

# EDUCATION

## Updates

29 February 2020

### ASIA & PACIFIC

**Australia, 26 Feb [Swinburne]: Australia's dual-sector universities renew call for education reform.** Swinburne's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Linda Kristjanson - together with the Vice-Chancellors of Australia's five other dual-sector universities - is calling on federal, state and territory governments to implement landmark recommendations reforming the tertiary education system to better meet the needs of students and the changing world of work. [LINK](#)

**Australia, 26 Feb [ABC]: Holocaust education becomes compulsory in Victorian state schools in bid to tackle rising anti-Semitism.** Victoria's Education Minister says high school students are receiving sub-standard education about the Holocaust, as the Government makes learning about the atrocities of World War II compulsory for years 9 and 10 students. [LINK](#)

**Australia, 25 Feb [Financial Review]: Unis offer discounts, reimbursements in battle over virus delays.** Universities are offering fee discounts and reimbursement of airfares, and the Group of Eight is considering an airline offer of charter flights to bring tens of thousands of students to Australia, as the higher education sector wrestles with the coronavirus. The University of Adelaide is offering a 20 per cent discount on semester-one fees and a \$2000 airfare reimbursement to keep students enrolled and where possible able to complete 2020 as normal [LINK](#)

**Cambodia, 25 Feb [The Phnom Penh Post]: Ministry rebuffs allegations of salary, position tampering.** The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has denied allegations that paperwork is being tampered with in order to selectively promote staff and increase salary scales. The ministry said in a press release on Tuesday that the allegations undermined the code of ethics at the ministry and the dignity of the education staff. "There has not been any irregularity regarding paperwork to promote anyone to a position or rank or increase salary scales. [LINK](#)

**Cambodia, 23 Feb [The Phnom Penh Post]: Ministry focuses on early education.** The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport will on Monday launch "Komar Rien Komar Cheh", an early childhood education programme supported by USAID, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Unesco, Unicef and many other NGO partners. The event will be presided over by Minister of Education, Youth and Sport Hang Chuon Naron. [LINK](#)

**India, 24 Feb [The Wire]: Melania's Delhi School Visit Not Political, Focus on Education: US Embassy Spokesperson.** The US embassy on Sunday said it did

not have any objection to the presence of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia during US First Lady Melania Trump's visit to a government school, but stressed that it was not a political event and the intention was to focus on education and students. The clarification came after Delhi government sources had said on Saturday that Kejriwal and Sisodia will not attend the event as their names were dropped from the guest list. Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party blamed the BJP-led Central government for it. [LINK](#)

**Malaysia, 25 Feb [FMT news]: Malaysian private education firm owners mull stake sale.** Owners of SEG International Bhd are considering selling their stakes in the Malaysian private tertiary education group, according to people familiar with the matter. Navis Capital Partners Ltd, an Asia-focused private-equity firm, and SEG International's managing director Clement Hii, have held preliminary discussions with potential advisers, the people said. [LINK](#)

**Malaysia, 24 Feb [Malay Mail]: Reshaping Malaysia's tertiary education system — Farhan Kamarulzaman.** The tertiary education system in Malaysia needs an overhaul in order to reshape it in such a way as to meet the industrial need of the country and to prepare its workforce for skills and expertise that will support the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). To begin with, adjustment of the curriculum has to be made in order to prepare the coming workforce for the challenges ahead. [LINK](#)

**Singapore, 25 Feb [The Straits Times]: Coronavirus: Universities suspend exchange programmes to South Korea, advise students there to come back.** Nanyang Technological University (NTU) student Noel was about to leave for the airport to catch a 1am flight to Seoul for a four-month exchange programme when she received an e-mail saying the programme has been suspended. The e-mail, from NTU's Office of Global Education and Mobility that handles such programmes, was sent at about 9.50pm on Sunday (Feb 25) and seen by The Straits Times. [LINK](#)

**Singapore, 24 Feb [cna]: SkillsFuture remains 'one of the most important economic and social strategies for Singapore's future': Ong Ye Kung.** The SkillsFuture programme remains "one of the most important economic and social strategies for Singapore's future", said Minister for Education Ong Ye Kung on Monday (Feb 24). Speaking to reporters at NTUC Learning Hub, Mr Ong noted that since SkillsFuture was launched five years ago, the participation rate has improved from about 30 per cent to almost 50 per cent, and that he expects it continue increasing. [LINK](#)

