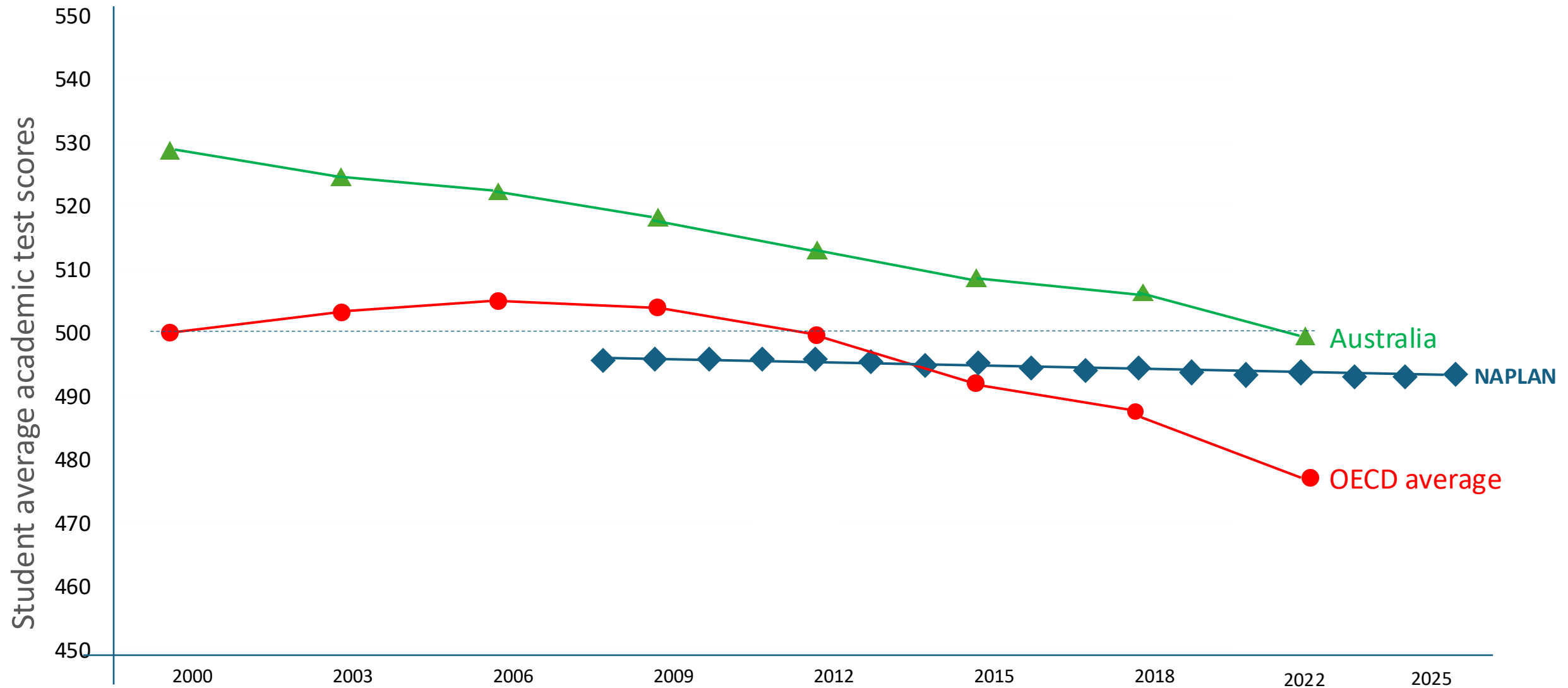
– Human Development Report 2018



