

PRIVATE SCHOOLS SAY GONSKI STUDIES WRONG, PREJUDICED

by Andrew Stevenson, Education Editor, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

The private school sector has criticised the quality and assumptions of the key research projects commissioned by the Gonski review of education, while questioning the independence and accuracy of the work.

In their final submissions to the review of school funding, the Independent Schools Council of Australia, the Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia, the NSW Parents Council and the Independent Education Union all rounded on work released last month by the Gonski review.

The NSW Parents Council criticised what it termed a "shameful attempt to develop class war debate". Instead of recognising that parents make radical financial decisions in order to choose schools that support their philosophical approach to raising their children, the tenor of the reports was that they chose to go private merely because they "are blessed with greater, wealth, income, power or possessions".

Responding to calls for accountability in the use of taxpayer funds, the council also said non-government school parents are subsidising parents of children in government schools and are entitled to greater insights into the "inefficient allocation and deployment of government funding for schools".

The funding review, headed by David Gonski, is scheduled to report to the federal government by the end of the year. Apart from releasing four commissioned reports - which it did not endorse - it has given little insight into its thoughts and directions.

But the private school lobby has seen enough to be on its guard about what the Independent Schools Council terms a "high stakes" funding review. "A number of reports strongly reflect an inherent bias against non-government schools," the council submitted.

"That these reports were allowed to be released without these overt and covert biases being addressed undermines the

credibility of the research informing the Panel's deliberations," it said. The council accused the authors of the Nour Group report of making "inflammatory and inaccurate statements" and relying on opinion not research.

A key proposal in a report by Allen Consulting is for the establishment of an education resource standard,

cheating or fraudulent behaviour when school funding or resourcing is tied to high-stakes literacy and numeracy tests," it wrote.

Independent school principals are also worried by the lack of detail about how such a standard might work in practice, as well as how other funding ideas scoped by the reports might function.



the amount of money needed for a student to reach minimum educational benchmarks.

It is a proposal that concerns the independent schools sector, which said the data on which it would be built is inadequate.

The report also provided no details about how it might be implemented making it impossible to assess the impact on individual independent schools.

The independent teachers union is also worried about the data, particularly an apparent reliance on Naplan test results, an approach it said "is seriously flawed". "Overseas experience clearly points to evidence of test coaching, widespread

"AHISA would be concerned if the Review panel were to recommend any of these proposals without further intensive consultation with school sector representatives," it said. And the headmasters' association repeats the accusation of prejudice.

"The inherent bias against non-government schooling evident in the research papers shows that non-government schools, particularly independent schools, are still struggling to be deemed legitimate providers of school education in Australia," it submitted.

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SCHOOL OF THE TERM

Lutheran Primary School Wagga Wagga



LPSWW is a double streamed primary school located in regional NSW. We are privileged to serve 382 students and their families each day. We are one of the four Lutheran Schools in NSW, the others being St Pauls College at Walla Walla, St John's Lutheran Primary at Jindera and St Pauls Lutheran Primary

at Henty. In total there are 85 Lutheran schools in Australia. Being small in number I'm quite regularly asked 'What is a Lutheran school?'

As a Lutheran school we openly proclaim that the gospel of Jesus (the grace of God) informs all activities. Our schools don't rely on a program to be Christian but rather an understanding that all we do is carried out in light of our beliefs.

Throughout our Lutheran schools our **'Vision for learners and learning in Lutheran Schools'** provides a framework for decision making. Our **'Lifelong Qualities for Learners'** articulate our core values of love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, courage, humility, hope, quality and appreciation. It further describes our aspirational attributes and abilities that we hold for students in Lutheran schools. (www.lutheran.edu.au). We strive for our students who have been part of Lutheran schools to be

- Self-directed, insightful investigators and learners
- Discerning, resourceful problem solvers and implementers
- Adept, creative producers and contributors
- Open, responsive communicators and facilitators
- Principled, resilient collaborators and leaders
- Caring, steadfast supporters and advocates

It is the integration of our core values and focus on desired characteristics and outcomes for our students that come to the fore at phases of schooling such as the transition of our Year six students to High School.

