



Queensland Independent Education Union **MEDIA ALERT**

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QIEU warns Gillard of dangerous, flawed education system arriving Monday

"We can all love New York but that does not mean being in love with the flawed school rating system of NYC's school Chancellor Joel Klein," according to Queensland Independent Education Union General Secretary Terry Burke.

Mr Burke has warned that the arrival in Australia on 24 November of the Chancellor of Education for New York City, Mr Joel Klein, on the invitation of federal Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, is a dangerous moment for Australian education.

Julia Gillard has expressed keen interest in Chancellor Klein's system of school rating as a possible structure for Australian schools.

Mr Burke, who has just returned from the USA, says: "Joel Klein's regime shows no genuine respect for educators. His system is run by lawyers and business professionals whose knowledge is remote from school experience. They always need a set of figures to make a decision rather than engaging with the reality of teaching and learning in schools and the character of their students."

"In New York City the work of a school is reduced to a single grade – A to F with no transparency as to how that grade was reached. Mr Klein does not want complex assessments of students or schools. His is a punishment model rather than a resource to assess where need exists," he said.

According to Mr Burke, Mr Klein's accountability for schools results in misdirected and nonsensical decisions being made in schools.

"It is frankly bizarre that students at a school like the Bronx High School of Science which boasts over six Nobel Awards among its alumni and where students consistently get 90% plus Maths scores constantly try to improve their scores because an 'improvement' attracts additional funding.

"Rather than use their undoubted basic mathematical ability to do extension and experimental Maths these students are engaged in 'exam prepping' classroom work."

School accountability should ultimately be a tool to improve schools not to misdirect schools into a narrow and often meaningless set of preoccupations. Schools should be accountable and there is more than enough evidence of what makes an effective school and this rather than Joel Klein's flawed prescriptions should be followed.

Authorities need to look at many factors in school effectiveness including:

- * Academic achievement, certainly, but not in terms of a narrow range of results from high-stakes testing;
- * Safety, order and discipline;
- * Teamwork for student achievement, ensuring educational professionals have the time to work collegially to produce the best learning environments for their context; and
- * Leadership practices – again to ensure leaders have the time and resources to develop their schools as effective learning communities.

"The best way to improve our already very good educational outcomes is to look to successful models where education authorities engage in genuine dialogue with educational professionals, and provide the resources necessary to achieve our goals," Mr Burke said.

"There will be no 'Education Revolution' in this country if the flawed and failed is followed rather than the evidenced and effective," Mr Burke said.

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"The Queensland Independent Education Union represents over 14,500 non-government education sector employees including teachers, principals, school support staff, grounds and maintenance staff, early childhood education staff and employees in business, international and English language colleges."

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