

MEMBER BRIEFING

PISA 2018

Characteristics of Australian students and schools: Sector differences

29 September 2020

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) issued its second country report providing an analysis of PISA 2018 data on 18 September 2020. The second report analyses [PISA 2018 data on Australian student and school characteristics](#).

ACER's first [country report on Australian students' academic performance](#) in PISA 2018 was released on 3 December 2019. AHISA issued a [briefing to members](#) highlighting results for Australian students according to school sector on 4 December 2019.

This briefing draws together for the convenience of AHISA members key findings from ACER's second country report, with a focus on comparisons of results from Australia's government, Catholic and independent school sectors.

Key sector differences

Students attending independent schools:

- Reported a greater sense of belonging at school than students in government schools
- Are significantly more likely than students in the government or Catholic sectors to report cooperation among students in their school
- Are more likely than students in other sectors to report competition among students in their school
- Experience less class disruption than students in other sectors
- Are significantly less likely than students in other sectors to behave in ways that hinder their learning (such as skip classes, use drugs or alcohol, intimidate or bully other students, lack respect for teachers or not pay attention in class)
- Are more likely to report higher levels of self-efficacy or competence than students in government schools, but also more likely to report a greater fear of failure
- More likely to report their teachers as enthusiastic and supportive than students in the government or Catholic school sectors
- Are significantly more likely to report receiving feedback from teachers.

Teachers in independent schools:

- Are significantly less likely than teachers in other sectors to engage in behaviours (such as absenteeism, not being well prepared for class and resistance to change) that principals see as hindering student learning.

Parents of students at independent schools:

- Are more likely than parents of students in government schools to participate in school-related activities, and more likely than parents in either the government or Catholic sectors to volunteer in physical or extra-curricular activities.

Comparisons of data between PISA 2018 and PISA in other years show that while independent schools retain an advantage on aspects of schooling such as in-class disciplinary climate or fewer incidents of student bullying, the gap with other sectors has narrowed.

In some cases, this gap reduction may be attributed to schools in other sectors ‘catching up’ – possibly through adoption of practices in independent schools – but in other cases the narrowing is due to a greater decline in the independent sector. For instance, between PISA 2015 and PISA 2018, the proportion of students in independent schools who reported *Other students made fun of me at least a few times a month* rose seven percentage points, putting reports of this behaviour and its frequency in the independent sector on par with the Catholic sector (see page 15 of this briefing).

Comparisons between PISA 2018 results and previous PISA surveys may also indicate that general cultural changes have a similar impact on student behaviours in all sectors. For instance, between the PISA 2012 and PISA 2018 surveys, the percentage increase in students reporting absenteeism or lateness at least three times in the two weeks prior to being surveyed was very close across all sectors (see page 17 of this briefing).

While the PISA 2018 sector comparisons may be understood as affirming the positive cultures for which independent schools are generally recognised in Australia, it should be noted that some aspects of these cultures do not compare favourably to those of schools in other OECD countries or to the OECD average. For instance, the mean index for student exposure to bullying for Australian independent schools is 0.2 (see page 15 of this briefing); the OECD average is 0.0.

As can be seen in the following table, students in Australian independent schools report experiencing a higher level of exposure to bullying than students in several countries, including Denmark (0.03), Hong Kong (China) (0.11), Ireland (0.13), Canada (0.14) and the United States (0.15).

PISA 2018: Exposure to bullying index

COUNTRY/ECONOMY	Mean Index	
Chinese Taipei	-0.36	▲ Less exposure to bullying
Japan	-0.28	
B-S-J-Z (China)	-0.20	
Norway	-0.13	
Sweden	-0.12	
Finland	-0.03	
Germany	-0.01	
OECD Average	0.0	
Denmark	0.03	▼ More exposure to bullying
Poland	0.07	
Estonia	0.08	
Hong Kong (China)	0.11	
Ireland	0.13	
Macao (China)	0.14	
Canada	0.14	
United States	0.15	
Australian independent schools	0.20	
United Kingdom	0.24	
Singapore	0.26	
Australia	0.33	
New Zealand	0.40	

This table has been adapted from Figure 7.1, [PISA 2018 Reporting Australia's Results, Volume II, Student and School Characteristics](#), page 69.

