

**7 December 2016**

## **Grades important but well-rounded education equally important**

ASG is urging the government to consider providing an enabling environment and holistic education of children in light of the latest international results which show Australian students are slipping behind in science, maths and literacy.

Last night the 2015 results from the OECD's latest global education survey—Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)—was released in Paris, revealing a bleak report card for Australian students in the last decade.

Australian students performed equal 10th in science (down from 8th in 2012), 20th in maths (down from 17) and 12th in reading (down from 10).

However, while student benchmarks are important ASG research confirms the focus on academic excellence is overshadowing the social and emotional growth of children.

As revealed in the second edition of the ASG Parents Report Card, parents are acutely aware of the harmonious balance between academic achievements and the social and emotional growth that their children need to succeed.

ASG CEO John Velegrinis says parents are concerned with their child's social skills and general wellbeing.

"When parents send their children to school each morning, they want to know that they've got the skills and the confidence to handle their personal problems, that they can manage their emotions and that they can talk to their friends when they need help.

But the reality is quite different. Sixty two per cent of parents believe their child is easily upset by negative experiences and almost one in two parents believe their child becomes angry when they feel they can't control things. So while parents want to see their child succeed at school, if the social skills are not there, this can be a real barrier to their educational success."

Mr Velegrinis added that the government needs to be more strategic and focus on creating an environment that enables teachers and schools to provide students with a range of learning experiences that equip them to be active participants in a challenging world.

"Even though funding isn't the only solution to uplifting education standards, it is important that we urgently address the issue of inequitable education funding in Australia. Other resources also have to be marshalled more efficiently. For example, education policies, curriculum and teacher training must continuously reflect the changing nature of knowledge and technology. We want an education system that equips students with the skills that enable access, acquisition and rigorous discernment of information as well as nurturing the emotional intelligence and the collaborative intelligence dimensions of a student's education."

View [Excellence and Equity in Education](#) and [Policies and Practices for Successful Schools](#) for more information on the 2015 PISA results.

ENDS.

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**Editor's notes:**

*The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 530,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.5 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members.*