



SCHOOL REPORTING LAWS BACK BEFORE PARLIAMENT

7 July 2009

Premier Nathan Rees today announced the NSW Government would move to overturn an Education Act amendment supported by the NSW Opposition that prevents the publication of school performance data by media outlets.

Mr Rees said a new bill would be introduced to Parliament in September in order to strike out the controversial amendment imposed on the Education Amendment (Publication of School results) Act.

“Our laws were about providing parents with accurate and vital information about their children and the schools they attend,” Mr Rees said.

“Barry O’Farrell has once again put his personal political interests before the families of NSW.”

Last month, the NSW Government passed legislation to enable the performance data of all NSW schools to be reported on a national website.

“Our actions brought NSW in line with every other State and Territory in providing transparent data on school performance to the Commonwealth,” Mr Rees said.

“Instead of supporting the legislation - which was their stated policy - the Opposition supported an alarming provision that would see media outlets fined up to \$55,000 if they published the very same school data available on the internet.

“The Opposition have failed to put the rights of parents to access this information ahead of their own cheap political gain.”

Mr Rees said the Opposition’s antics had resulted in an unprecedented backlash from some of Australia’s most senior Liberal Party Members including:

- Former Prime Minister; Mr John Howard;
- Former Federal Liberal Leader and Education Minister, Brendan Nelson;
- Former NSW Shadow Education Minister, Stephen O’Doherty.

Education and Training Minister Verity Firth said she couldn’t understand why the Opposition would want to stop the release of information to parents about how their child’s school compared to similar schools.

“Comparing schools of similar characteristics will enable us to direct the appropriate resources to those schools that need more help,” Minister Firth said.

“This has never been about the creation of simplistic league tables. The NSW Government opposes simplistic league tables. This is about providing rich, contextualised information to parents about the performance of all schools.”