The 2018 data drawn from the responses of both students and principals confirm, however, that Australian independent schools deserve their reputation for quality teaching.

PISA 2018: Index means for teacher behaviours as perceived by students and principals

STUDENT REPORTS	OECD Average	Australia	Australian school sectors		
			Independent	Catholic	Government
The higher the index mean, the more frequently the behaviours are experienced by students					
Teacher enthusiasm	0.01	0.20	0.38	0.25	0.12
Teacher support	0.01	0.25	0.36	0.31	0.20
Teacher feedback	0.01	0.35	0.47	0.35	0.32
PRINCIPAL REPORTS	OECD Average	Australia	Independent	Catholic	Government
The lower the index mean, the less teacher behaviours are perceived as hindering student learning					
Teacher behaviours hinder learning	0.13	0.33	0.02	0.31	0.42

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To preserve accuracy, with two exceptions, charts included in this briefing have been copied directly from ACER's report. Much of the text reflects the text as presented in ACER's report, with relevant source pages noted. Exceptions include replacement of the term 'provincial' in the original with the term 'regional', and insertion of comment in comparison of data between PISA rounds.

1. Students' socioeconomic background

Socioeconomic comparisons of PISA 2018 results are based on an Economic, Social and Cultural Status index (ESCS) derived from information collected in the Student Questionnaire. According to this index, participating students were distributed into quartiles of socioeconomic background. The following table, extracted from ACER's second country report (page 9), shows there was a higher proportion of students from the highest socioeconomic quartile attending independent schools (43%) than in government schools (17%) or Catholic schools (31%).

**Number and percentage of Australian PISA 2018 students,
by socioeconomic background quartiles and school sector**

Socioeconomic background	Government			Catholic			Independent			Total weighted % of PISA population
	N students	Weighted N	Weighted %	N students	Weighted N	Weighted %	N students	Weighted N	Weighted %	
Lowest quartile	2432	46057	33	474	7850	15	270	4538	10	25
Second quartile	1983	37684	27	733	12490	24	488	8297	19	25
Third quartile	1643	30870	22	853	15213	29	715	12336	28	25
Highest quartile	1217	23060	17	876	16174	31	1129	19227	43	25

Note: N students is based on the achieved (unweighted) sample; weighted N is based on the number of students in the target population represented by the sample.

ACER's report notes that, while the relationship between socioeconomic background and achievement in PISA is weaker in Australia than the OECD average, Australian students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds do not perform as well as students from similar backgrounds in high performing comparison countries. Australian students from a high socioeconomic background, however, 'perform well [and] are educated to a standard that is not statistically different to students at a similar socioeconomic level in several high performing countries' (page 11).

ACER also notes that while the amount of variance in performance between Australian schools is lower than the OECD average of 29%, its variance of 25% indicates that 'it still matters which school a child attends' (pages 11 and 23-24).

2. Sense of belonging at school

PISA measures students' sense of belonging at school by asking students to rate their level of agreement or disagreement to six statements:

- I feel like an outside (or left out of things) at school.
- I make friends easily at school.
- I feel like I belong at school.
- I feel awkward and out of place in my school.
- Other students seem to like me.
- I feel lonely at school.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 25-26) include:

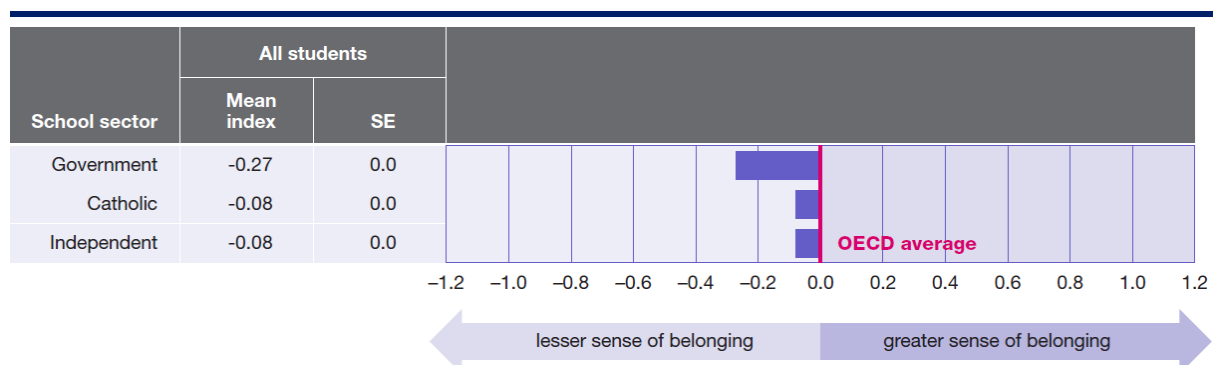
- On average, Australian students reported similar levels of sense of belonging at school to students in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Beijing-Shanghai-Jiangsu-Zhejiang (B-S-

