

# EDUCATION

## Updates

18 January 2020

### ASIA & PACIFIC

**Australia, 18 Jan [The Age]: Letting your kids be bored is helping them learn.** "I'm bored!" It's the catchcry every parent loathes, especially four weeks into the six week summer school holiday break. But education academics say the so-called iPad generation needs to experience boredom, because it is vital to learning. University of New South Wales professor of education policy and deputy director at the Gonski Institute for Education Pasi Sahlberg said boredom spurs creativity and can bolster problem solving skills. [LINK](#)

**Australia, 17 Jan [Education Review]: The schools taking teacher training into their own hands.** A common complaint about teaching graduates is that they lack the classroom experience needed to begin their careers as competent teachers. Universities do their best to address this issue through practicums that vary in length, from one-week observations to semester-long stints as the students' active teacher. [LINK](#)

**Australia, 15 Jan [The Age]: Success in year 12 maths adds up to better science results at uni.** Students who do well in any year 12 maths subject, even low-level maths, are more likely to perform better in their first year of university. A large study by the Australian Council for Educational Research found that studying maths through to year 12 has a "statistically significant influence" on a student's performance in science and maths subjects at university. [LINK](#)

**Malaysia, 16 Jan [Malay Mail]: Now acting education minister, Dr M says will retain controversial free breakfast scheme.** The Education Ministry will proceed with its free breakfast programme for national schools, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today. However, the prime minister and acting education minister said this will now be available only to eligible students. "We will continue the programme, but it will be focused on those who cannot afford it only," said Dr Mahathir. He said it would not be fair to offer free breakfast across the board. [LINK](#)

**Malaysia, 16 Jan [Malay Mail]: Habibah appointed new education director-general.** Habibah Abdul Rahim has been appointed as the new education director-general effective January 10, the Ministry of Education (MOE) said today. Habibah, 58, took over from Datuk Amin Senin, who retired on December 21 last year. Among the positions she has held in the ministry were deputy director-general (Policy and Curriculum Sector), Education Planning and Policy Research director, Performance and Delivery Unit (Padu) executive director and senior lecturer at Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB). [LINK](#)

**Malaysia, 16 Jan [Malay Mail]: Report: Maszlee installed loyalists in key education roles prior to exit.** Maszlee Malik appointed at least 26 university officials with Islamist leanings and who were aligned with him and Perlis Mufti Datuk Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin prior to his resignation as education minister, a news portal has alleged. *Asia Sentinel* reported that an unnamed former vice-chancellor provided a list of appointees said to be aligned to the two figures. [LINK](#)

**New Zealand, 18 Jan [Stuff]: Six teachers resign over 'bullying' principal at Auckland's Halsey Drive School.** At least six teachers and five board members have resigned from an Auckland primary school following allegations of "intimidation and bullying" by its principal. The resignations came after 12 Halsey Drive School staff members signed a letter of complaint highlighting concerns with principal Cheryl Davies-Crook. [LINK](#)

**Singapore, 17 Jan [The Straits Times]: Education needs to keep up with social media: Ong Ye Kung.** Social media is changing the way people receive and absorb information, and education has a part to play in addressing this challenge, said Education Minister Ong Ye Kung yesterday. Although society has yet to find a solution to the ills of social media, education systems have to recognise its growing influence and "equip our young with the values, mindsets and skills to live in this digital world", he said. [LINK](#)

**Singapore, 15 Jan [The Straits Times]: Salaries up for fresh poly grads last year.** Polytechnic graduates last year had better job prospects than their seniors, and commanded slightly higher salaries. According to the latest graduate employment survey released yesterday, 90.7 per cent of polytechnic graduates who entered the workforce last year found permanent, freelance or part-time jobs within six months of graduation. This is 1.2 percentage points higher than the figure for the 2018 batch. [LINK](#)

**Thailand, 16 Jan [Bangkok Post]: Teachers owe B1.1 trillion, 16% of total public debt.** The huge debt incurred by teaching personnel was attributed to the rising cost of living, family burdens and a lack of financial discipline on the part of both teachers and the financial institutions they borrowed from, Mr Samkhan said. [LINK](#)

**Vietnam, 15 Jan [dti News]: Vietnam's first private non-profit university inaugurated.** VinUni, Vietnam's first private non-profit university, which has a total investment of VND6.5 trillion (USD279 million) has been opened. VinUni invested by Vietnam's conglomerate VinGroup. It has set a goal to be listed among the top 50 best newly-opened universities. [LINK](#)