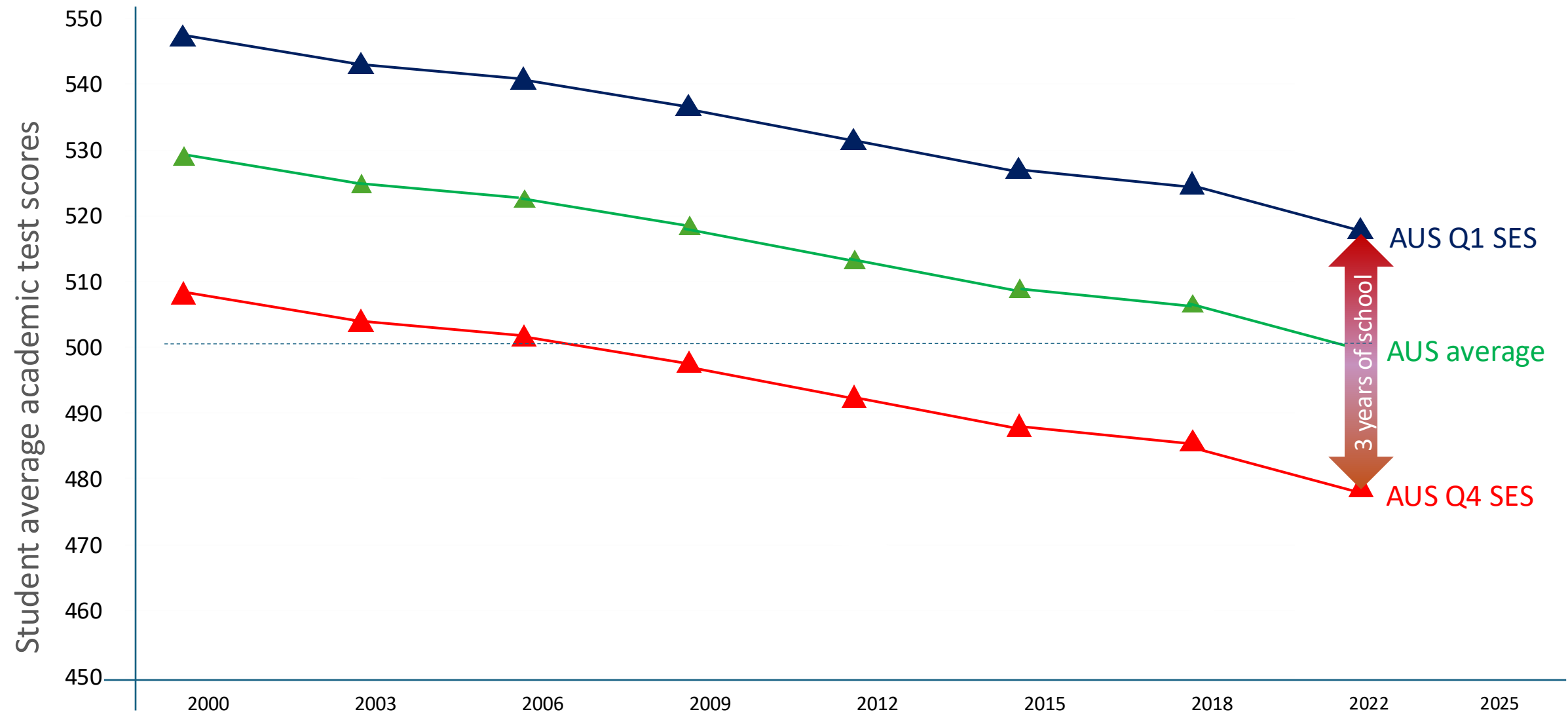
“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results.”