As we complete Term Four at LPSWW we have the privilege of graduating for the 30th occasion our Year 6 students. I always find this a time of great reflection as I recall these students beginning with us nearly 7 years ago for their first

days of Primary school. They came to us as excited 5 year olds embarking on their journey to big school. Over their seven years of schooling with us we have provided them with programs and activities to build independence, self confidence and belief. They have been buddies, peer support leaders, SRC reps, school and house captains, served others through fundraising, solved problems both in and outside the classroom, inquired and collaborated on learning projects. Progressively we have scaffolded our students to accept responsibility for their learning, timetable and manage learning and homework activities, to face challenges and grow and develop with their peers. Now we intentionally engage and support them and their families with orientation programs for High School.

While all these programs and activities and the numerous others that all schools rightly implement are important it is my belief that as Lutheran Schools it is the integration of our values and framework into every moment and experience during the seven years of their journey with us that creates a 'lifestyle'. This develops the lifelong skills that enable our students to confidently and successfully approach their futures and the milestone of transition from Primary to High School.



BRINGING PARENTS UP TO SPEED – THRIVING NOT JUST SURVIVING BEING A PARENT! **FREE EVENT**

In conjunction with Randwick and Waverley Council, the NSW Parents' Council invites you to the third free *Bringing Parents up to Speed* workshop. The focus of the afternoon will be on youth mental health issues, strengthening families and building resilience. This will be an interactive community event and everybody is welcome.

FORUM WILL INCLUDE:

- Expert Speakers
- The Resilience Doughnut (how to build resilience)
- Your questions answered by professionals
- Meet your local youth services

When: Saturday 29th October from 1pm – 4pm
Where: Randwick Town Hall

This is a FREE event but places are limited so please reserve your spot online at www.parentscouncil.nsw.edu.au today or phone (02) 9955 8276

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Grieve



With the recent release of the Commissioned Research Papers from the Gonski Review of Schooling Funding, the Council has spent the month of September formulating its response with well over 700 pages of research to disseminate. The Council was greatly concerned that several of the Research Papers provided little evidence to support the assumption that parents make decisions to enrol

their children in independent schools merely because they are blessed with greater 'wealth, income, power or possessions' as purported in the Emerging Issues Paper. As stated in the Council's submission to the Review, a vast majority of parents of children at independent schools make significant financial sacrifices to send their children to their school of choice. As previously commented by the Council, 67% of independent schools in NSW are rated as low Socio Economic Status (SES) schools with many parents working more than one job to send their children to their school of choice.

The Council was also concerned at the lack of consistency in the standard of research in the reports and that the Research Reports had not been subjected to 'peer review' as is the norm. The Council also noted with concern the express acknowledgement in some papers of the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

having had substantive input into some of the commissioned research which led the Council to question the independence of some of the research.

The Council was also concerned at the limited research on Students with a Disability (SWD) or Special Needs in the Research Papers and the fact that will still do not have a disability definition. The Council notes that at the recent Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) meeting, held in Melbourne on Friday 14 October, that the Educational Ministers have agreed to develop a plan for the collection of 'nationally consistent' data on school students with disability.

The Council remains committed to its stance that; more funding should be provided for all schooling; no school should lose funding in 'real' terms; that all Australian children should receive government funding support for their education; extra funding should be provided for students with a disability or special needs; increased government support is needed to meet the costs of schooling infrastructure; and that independent schools reflect the diversity of our community.

We congratulate Minister Piccoli's initiative for holding a forum on Rural and Remote Education with his state and territory counterparts and the Ministers have agreed that NSW would lead further work on the action required to address the needs of rural and regional communities.

PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

Mrs. Heather Norton,
Principal The Scots School Albury



I learned a new verb this week - facebook! When asking my youngest daughter had she heard from a friend she replied 'No, but I can facebook her to see where she is.' Sound familiar?

This reminded me of the need to talk to our children about the use of Facebook and social media sites. What we write about ourselves, say about others, or comment on, remains "on

the record" in the virtual world of technology.