## EUROPE

**Denmark, 14 Jan [The Local]: Why Copenhagen has taken steps to increase diversity in its classrooms.** In 2010, 16 schools in the capital – 1 in 4 – had a ratio of over 50 percent for children termed 'bilingual' (Danish: *tosprogede*), meaning a language other than Danish is spoken in their home environments. That number has now been reduced to 9 schools in the city, newspaper Politiken reports. As such, demographics are now spread more evenly between schools in Copenhagen. [LINK](#)

**Finland, 18 Jan [Daily Finland]: Experts in entrepreneurship, innovation take education to KSA.** Co-owned by the University of Turku, the University of Eastern Finland, and the Åbo Akademi University, Finland University offers various types of commissioned professional training both in South America and Middle East and in different parts of South East Asia. Saudi Arabia has set economic diversification as the country's objective, and entrepreneurship and innovations have a central role in the Saudi Mission 2020 strategy, said a press release issued by University of Turku. The Saudi Arabian universities wish to offer their students competence and opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial activities. [LINK](#)

**United Kingdom, 17 Jan [BBC]: 'Grade inflation' in top degree grades stopping.** The sharp increase in university students in the UK getting top degree grades seems to have stalled, according to annual official figures. It follows warnings from ministers of the need to prevent "grade inflation" devaluing degrees. The latest figures show 28% of students were awarded first class degrees in 2018-19 - the same as the year before. England's higher education watchdog, the Office for Students, had attacked "unexplained" increases in top grades. [LINK](#)

**United Kingdom, 17 Jan [BBC]: London council's special needs inquiry caused by 'systemic failures'.** At least 5,000 children seeking special educational needs support (Send) are to have their cases reviewed after a London council landed a stinging rebuke from the local government ombudsman. Concerns about "systemic failures" in Richmond's Send department prompted the watchdog to take the highly unusual step of ordering the full-scale audit. [LINK](#)

**United Kingdom, 16 Jan [The Guardian]: Third of non-EU university students in UK come from China.** The number of students from China at British universities increased again last year, with the latest figures showing that recruitment of Chinese students outstripped those from other countries. The Higher Education Statistics Agency's breakdown of students in UK higher education last year showed that the number of students from China rose above 120,000 for the first time, accounting for more than one in every three non-EU students. [LINK](#)

## AMERICAS

**Canada, 17 Jan [The Globe and Mail]: Ontario's teachers, education workers using more sick days now than almost a decade ago: report.** Ontario's teachers and ed-

ucation workers are taking more sick days now than they did almost a decade ago, with time off for educational assistants and elementary teachers climbing by about 60 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively, according to a new report.

**Canada, 15 Jan [The Globe and Mail]: Internal task force report recommends sweeping changes to the way University of Toronto handles mental health on campus.** An internal task force has recommended sweeping changes to the way the University of Toronto handles mental health on its three campuses, including easier, one-stop access points for students, better triaging and a mobile, after-hours mental health response team. [LINK](#)

**United States, 16 Jan [The PIE News]: US overtakes UK as "best in world" for education.** The US is perceived as the top country in the world for education, having overtaken last year's top spot holder the UK, according to a survey by *U.S. News & World Report*. The 2020 'Best Countries' rankings, which surveyed 20,000 people from across the globe, also rated the United Arab Emirates as the best country for study abroad. [LINK](#)

**United States, 14 Jan [US News]: Warren Vows to Use Executive Authority to Cancel Student Loan Debt on Day One.** Democratic Presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren vowed to use executive authority to cancel the majority of student loan debt her first day in office if elected this November. The promise to go around Congress on an issue that Republicans – and even some Democrats – don't support sets the senator from Massachusetts apart from even her closest progressive rival, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, and comes ahead of a critical debate just weeks before the Feb. 3 Iowa caucuses. [LINK](#)

**United States, 13 Jan [US News]: 'National Parents Union' to Challenge Political Influence of Teachers Groups.** Parents, frustrated with shifting political winds in K-12 education, are doing what parents have been known to do for centuries: Go it alone. Two Latina mothers from opposite sides of the country have joined forces to form their own union to disrupt an education agenda they say is pushing out parents like them and, more importantly, leaving behind poor students and students of color [LINK](#)

## AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

**Palestine, 17 Jan [Middle East Monitor]: Israel army demolishes school to disrupt education for Palestinians.** A school that was in the middle of construction in the town of Yatta located in the south Hebron hills of the occupied West Bank has been destroyed by Israeli soldiers, reported the official Palestinian news agency *Wafa*. [LINK](#)

**Qatar, 15 Jan [Middle East Monitor]: 'Qatar to teach human rights in schools.'** The Qatari National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) and Ministry of Education and Higher Education yesterday launched the guide on human rights on the sidelines of the Doha International Book Fair. The guide, which will be incorporated into the educational curricula from primary school during the next academic year, covers the right to identity, the right to play, the right to education, the right to health, the right to equality and others. [LINK](#)