6 June 2012

Dear Parent,

This Thursday the Australian Education Union is asking its members to take strike action in support of a 30% pay claim.

There may be on-going disruption in the form of full day strikes or other stop work action.

Your principal together with the school’s leadership team will keep you informed about arrangements at your school.

The Government’s priority is to keep schools open so people can meet their family and work responsibilities.

Victoria’s teachers deserve a pay rise but the Government believes it must be reasonable and add real value to our children’s education by strengthening the teaching profession.

New Wage Agreement

Negotiations for a new agreement commenced in August 2011. These discussions have been generally positive, and progress was made on a range of important reforms including new categories of teachers and higher pay scales for principals who enjoy increased autonomy and responsibility in managing our schools.

The offer we have made to teachers would make the best performing teachers in Victoria the best paid teachers in the country.

We want to reward teachers for the contribution they make to improving student and school outcomes.

We want to keep our best teachers teaching, and we believe reform is needed to keep the best and brightest teachers in the profession.

Key elements of the reform we seek are set out in the attachment.

The Government continues to negotiate with the teaching profession in good faith and we look forward to a balanced and fair agreement which supports better education for all Victorian students.

More information regarding the teachers EBA can be found at:


Yours sincerely

[Signature]

The Hon. Peter Hall, MLC
Minister responsible for the Teaching Profession

The Hon. Martin Dixon, MP
Minister for Education

This original has been printed in black and white on recycled paper to reduce cost and environmental impact.
Improving school outcomes

The key reforms we seek are set out below.

Performance pay to ensure our best performing teachers are the best paid in the country

The Government believes in a strong performance management system for teachers.

The former Labor government implemented performance pay trials in more than 30 Victorian government schools and we have been carefully studying their results in order to improve the approach to recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching. Recently, other Australian governments have commenced work on performance pay systems. Performance pay systems work well in a number of Australian independent schools and neighbouring public school systems.

Under the proposed system, the top 70 per cent of teachers will be rewarded for their performance.

Teachers’ performance will be assessed on a wide range of criteria including skills in the classroom, lifting student outcomes, their non-teaching school-based activities, and their contribution to the school community.

The teachers’ union has rejected this initiative.

More face-to-face time in the classroom

We have asked teachers in large high schools to spend more time teaching children. Teachers in secondary schools spend on average 16.4 hours per week teaching during term time. The average number of teaching hours has been steadily decreasing since 2000 when it was 18 hours a week.

We have asked teachers in large high schools to increase their face to face teaching time by one hour per week.

The teachers’ union has rejected this initiative.

An appropriate approach to progression through the salary scale

In most professions, progression through the salary structure is considered a promotion in recognition of an employee’s performance and the development of new skills.

In Victoria, 99.8 per cent of government teachers progress up their pay scale every year, making a salary increase automatic in the case of teachers who have not yet reached the top of their salary scale.

We are asking the profession to assess performance more and adopt an approach to progression which reflects common standards. In the Victorian Public Service, around 80 per cent of workers progress up the pay scale each year. We have asked teachers to accept a similar progression rate and to manage those teachers who need assistance to build their skills.

The teachers’ union has rejected this initiative.

Strengthening our teaching profession

In coming weeks, we will release a paper on the importance of the teaching profession. This will look at what has worked to strengthen the profession, interstate and overseas, and the challenges we face in bringing new cohorts and new generations into the profession of teaching. The paper also looks at how we properly prepare principals for the vital role they play in our schools and communities. We encourage you to look at it when it is released.