Australian schools up close

Student achievement in Australia

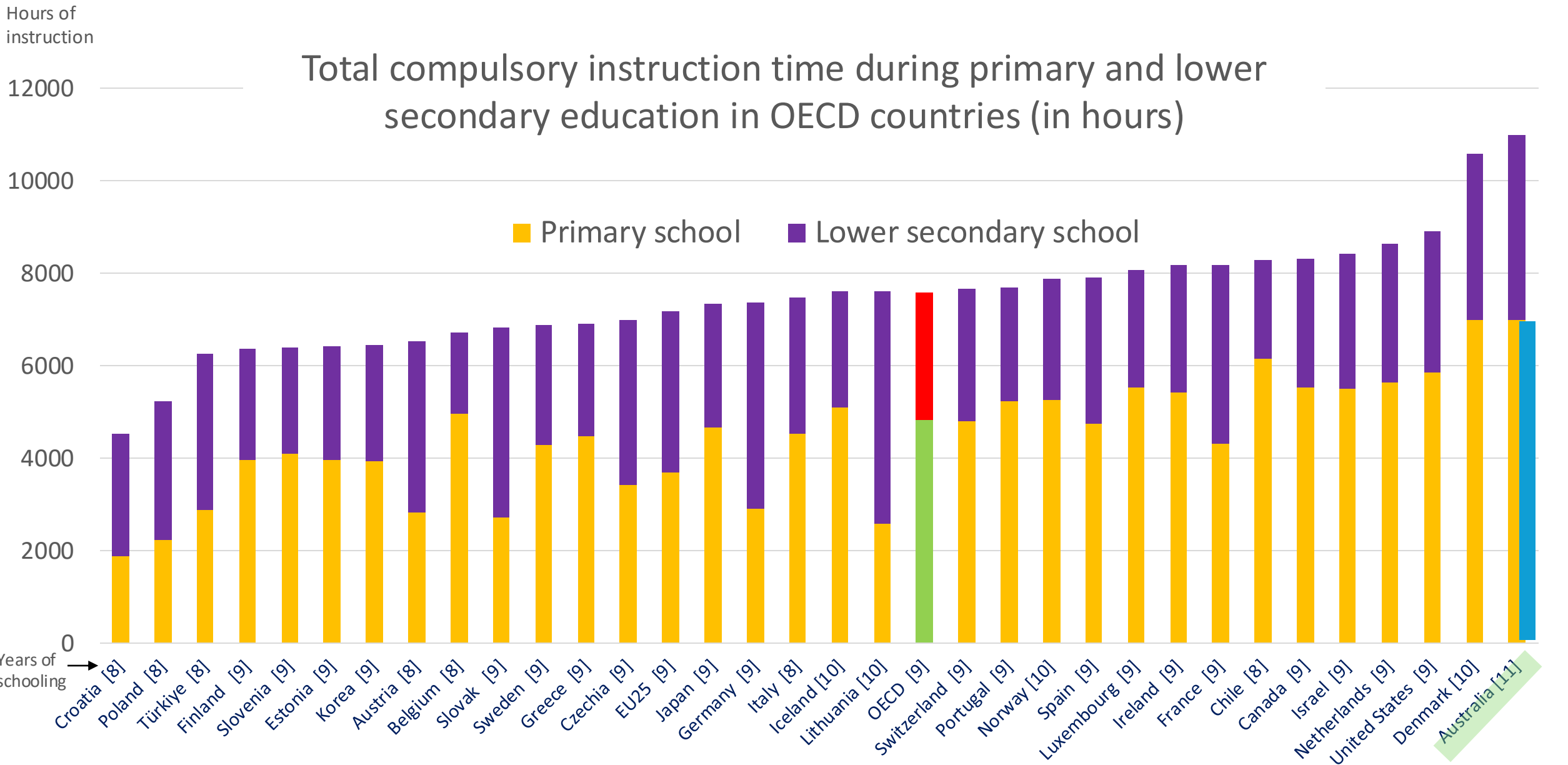


Student achievement in Australia



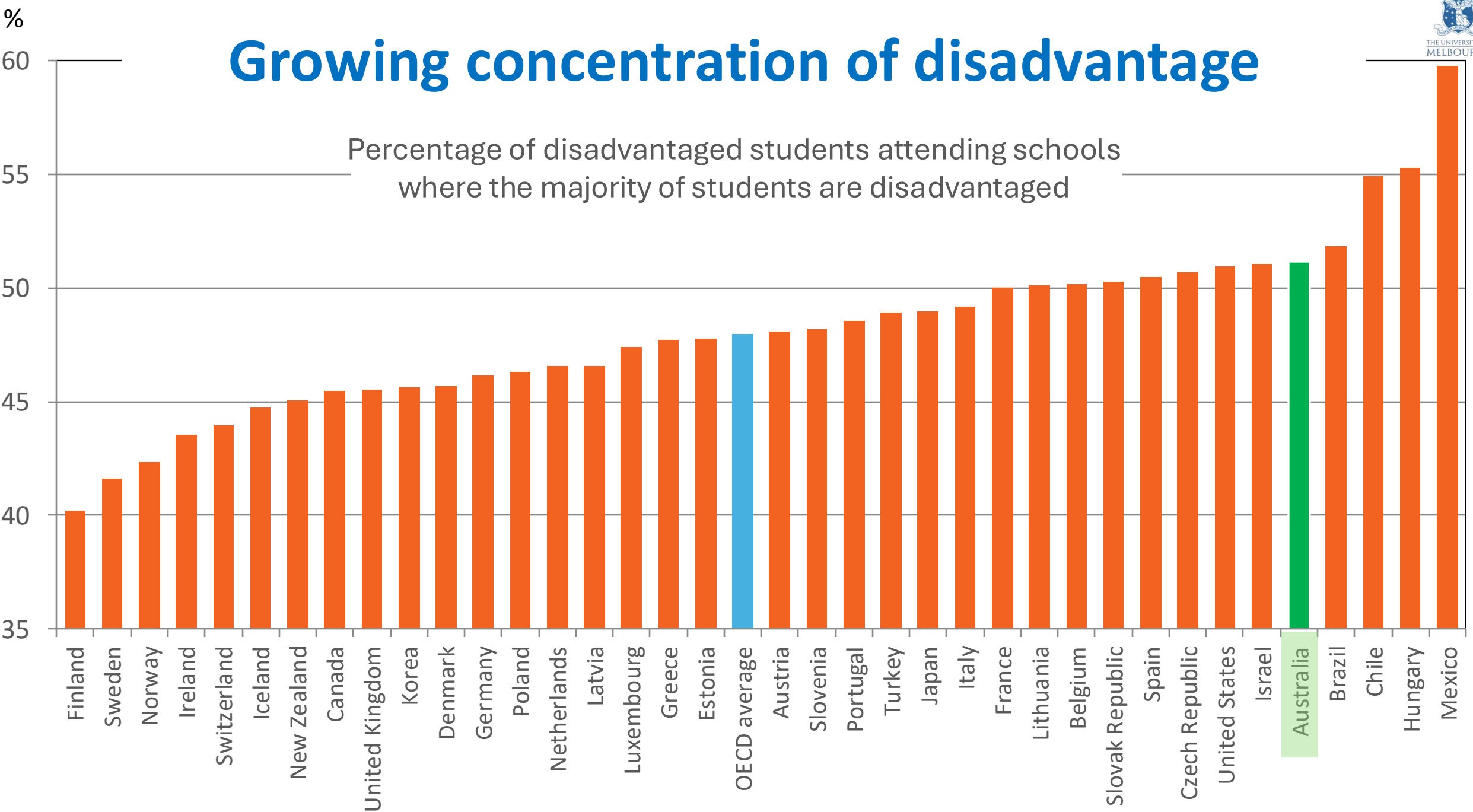
Excessive instruction time

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