## [ASIA & PACIFIC \[CONT'D\]](#)

**Thailand, 26 Feb [Thailand Business News]: Bangkok closes all schools due to severe air pollution conditions.** The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has advised the general public to anticipate severe air pollution from now until the end of the month, urging them to take precautionary measures. All schools under the supervision of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) have been ordered closed from today until Friday, as air quality in the capital worsened today and the situation is likely to persist due to poor air circulation and accumulation of PM2.5 dust in the atmosphere. [LINK](#)

**Thailand, 25 Feb [The PIE News]: Thailand: Embassies to help find teachers.** The Ministry of Education in Thailand has held a meeting with several embassies to discuss how to recruit more English language teachers for schools across the country. The Bangkok Post reported education minister Nataphol Teepsuwan as saying “a large number of teachers are necessary as we are working on upgrading the entire education system” following the meeting. [LINK](#)

## [EUROPE](#)

**Belgium, 26 Feb [The Brussels Times]: It is ‘not justified’ to ban school trips to Italy.** The education minister of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Caroline Désir, believes that the spread of the coronavirus in Europe still does not justify banning school trips to Italy, La Dernière Heure reported on Wednesday. If some schools have taken the decision to cancel school trips to Italy as a precaution, a cancellation of all such visits is as yet not on the agenda. [LINK](#)

**Greece, 23 Feb [Greek Reporter]: Coronavirus: Greek Schools in Italy Close, Ed Min Bans Educational Trips.** Greek Education Minister Niki Kerameos has decided to suspend all student educational trips planned to Italy and also shut down ten Greek schools operating in the neighboring country, due to the coronavirus outbreak. There are ten Greek schools in Italy. Specifically, two are in Milan and eight in central and southern Italy. The students are to return to Greece as soon as possible, with the departure procedures coordinated by the Greek Ministry of Health. [LINK](#)

**United Kingdom, 26 Feb [BBC]: Coronavirus: Northern Ireland pupils sent home after school trips to Italy.** Pupils from three Northern Ireland schools who were recently on school trips to Italy have been sent home from class due to coronavirus concerns. Groups of students from Lismavady Grammar School, Banbridge Academy and Cambridge House Grammar in Ballymena recently returned from northern Italy. Cambridge House has sent its pupils home for 14 days. [LINK](#)

## [AMERICAS](#)

**Canada, 25 Feb [Global News]: Ontario’s Catholic teachers increase their requests on benefits, education minister says.** Ontario’s education minister came out swinging Tuesday against the Catholic teachers’ union a

day after negotiations were scuttled by what he said were new benefits demands. The Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association called off rotating strikes it had planned for this week in order to bargain Monday with the government, but by all accounts little progress was made. [LINK](#)

**USA, 24 Feb [The Progressive]: How Bloomberg Trashed Public Education in New York.** Mike Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York City now running for President, often brags about being one of the most prolific charter school creators in the United States. Bloomberg says he “absolutely” intends to expand charters in his federal education plan. This is a serious threat to public education, especially given Bloomberg’s history of using his fortune to shape policy. [LINK](#)

**USA, 24 Feb [South Florida Sun Sentinel]: Broward schools wrongly fired teacher for alleged choking, judge finds.** The Broward School District should never have fired a teacher accused of choking a student, after trusting the allegations of a boy with a history of lying and a co-worker who seemed more interested in enjoying the sun than protecting a child, a state judge wrote in a scathing report. [LINK](#)

## [AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST](#)

**Kuwait, 26 Feb [Arab Times Online]: MOE: Schools suspended from 1st Mar – 12th Mar.** Ministry of Education came to decision due to circumstances the country is going through, and based on the decision of the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Saud Al-Harbi decided to suspend schools for students and administrative bodies working in public and private schools and institutes for two weeks, starting next Sunday, March 1, until Thursday March 12, 2020. [LINK](#)

**South Africa, 26 Feb [The South African]: Budget Speech 2020: Increased spending on education and health.** Finance Minister Tito Mboweni has increased government spending on schools and healthcare as South Africa grapples with a crisis in its schools and the advent of the National Health Insurance program. Mboweni said that focusing spending on health was one of the cornerstones of his budget, allocating R230 billion to health. “Consequently, the largest spending areas will be learning and culture, which receives R396 billion followed by health R230 billion, and social development with R310 billion.” [LINK](#)

**UAE, 25 Feb [The Khaleej Times]: Using tech in schools could cut dropout rates in Arab world: Experts.** Using technologies and digital resources in schools could help slash illiteracy rates in Arab countries, experts said at the first-ever Arab Literacy Challenge Forum, which opened in Dubai on Monday, February 24. Dr Ahmed Ouzzi, professor emeritus of psychology and education at the University of Mohamed V in Rabat, Morocco, said digitalisation must be considered as one part of the solution. [LINK](#)