I wonder if you have ever "googled" yourself (another verb!) or used search engines such as the Wayback to track your digital footprint.

I invite you to visit <http://wayback.archive.org/web/> and place the address of a website you regularly visit in the search engine. Surprising results! You can access previous versions of the site, read the articles, and view the pictures of an era past - demonstrating that our digital presence is ever present.

We know that the technology is available to track and hack into pages that we assumed were no longer visible. We live in a world which can judge us through our interactions with technology. Potential candidates for positions in the corporate world are screened using programmes which seek to uncover their past; a frightening but realistic practice.

Teachers are also learning the importance of learning the nuances of this new world. We too are pioneers in the on-line environment and are rapidly grasping the reality of the immediacy of our interactions. We are in a constant state of learning and relearning as we strive to keep our students ahead of the game.

As parents we want to protect our children and provide them with every opportunity to shine in the future. Now is the time to act!

I encourage you to regularly ask your son or daughter to show you their Facebook page - enquire about their Facebook friends. Remind them that a "friend" is someone who they know personally, not through the anonymous world of cyberspace.

However, it is important to remain positive about the use of this technology - as communication of any form is a way of reaching out to others. Using social media such as Facebook encourages our children to keep in contact, share ideas and seek advice; a tool of enormous potential.

The power is in their hands, but as parents we are responsible for sharing the wisdom of years. We may not feel prepared for the virtual world our children live in, yet our experience dealing with our own challenges is the greatest gift we can impart.

My youngest daughter, Emma (now 22), has now reduced her vast list of Facebook friends. She tells me that the new more is now less!

ENGAGING WITH PARENTS, FAMILIES AND CARERS

By Dr. Sue Saltmarsh,

Associate Professor of Educational Studies at the Australian Catholic University

In June 2010, the NSW Parents' Council, in conjunction with the NSW Joint Parent Forum, received \$163,500 from the State Government to develop programs that contribute to how both pre-service teacher education and teacher professional development around parent and family engagement.

The Joint Forum has commissioned Dr. Sue Saltmarsh, Associate Professor of Educational Studies at the Australian Catholic University, to lead the project. Programs will be developed in consultation with an executive committee from the joint parents' forum, together with academic and professional advisory panels.

The Engaging with Parents, Carers and Families project team has completed two studies thus far in 2011. The first study explored parents' experiences of school engagement through focus groups with NSW parents from independent, Catholic and public school sectors in urban, outer metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

The second study explored how parent-school engagement is taught in Australian teacher education programs, and analysed program information and conducted interviews with teacher educators from 16 participating universities.

Findings from the first study show that parent engagement takes many forms, but that family circumstances can limit the forms of involvement most often recognized and valued by schools. Work and community commitments, care responsibilities young children, or for ill, disabled or elderly family members, can mean that for many families, parent engagement takes place primarily within the home context, rather than through activities such as volunteering, fund-raising, and participation in parent representative councils.

Parents interviewed identified a range of areas in which they felt the teaching profession need to be equipped, with most citing effective communication strategies as being of critical importance. Problems typically described by parents include: poor or inconsistent communication; not being notified of problems at school until they had become a major issue;

feeling labeled as a 'problem parent' after raising concerns or making complaints; and in some cases, being made to feel dismissed, unwelcome or excluded.

Findings from the study show that school culture is crucial to fostering strong relationships between parents and schools, with parents citing the importance of factors such as school leadership, and the responsiveness of teaching and administrative staff, to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment. The study also found that parents are generally mindful of the complex nature of teacher's work, and that when well-informed; parents are likely to be supportive of a range of teaching styles and preferences for levels of parent involvement in classroom activities.

Findings from the second study identify four key domains in which pre-service teacher education programs typically address the issue of parent-school engagement. These include: 1) family-school relations covered as a topic within general, foundational approaches in units dealing with socio-cultural, historical and ecological contexts of education; 2) stand-alone units in special interest areas of study such as those included in programs for Indigenous and NESB/EAL education, special needs education and the education of rural/remote students and boys; 3) stand-alone units explicitly devoted to addressing questions of parent or community engagement, including units dealing with professional communication; and 4) professional experience (also referred to as school placement or practicum).