J-Z) (China), Canada and Singapore, and a weaker sense of belonging than the OECD average.

- Students in Norway reported the highest sense of belonging, followed by Germany, Korea and Denmark. Students in Macao (China) and Hong Kong (China) reported the weakest sense of belonging at school.
- Male students reported a greater sense of belonging than female students.
- A higher percentage of male students agreed with the statements *I make friends easily at school* and *I feel like I belong at school* than female students, and a higher percentage of female students agreed with *I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school*, *I feel awkward and out of place in my school* and *I feel lonely at school* than male students.
- The least disadvantaged students reported a greater sense of belonging than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools reported a greater sense of belonging than students in regional and remote schools. Students in regional schools reported having similar levels of sense of belonging to students in remote schools.
- Non-Indigenous students reported a greater sense of belonging than Indigenous students.
- First-generation students reported a greater sense of belonging than Australian-born students. Foreign-born students reported similar levels of sense of belonging to Australian-born and first-generation students.
- Although there was little direct association between sense of belonging and reading literacy performance in Australia, middle and high performers in reading literacy reported similar levels of sense of belonging at school, and had a greater sense of belonging than the lowest performers.
- Students in the highest quartile of the sense of belonging index scored on average 23 points higher (around two-thirds of a year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER reports significant differences in students' sense of belonging depending on school sector: overall, students in Catholic and independent schools reported similar levels of sense of belonging, although still below the OECD average but were significantly more likely to report a greater sense of belonging than students in government schools (page 31).

PISA 2018 Australia
Sense of belonging at school index, by school sector



Considering only those student responses indicating agreement (rather than disagreement) with statements indicating a sense of belonging at school, there is greater congruence between sector results.

Percentage of Australian PISA 2018 students who reported their agreement on aspects of sense of belonging at school, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>					
	I make friends easily at school	I feel like I belong at school	Other students seem to like me	I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school	I feel awkward and out of place in my school	I feel lonely at school
Government	73	65	82	30	27	21
Catholic	79	74	90	23	22	17
Independent	78	72	89	23	22	17

ACER notes that student reports of sense of belonging deteriorated between PISA 2012 and 2018. There was a 10 percentage point decrease for Australian students who agreed or strongly agreed that *I feel like I belong at school* and a 12 percentage point increase for Australian students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school*.

While student reports of sense of belonging declined in all school sectors between PISA 2012 and PISA 2018, the decline was sharpest in the government sector.

Percentage of students who reported their agreement on aspects of sense of belonging at school in PISA 2012, and the difference compared to PISA 2018, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>					
	I make friends easily at school		I feel like I belong at school		Other students seem to like me	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	84	▼ 11 pp	76	▼ 11 pp	90	▼ 8 pp
Catholic	88	▼ 9 pp	82	▼ 8 pp	95	▼ 5 pp
Independent	85	▼ 7 pp	82	▼ 10 pp	92	▼ 3 pp

School sector	I feel like an outsider (or left out of things) at school		I feel awkward and out of place in my school		I feel lonely at school	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	16	▲ 14 pp	16	▲ 11 pp	13	▲ 8 pp
Catholic	12	▲ 11 pp	13	▲ 9 pp	9	▲ 8 pp
Independent	13	▲ 10 pp	14	▲ 8 pp	12	▲ 5 pp

Notes: *Change over time* represents the percentage point (pp) difference between PISA 2018 and 2012.