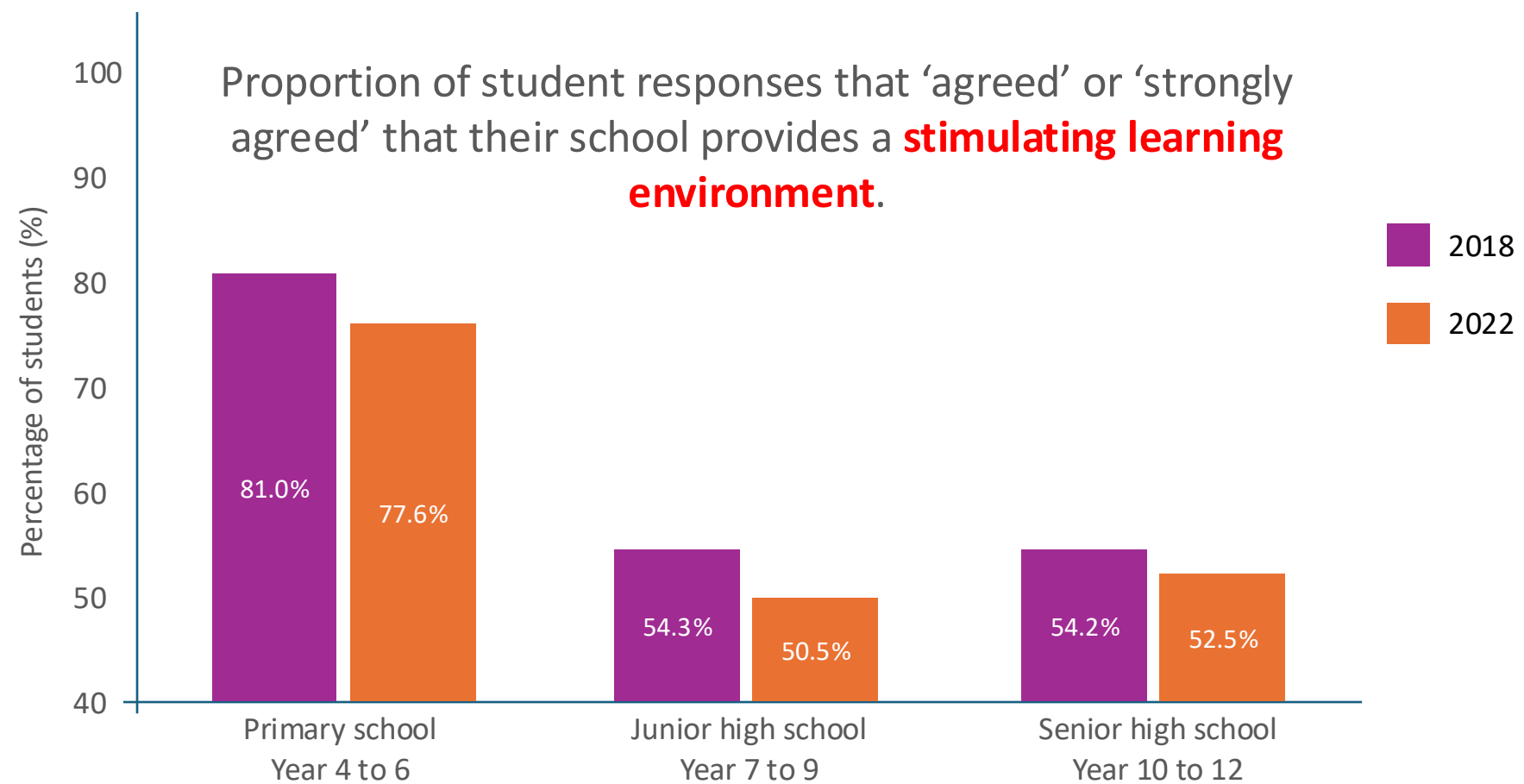


Source: OECD (2023)

Growing concentration of disadvantage



Declining engagement



Let the children flourish

Purpose of education

Personal:

To help individuals develop their talents, passions, and sense of identity to live flourishing lives.

Cultural:

To pass on the values, knowledge, and understanding that allow communities to thrive, while also fostering cultural diversity and creativity.

Economic:

