

EDITORIAL

When a million or so students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy tests in May, attention turned to allegations of cheating. The *Adelaide Advertiser* named a teacher from St Leonard's Primary School who was allegedly caught making changes to Year 7 test answers. The alleged incident wasn't the only one to surface in South Australia. According to SA Education Minister Jay Weatherill, two other teachers were also investigated, one at Elizabeth Vale Primary School for allegedly providing improper assistance to students, the other at Rostrevor College for allegedly giving advance notice of a test topic, but neither teacher was publicly identified, a consideration not provided to the St Leonard's teacher. The minister was careful to describe the Elizabeth Vale case as an 'alleged incident' and pointed out that, 'It is important to note that this allegation of improper supervision has been denied.' The St Leonard's teacher was stood down while the SA Education Department undertook a full investigation, but before that had been completed, Weatherill described the alleged incident to the *Advertiser* as a 'gross breach of professionalism.' In a prepared statement, he advised that, 'The teacher admitted the behaviour and has been removed from duty and will be subject to a disciplinary process.' Since Weatherill referred to an initial investigation and his department's full and continuing investigation, it's fair to ask whether that initial investigation offered the teacher in question due process. Weatherill said there was nothing to suggest cheating is widespread. Fair enough, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, but the cases, and the way they've been handled, do more than redefine the meaning of 'high-stakes' testing. **T**

FAST FACTS

- Number of school students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) in schools in 2008: 219,900.
- Number of school-based apprentices and trainees: 25,700.
- Number enrolled in other VET in schools programs: 194,200.
- Percentage of VET in schools students undertaking a senior secondary certificate: 41 per cent.
- Percentage in major cities: 54.8 per cent.
- In larger regional hubs: 24.3 per cent.
- In outer regional areas: 15.7 per cent.
- In remote areas: 2.8 per cent.
- In very remote areas: 1.7 per cent.
- Percentage of VET in schools students who are Indigenous: 3.5 per cent.
- Percentage increase in the total number of VET in schools students from 2007 to 2008: 25.8 per cent.
- In the total number of school-based apprentices and trainees: 71.9 per cent.
- In the total number of students enrolled in other VET in schools programs: 21.5 per cent.

Source: *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: VET in Schools 2008*. Adelaide: NCVER.

Answers: 1. walk your school's hallways; 2. because if the effect of the improved instruction takes longer than a year, in most cases you then have to account for new variables to do with the assignment of students and teachers to particular classes, the effects of other teachers and the effects of the curriculum; 3. Ralph Saubern; 4. you bet, for and against; 5. 90 per cent, according to research by Angela Clapperton and Erin Cassell; 6. fractures; 7. forearms and elbows; 8. no, but they suggest schools need to take 'reasonable precautions' in managing the risks; 9. Tim Longwill; 10. nothing, they're just original phrases that everyone likes.

QUICK QUIZ

1. What is Donna Laubli's tip for conducting a quick audit of your school culture?
2. Why do researchers struggle to find the link between professional learning and improved student outcomes?
3. Who calls the idea that you're either 'testing' or you're 'teaching' a temptingly simple dichotomy?
4. Did Mick Wilkinson's article on evolution generate feedback?
5. What percentage of playground injuries are caused by falls from play equipment?
6. What are the most common injuries?
7. To what parts of the body?
8. Do court decisions suggest we ought to curb play and sport in schools?
9. Who said, 'We currently have no targeted legislation to adequately address cyberbullying, and the general law... remains a blunt tool'?
10. At the end of the day, in the fullness of time, when all's said and done, and the pies are selling like cakes that are very hot on account of an offer of 25 per cent off, what's wrong with clichés?

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