▲ ▼ Change over time significant.

3. Cooperation among students

PISA measures student cooperation by asking students whether they perceived the following statements about their school as 'not at all true', 'slightly true', 'very true' or 'extremely true':

- Students seem to value cooperation.
- It seems that students are cooperating with each other.
- Students seem to share the feeling that cooperating with each other is important.
- Students feel that they are encouraged to cooperate with others.

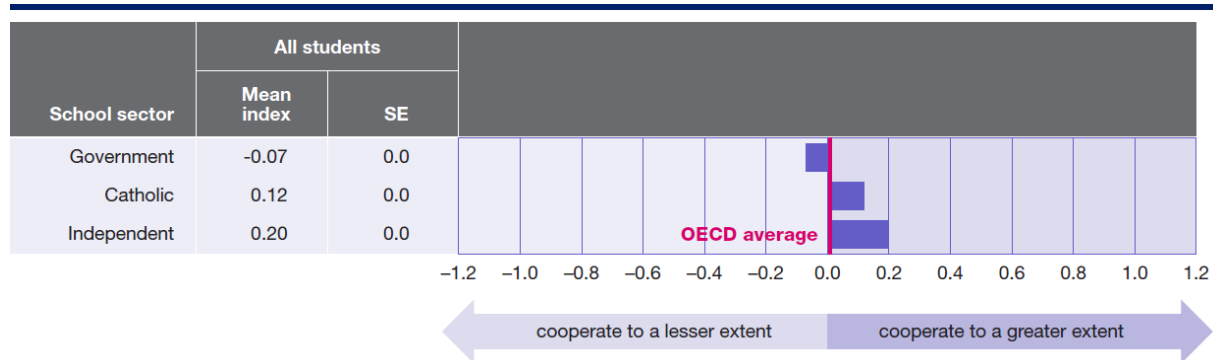
An index of student cooperation was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 39-40) include:

- On average, Australian students perceived that cooperation among students occurred to a similar extent in schools as among students in New Zealand, Poland, Macao (China) and Germany and to a greater extent than among students on average across the OECD countries.
- Students in Norway, followed by those in Denmark and Chinese Taipei, were the mostly likely to report cooperation among students in their school.
- On average, 64% of Australian students perceived it was true or extremely true that it seems that *students are cooperating with each other* and 67% that *students feel they are encouraged to cooperate with others*, while 59% agreed it was true or extremely true that *students seem to value cooperation* and 60% that *students seem to share the feeling that cooperating with each other is important*.
- Male students perceived that cooperation among students occurred to a greater extent than did female students.
- The least disadvantaged students perceived that cooperation among students occurred to a greater extent than did the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools perceived that cooperation among students occurred to a greater extent than students in regional and remote schools, and students in regional schools perceived that cooperation among students occurred to a greater extent than students in remote schools.
- Non-Indigenous students perceived cooperation occurred to a greater extent than did Indigenous students.
- Australian-born students, first-generation students and foreign-born students perceived cooperation among students occurred to a similar extent.
- High achieving students in reading literacy perceived cooperation occurred to a greater extent than middle performers, who in turn reported student cooperation occurred to a greater extent than low achievers.
- Students in the highest quartile of the cooperation index scored on average 29 points higher (nearly one year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.
- There was a very small positive relationship between student cooperation and reading literacy performance among Australian students.

Students in independent schools perceived that cooperation among students occurred to a significantly greater extent than students in Catholic and government schools (page 44).

PISA 2018 Australia
Cooperation among students index, by school sector



A higher percentage of students in all sectors were more likely to agree with the statement that *students feel that they are encouraged to cooperate with others* than with statements referring to students' willingness to cooperate.

**Percentage of students who perceive other students at their school
cooperate with each other, by school sector**

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>very true</i> or <i>extremely true</i>			
	Students seem to value cooperation	It seems that students are cooperating with each other	Students seem to share the feeling that cooperating with each other is important	Students feel that they are encouraged to cooperate with others
Government	54	59	56	62
Catholic	64	69	66	71
Independent	67	71	67	75

4. Competition among students

PISA measures student competition by asking students whether they perceived the following statements about their school as 'not at all true', 'slightly true', 'very true' or 'extremely true':

- Students seem to value competition.
- It seems that students are competing with each other.
- Students seem to share the feeling that competing with each other is important.
- Students feel that they are being compared with others.