Findings from this study challenge the prevailing view that teacher education does not address parent engagement, but suggest instead that the dispersed and variable ways in which it is often addressed make it difficult to establish the frequency and depth with which student learning on this topic can be ensured. While it is clear that some programs attend to the topic only minimally, others maintain it as a focus that is integrated and extended across programs.

Findings from these two studies are being used to inform development of resources for professional development and pre-service teacher education.

PARENTS IN TRANSITION – MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

By Angie Wilcock



Whether our children are moving from pre-school to 'big school', primary to secondary, or secondary to tertiary or the work place, parents ALWAYS have a role to play – significantly different in each phase, but a role nonetheless.

In the younger years, we want to be involved in as many avenues of our children's' education as possible - reading groups, canteen, P&F committees, fund-raising activities,

excursion assistants, teacher's aides - the roles are varied and we support with as much time and energy as our daily lives allow. We are ENCOURAGED to support!

The move from primary to secondary school takes on a different perspective - a more 'hands off' approach. Yes, there are still opportunities to be involved within the school itself, such as parent committees, canteen assistants, school councils or advisory boards etc, but many parents suddenly find themselves feeling more like 'onlookers' than 'participants' in their child's education.

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AWARD WINNING SCHOOL PROGRAM



Congratulations to our affiliated school, St Philip's Christian College - D.A.L.E School, for their recent win in the NAB Schools First Awards for their DALE Young Mothers' Program Early Intervention.

The DALE Young Mothers' Program recently celebrated 10 years of operation having commenced in

August 2000 under the administration of St Philip's Christian Education Foundation to meet the needs of teenage women in the Newcastle and Hunter area who were unable to complete their High School education because of pregnancy or young motherhood.

The Program aims to provide a service that will enable young pregnant girls and young mothers to continue their education in an environment that is both flexible and supportive of their particular needs and conducive to learning. The provision of the on-site child care facility adjacent to the classrooms allows the mothers to be in close proximity to their babies and therefore participate in the daily care during the school day.

A flexible curriculum with teacher support allows for flexible entry points throughout the year and provides the students with the opportunity to self-pace and self-regulation. The classroom opens from 9am to 3.30pm, but allows late starters up to 10am. This flexibility in study patterns and starting times is designed to accommodate the needs of motherhood and pregnancy.



The Program operates within a strengths-based solution-focus structure. By creating a climate in the Program that is positive and supportive and the conditions that reflect the social justice principles of philosophy of 'power with', 'respect' and 'ownership' the young mothers are able to be in control of their own process of change and development.

The Program provides support where a need is recognised. We provide a mini bus service for morning and afternoon pick ups and drop offs from different pre-arranged locations in the Newcastle area. The Program runs classes that address parenting, relationship and life skills - baby care - such as infant massage, breast feeding, child development, dental hygiene; self-esteem, conflict resolution, relationships; vocational – such as cooking, car maintenance; and the developmental issues of the babies in the crèche. Outings and group activities throughout the year enable the young mothers peer interaction and peer support.

There are currently 48 students enrolled in the Program with 38 babies in the crèche. Students usually attend on a part time basis, 3 or 4 days per week.

The Program caters for approximately 60 disadvantaged youth with often extremely high support needs in the course of a year. The majority had dropped out of school well before year 10. Over the 10 years that the Program has been operating a number of young mothers have entered university to study nursing, teaching, midwifery, child psychology, nuclear medicine; and many more moving into careers in aged care and children services.

A partnership was developed between the school and a local parenting and child health organization, First Steps Parenting, which takes a preventative approach and draws on the principles of early intervention by addressing parenting and baby health needs on-site. The partnership takes a holistic approach to the teenage participants and recognizes that there are many issues that may impact on their ability to stay connected to education. The partner shares their expertise with the school and visits weekly to provide ongoing support for a group of young mothers, they workshop ideas and identify concerns. There is a longitudinal impact from the project as the young mothers have benefited from the program and their children also benefit from improved parenting.

