

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 734

ANOTHER PIECE OF JARGON IN THE INEQUALITY DEBATE : “Resilient students”

Parents deal with children – their children. Teachers deal with these children, who, amongst many other things are their students.

They have names. They are individuals with various educational requirements. But in *edu-speak* a new descriptor has surfaced in OECD and media reports for a substantial group of Australian children : the term ‘*Resilient Students*’

Are these a sub-species of children who are knocked down but keep getting up again? DO they live in a jungle created by rising inequalities and are they the Darwinian ‘survivors’ ?

Perhaps that is not far from the truth. According to OECD reports these are the disadvantaged children who survive their poor socioeconomic start in life; survive inadequately funded schools; and still remain in the educational race with their wealthy peers from massively overfunded private schools.

In this Darwinian survival of the fittest, Australian style, the survival rate is falling.

Pallavi Singhal , an education writer for the Fairfax Press tells us that

The share of resilient students in Australia has fallen from 36.3 per cent of students in 2006 to 28.6 per cent in 2015, according to the OECD. Only about 28.6 per cent of the most disadvantaged students in Australia are demonstrating the skills needed for success later in life in Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, an OECD report has found. This is slightly higher than the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development average of 25.2 per cent, but far lower than countries such as Canada and Finland, where nearly 40 per cent of students are overcoming their background to succeed at school.<http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/the-factors-holding-back-australias-most-disadvantaged-students-20180129-h0qdgx.html?btis>

DOGS do not accept a Darwinian predestination for a high percentage of Australian children. The problem of disadvantage in Australia has been greatly exacerbated since State Aid to private schools was re-introduced amounts in the guise of a ‘Needs’ policy in 1973. The ‘ inequality’, ‘disadvantaged’ problem would be greatly ameliorated if children attended “equal” free compulsory and secular schools , adequately staffed and resourced. The devil can take the wealthy survivors in schools they pay for themselves.

Then the resilience of disadvantaged children could be taken for granted.

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855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS