

EDITORIAL

2020 VISION

When Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s 1,000 ‘best and brightest brains’ met at the Australia 2020 Summit at Canberra’s Parliament House last month, education had been promoted into the PM’s 10 critical areas, after the economic infrastructure category was rebadged as ‘the productivity agenda – education, skills, training, science and innovation.’ The 100 productivity agenda Summiteers included educational researchers, unionists and even – gasp – actual educators at the chalkface. The PM said 2020 was ‘a forum for free and open public discussion in which there are no wrong answers’ to questions like ‘What options are there for funding the education system, given the complexities of federalism?’ and ‘What should the “public commitment” to education be?’ If there were no wrong answers, it’s likely there were plenty of agree-to-disagrees.

SEGREGATION?

‘White flight’ last month became a national phenomenon, apparently, after a report by Anna Patty was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in March. Quoting a confidential report by the New South Wales Secondary Principals Council on principals’ perceptions about student enrolment patterns, Patty almost single-handedly created this new phenomenon. Patty’s ‘white flight,’ however, raises several questions: did the unpublished NSW Secondary Principals Council report rely on more than a self-report survey of principals; were principals’ perceptions of ethnic-based enrolment patterns substantiated statistically in terms of actual changes in school enrolment patterns; did these relate to wider demographic changes; was it the case that only students of European appearance moved schools; and were school-changers surveyed to see why they moved? **1**

FAST FACTS

- Percentage of instructional time primary school teachers spend on English: 38 per cent.
- On Maths: 18 per cent.
- Health and Physical Education: 11 per cent.
- The Arts: 8 per cent.
- Religious Education: 4 per cent.
- Studies of Society and the Environment: 4 per cent.
- Science: 3 per cent.
- Languages Other Than English: 2 per cent.
- Technology: 1 per cent.
- Percentage of primary schools with a specialist librarian: 63 per cent.
- With a specialist LOTE teacher: 58 per cent.
- With a literacy specialist: 51 per cent.
- With a music specialist: 47 per cent.
- With a physical education specialist: 46 per cent.
- With a numeracy specialist: 10 per cent.
- With a science specialist: 8 per cent.

Source: Angus, M., Olney, H. & Ainley, J. (2007). *In the Balance: The future of Australia’s primary schools*. Australian Primary Principals Association.

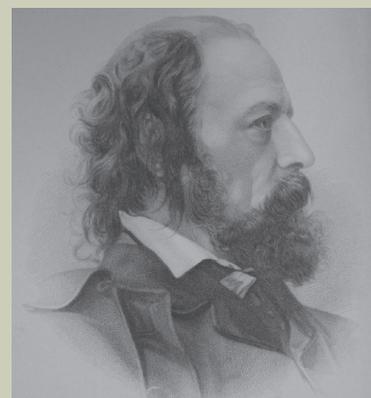
QUICK QUIZ

1. Was the former chief executive officer of Westpac, David Morgan, a child actor in 1960s TV shows?
2. Teachers in which state can become a Senior Teacher I or II?
3. Who said our government schools and many non-government schools are ‘in run-down condition or are educationally obsolete’?
4. Which country had the highest overall performance, but also one of the lowest levels of variation in student performance, in the 2006 Program for International Student Assessment?
5. How do school authorities in San Francisco get students from low-income families to avoid the benefits of a subsidised meal program?
6. Musical ability is learned, not genetic: true or false?
7. Who in 1786 said ‘life is a kind of chess’?
8. Can a student withhold consent to the disclosure of information about them?
9. Who wrote *Children and Bullying*?
10. Should Anzac be written as ‘Anzac’ or ‘ANZAC’?

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*Ours not to reason why
Ours but to do and die.*

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON, 1809
-1892, FROM ‘THE CHARGE OF THE
LIGHT BRIGADE,’ SHOWING HE WAS A
POET, NOT AN EDUCATOR



Answers: 1. yes; 2. Western Australia – and, okay, okay, South Australia has Advanced Skills Teacher 1 and 2 classifications – calm down – and they have something similar in Tasmania; 3. Professor Brian Caldwell; 4. Finland; 5. they get them to queue up separately from higher-income paying students – brilliant; 6. true, according to research by Elizabeth Margulis; 7. Benjamin Franklin in *The Morals of Chess*; 8. yes, according to the Federal Privacy Commissioner; 9. Ken Rigby; 10. no, for Anzac biscuits, say, but yes, when specifically abbreviating the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.