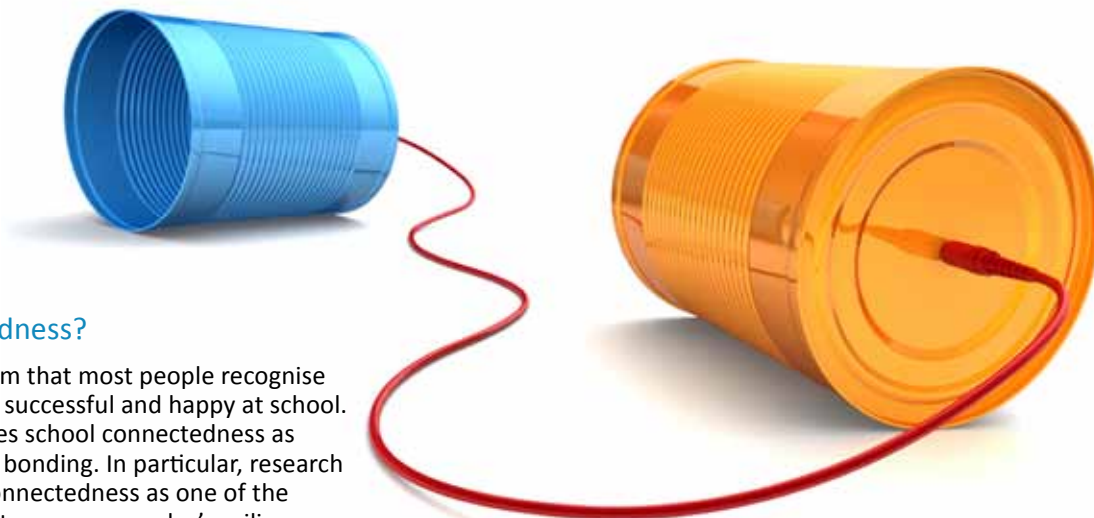
What the judges said: The school and the partner are committed to the long term success of this program so that the girls and their children benefit. Keeping students at school is all important and this partnership works hard to make sure this happens.



SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

Rose Cantali MAPS CCP CEDP

Clinical Psychologist www.psychmatters.com.au | NSW Parents' Council State Executive



What is school connectedness?

School connectedness is a term that most people recognise as essential for children to be successful and happy at school. The research literature, defines school connectedness as school engagement or school bonding. In particular, research on resilience has identified connectedness as one of the protective factors that promotes young peoples' resilience, that is, their ability to bounce back following an adversity in their lives (Waters, Cross & Shaw, 2010). As educators and parents we are aware that young people who enjoy school actually engage better academically and socially within the school environment and with that connect better with those who are part of that environment such as their peers and teachers. However current research on school connectedness is emerging as being a contributing factor to young people not only for good grades at school but more importantly for their overall mental health.

How can you identify whether your child is connected to school

Young people's level of connectedness can sometimes be a symptom of problems related to a young person's emotional state at the time. Many young people who present with more serious issues such as bullying, lack of motivation, anxiety at school and refusing to attend school are often masking emotional problems. It is therefore important that any type of school refusal by a child or adolescent should be investigated. It is suggested that parents maintain an active participation into their children's schooling by sustaining open communication with their child as well as with the school and teachers (Steinberg, Lamborn & Darling, 1992). It is important to note any symptoms that the child may be presenting with, such as symptoms of depression and anxiety that may hinder their motivation to attend school (Dube, 2009). Further, any instances of bullying need to be reported monitored and relieved (Waters, Cross & Shaw, 2010). Parents need to be aware of whether their child is connected to the academic aspect or only connected to the social environment at school as it has been suggested that if the child maintains a connection to both aspects the overall school connection will be stronger (Waters, 2010).

How is school connectedness developed?

Schools are endeavouring to promote and foster school connectedness by implementing a variety of programs such as mentoring, transition programs etc. However numerous integrative factors play a role in the development of school connectedness. Young people's connection to school will be stronger if they feel that they have a solid social support network at school and have the support and respect from their teachers (McNeely & Falci, 2004).

