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PISA 2026: Australian teachers excel despite mounting workplace pressures

The latest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) edition of the [Programme for International Student Assessment 2026](#) (PISA) reports that Australian teachers and students continue to perform above the OECD average. This major educational data set provides evidence at odds with recent [political attacks on teachers](#).

While the PISA results confirm that Australian teachers continue to provide [high-quality education](#), teachers and their unions know that these achievements are being delivered despite workforce shortages, unsustainable workloads and the [increasing complexity](#) of classroom environments.

The mental health and wellbeing challenges facing the teaching profession are a [major driver of teacher attrition](#) and the current workforce crisis. The PISA report highlights the ongoing impact of teacher shortages, with 49% of students attending schools where instruction was hindered by a lack of teachers, compared with the OECD average of 39%.

In a welcome acknowledgment of the work of teachers, the PISA results show that Australian teachers [provide higher levels of support](#) to students than the OECD average. This includes a 79% level of attention to students' learning compared with the average of 69% across the OECD.

The strong performance of Australian students across reading, mathematics and science reflect the commitment and expertise of Australia's teachers. Sustaining these outcomes, while also addressing [identified areas](#) of lower results, will require targeted investment in education, along with new measures to support teacher wellbeing and retention.

The PISA results provide an opportunity for governments and employers to work with education unions to ensure teachers have the [resources and autonomy](#) needed to support diverse student cohorts in all educational settings.

The IEU continues to campaign for [smaller class sizes, enhanced classroom support](#), and other measures that strengthen teacher wellbeing, retention, and student outcomes. If Australia wants world-class results, it must provide world-class support for teachers.