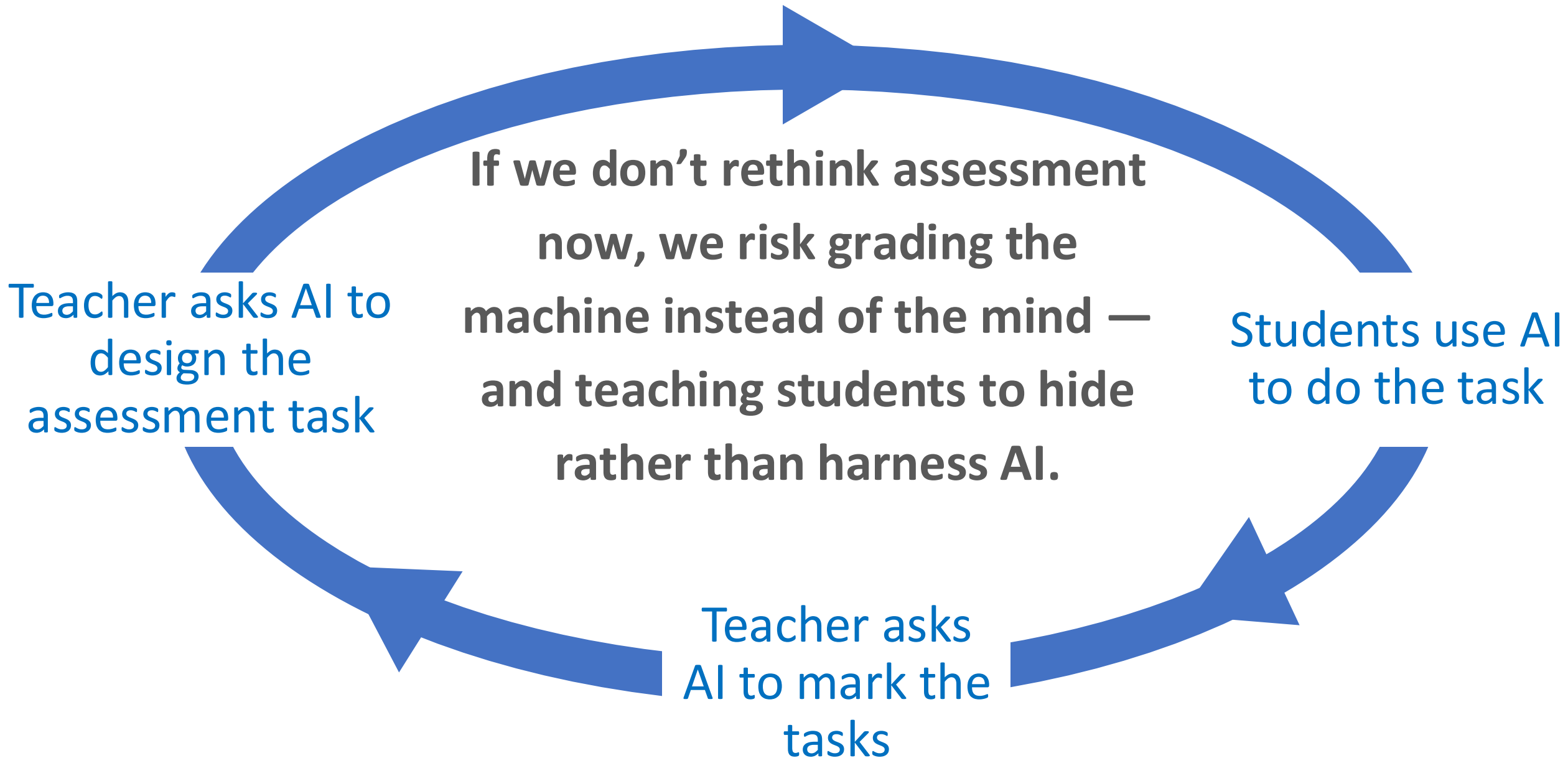
To prepare people with the skills, adaptability, and innovation needed to contribute to the economy in a changing world.



Global trends shaping the future of education?



The AI paradox



Right now, advanced AI models — such as GPT-4 and GPT-5 — can do *exceptionally* well on many traditional school and university assessments, usually at or above the top human performance.