This support needs to be extended to the home environment where parents need to demonstrate encouragement and assistance in matters regarding school. Further, the workload and materials taught need to be appropriate and interesting so that the child feels that they are in control of their academic performance (Yamamoto, 2010). If the child feels connected to their peers, teachers, academic work and have the support from their parents, their motivation to attend and perform better at school will be increased (McNeely & Falci, 2004).

What are the implications for students for positive and negative school connectedness?

Positive school connectedness has been associated with higher academic achievement, better development of social skills and higher self-esteem. Young people who do not have a strong connection to the school environment may find their academic performance and motivation lacking and may not develop essential social skills that a social support system may foster (Bauch & Goldring, 1995). Consequently, young people with poor school connectedness are at risk of developing significant mental health issues that impact on all areas of their life and relationships with others

How can parents foster positive school connectedness?

Parents may foster positive school connectedness by providing a positive home environment. Physical and emotional neglect are causes for poor school connectedness. Young people may not be able to focus on the benefits of school if they feel their needs are being neglected at home. It is essential that a supportive and safe environment be produced, where attention is paid to schoolwork and skill development is fostered (Bauch, & Goldring, 1995). Should a young person be exhibiting any symptoms of anxiety, help should be sought and the symptoms should not be ignored as they may be a representing factor of an issue (Wood, 2007).

Parenting skills should also be considered and an authoritative style of parenting has been suggested as the most constructive style. Authoritative parents listen to their children, encourage independence, allow the expression of opinions but also place limits and consequences of behaviour and administer fair discipline (Steinberg, Lamborn & Darling, 1992).

NSW PARENTS' COUNCIL – 2011 IN BRIEF

The NSW Parents' Council would like to thank all the parents, carers, principals and staff from our affiliated schools for their ongoing support in 2011. We continue to advocate on your behalf and represent you in the educational arena here in NSW.

Here are some of our highlights for 2011:

- Provided a submission to The Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling.
- Responded to The Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling: Papers on Commissioned Research. <http://www.parentscouncil.nsw.edu.au/AnnouncementRetrieve.aspx?ID=56644>
- Co-hosted Funding Facts Forum with the Association of Independent Schools NSW and Abbotsleigh School with over 500 parents attending and 64 schools being represented.
- The Council continued to be actively involved in the National Curriculum consultation process with State executives sitting on the Board of Curriculum Committees in each subject area and Board of Studies Committees.
- Represented parents in the independent sector on the following committees; Ministerial Non Government School Advisory Council, Ministerial Key Stakeholder Committee, AIS Independent Schools Consultative Committee, SSTS Student Travel Review Panel, NSW Joint Parent Forum, Pre Quality Teaching Parent Council, biannual DEEWR Parent Briefing, to name a few.
- Introduced a new marketing tool "*Find an affiliated school*" on our website.
- The NSW Parents' Council's Students with Disabilities and Special Needs (SWD) project team appointed as the Australian Parents' Council's SWD Taskforce.
- The SWD team responsible for writing the Australian Parents' Council submission on the national review of the Disability Standards (2005).
- SWD Team provided a submission and gave evidence to the NSW Parliamentary Standing Committee No: 2 Inquiry into "Transitional support students with additional or complex needs".
- The SWD Team also have produced excellent resources for parents and these can be sourced on our website under Students with Disabilities.
- A NSW School Bus Safety Community Advisory Committee has recently been formed to inquire into school bus safety in regional and rural NSW with the NSW Parents' Council representing non government school parents.
- The Council made a submission to the Bus Safety Community Advisory Committee on behalf of our rural and remote parents.
- Published four high quality newsletters and introduced regular ebulletins.
- Co-hosting a further two "*Bringing Parents up to Speed*" Forums and information evening on scaling in the HSC.
- Improvements to website content and search function to allow easier access to information on educational and social issues.
- Regular meetings with the Minister for Education and Communities and Shadow Minister.
- Increase in the number of schools affiliated and Parent Association meetings attended around NSW.