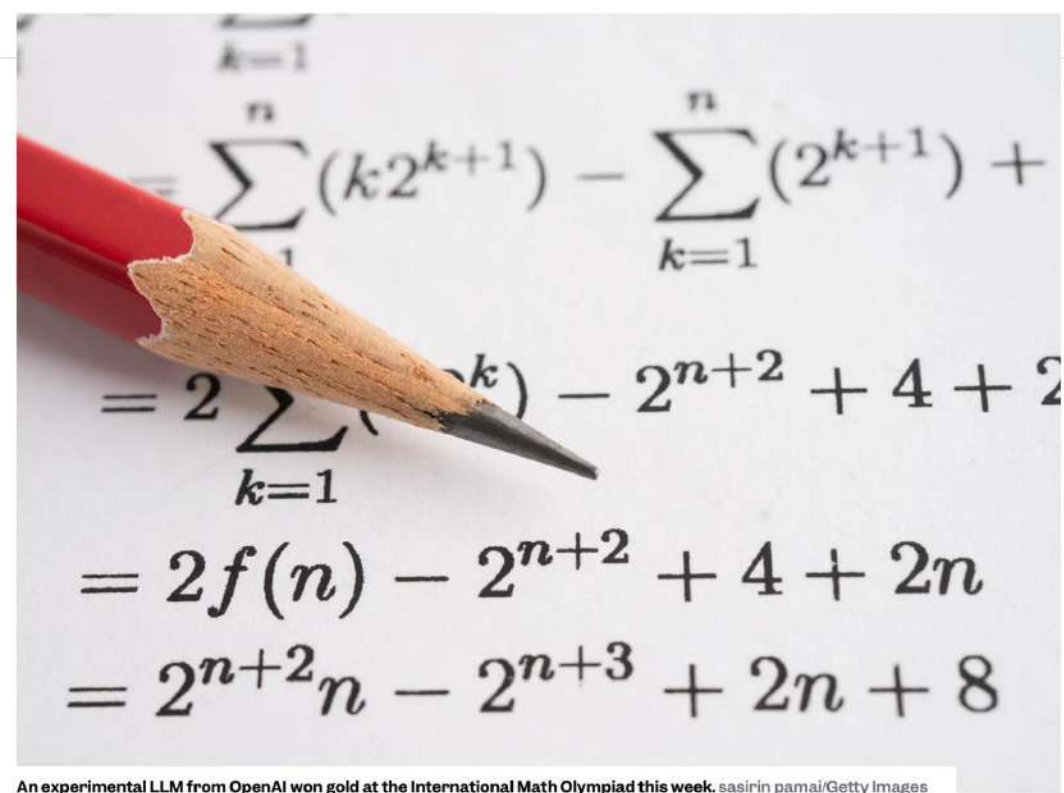
BUSINESS INSIDER

DOW JONES ▲ +0.47% NASDAQ ▲ +0.95% S&P 500 ▲ +0.78% AAPL ▲ +0.26% NVDA ▲ +0.03% MSFT ▲ +0.17% AMZN ▼ -0.01% META ▲ +0.1%

AI

OpenAI just won gold at the world's most prestigious math competition. Here's why that's a big deal.

By [Lakshmi Varanasi](#)



An experimental LLM from OpenAI won gold at the International Math Olympiad this week. sasirin pamai/Getty Images

How GPT-5 Might Perform on Different Types of School/College Assessments



Assessment tasks where AI struggles compared to humans

Authentic performance tasks

Oral presentations, artistic performances, collaborative projects, or practical lab work.

Self-reflection and metacognition

AI can generate text that sounds reflective, but it doesn't actually *experience* learning or emotion.

Personalised or very recent knowledge

If a test requires niche, very recent, or unpublished information, AI may be outdated.


What can we do?

New focus of assessment and test designs

If assessments reward memorisation and formulaic answers, AI will dominate them — possibly making such tests obsolete.

If tests assess originality, collaboration, creativity, and lived experience, human strengths remain central.

Assessment design will need to shift toward tasks where AI is a partner in learning rather than a proxy test-taker.



**First, measure what
you value.**



A photograph of a female teacher with brown hair tied back, wearing a teal cardigan over a pink blouse, high-fiving a young girl with pigtails in a classroom. The teacher is holding a stack of papers. Other students are visible in the background, seated at desks. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**Then, ask “How each child is
intelligent?”**

A photograph of a female teacher with brown hair tied back, wearing a teal cardigan over a pink blouse, smiling and high-fiving a young girl with pigtails. The teacher is holding a stack of papers. The girl is sitting at a desk. In the background, other students are visible at their desks in a bright classroom setting. An orange rectangular bar is located in the top left corner of the image.

**Finally, use assessment as
a mirror.**



**“We are in danger of
educating second-class
robots, not first-class
humans.”**

- Andreas Schleicher (2025)



Thank you!