Further details on our activities can be found on our website: www.parentscouncil.nsw.edu.au

We wish you a safe and happy summer break and look forward to working on your behalf in 2012.

All the best,

Stephen Grieve
President
The NSW Parents' Council

PARENTS IN TRANSITION *(Cont... from Page 4)*

When speaking with large groups of parents, I often ask them the question: "Why is it that once our kids reach secondary school, we lose our confidence and much of our involvement?" The responses are nearly always the same: "Because our kids tell us they don't want us around"; "Because we want our kids to grow up and think for themselves" and "Because we feel comfortable in primary, but secondary school is SO different now!"

Regardless of what your children tell you, they DO need you - albeit differently. Parents clearly need a more subtle approach, but research is quite clear on this – parental involvement with their child's education long-term is critical to achievement and a positive outlook on life-long learning.

So, what can parents DO in these critical transition phases? We need to be 'clever'; we need to be intuitive; we need to be innovative; we need to be PARENTS! Regardless of our own personal secondary school or tertiary experiences, we still have experiences our children do not have as yet - broad life experience!

The days of our children recounting every incident that has happened in their daily lives at pre-school or primary school may well be over - and often replaced by a monosyllabic, adolescent grunt - but we need to find other ways to tap in.

This transition phase between primary and secondary school is associated with huge social, emotional, cognitive and developmental change...sometimes it will feel that we don't know our children at all! The brain development that occurs during this phase is massive... and the swings in behaviour and moods can be confusing for parents. Don't underestimate how tough it is for your kids as well! The more you understand about these changes, the better you will understand the behaviour...but equally important is the establishment of consistent boundaries and consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

Don't give your adolescent the chance to shut you out - ask the right question, in the right way, at the right time and you may be pleasantly surprised by the response. You may be surprised by how much information will spill out of your teenager if you are prepared to 'share' - teamwork is vital to effective communication with adolescents, particularly as they experience the uncertainties of transition.

When our children move from one phase of education to another, they experience a sense of loss - a loss of continuity and a loss of 'connectedness' with their surroundings. They experience new social networks, new educational expectations, different teachers and teaching methods, increased responsibilities - these are not necessarily negatives, but they are changes, and adjustments need to be made.

We can make a powerful and positive impact on our children's coping skills by offering support rather than frustration!

Bottom line is: never underestimate your worth as a parent! Regardless of your personal achievements, you have reached parenthood and have information, knowledge, advice and support to share with your kids - no matter their age!

Angie Wilcock is a highly regarded Australian expert and speaker on transitions in education. She has worked with experts such as Dr Michael Carr-Gregg and Dr Andrew Fuller on the 'Generation Next' team, providing information and support to parents nationally on issues of adolescent mental health. Angie now works with teachers, parents and students across Australia in the area of transition to secondary school.

YOU CAN INFLUENCE YOUR ADOLESCENT'S CHOICES ABOUT ALCOHOL!

Wanting to go out and party is a normal rite of passage for most young people and with the end of the HSC fast approaching and Schoolies on the horizon here is some practical information for parents.

As a parent you have a major influence on your adolescent child's drinking behaviour and you can help prevent them from drinking alcohol or from harmful use. Your influence on your adolescent's attitudes and decisions about alcohol is greatest before they start drinking.

Parents are important role models for their children, even during adolescence. Your attitude towards alcohol, what you drink, how much, when and where you drink are all a major influence on whether or how your adolescent will drink in the future. This influence begins at a very early age.

Please take the time to read the Parenting Guidelines for Adolescent Alcohol Use found at http://parentingstrategies.net/guidelines_introduction/ (Parenting Strategies Program (2010). Parenting Guidelines for Adolescent Alcohol Use. Melbourne: Orygen Youth Health Research Centre, University of Melbourne.)

These parenting guidelines describe a range of strategies you can use to prevent your adolescent from misusing alcohol. Select those strategies that are appropriate for your adolescent's maturity and personality.

Each family is unique and it is important that you adapt the information provided in these guidelines to your situation. These guidelines were developed for preventing or reducing adolescent alcohol consumption in Australian families.