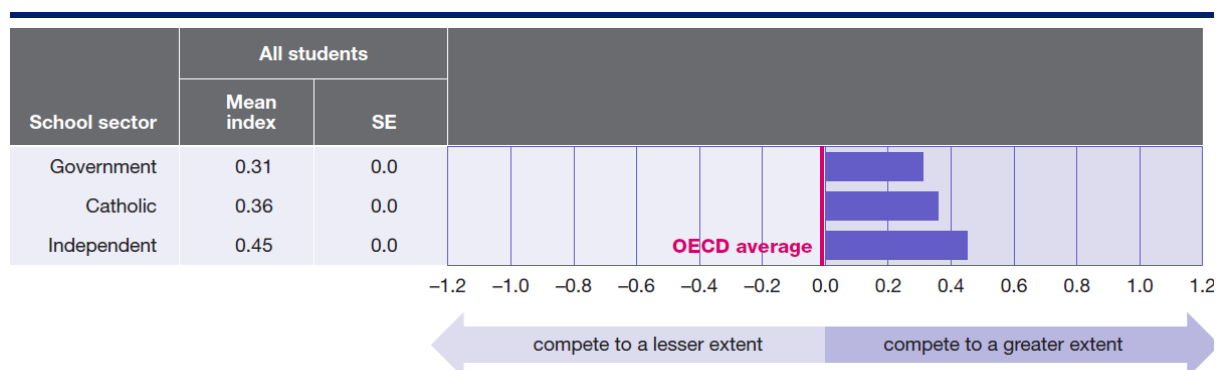
An index of student competition was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 48-49) include:

- On average, Australian students perceived competition among students at school occurred to a similar extent as students in New Zealand, Chinese Taipei and the United States, and to a greater extent than students on average across the OECD countries. Students in Singapore were the most likely – and students in Germany the least likely – to report competition among students in their school.
- On average, 68% of Australian students perceived it was true or extremely true that *students feel that they are being compared with others*, 67% reported agreement that *students seem to value competition*, 64% reported that *it seems that students are competing with each other* and 56% reported that *students seem to share the feeling that competing with each other is important*.
- Male students perceived that competition among students occurred to a greater extent than female students
- The least disadvantaged students perceived competition among students occurred to a greater extent in schools than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools perceived competition among students occurred to a greater extent than students in regional and remote schools. In turn, students in regional schools perceived competition among students occurred to a greater extent than students in remote schools.
- High achievers and middle performing students in reading literacy perceived that other students at their school compete with each other to a greater extent than low performers.
- Students in the highest quartile of the competition index scored on average 32 points higher (nearly one year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER reports (pages 52-53) that Australian students in all school sectors were more likely than students on average across the OECD to perceive their school's environment as competitive.

PISA 2018 Australia
Competition among students index, by school sector



Overall, students in independent schools perceived that competition among students at school occurred to a greater extent than students in Catholic schools, who in turn perceived competition among students occurring to a greater extent than students in government schools. There was,

however, a general level of agreement among students in all sectors (70%) to the statement *Students feel that they are being compared to others*.

**Percentage of students who perceive other students at their school
compete with each other, by school sector**

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>very true</i> or <i>extremely true</i>			
	Students seem to value competition	It seems that students are competing with each other	Students seem to share the feeling that competing with each other is important	Students feel that they are being compared with others
Government	64	63	55	68
Catholic	69	64	55	68
Independent	73	68	60	70

ACER reports (page 56) that, for Australian students, competition appears to be valued more highly than cooperation, with 67% of students perceiving it as true that *students seem to value competition* in contrast to 59% for *students seem to value cooperation*. Otherwise, ratings for items on cooperation and competition are similar:

- 60% of students perceived it was true that *students seem to share the feeling that cooperating with each other is important*, in contrast to 56% for *students seem to share the feeling that competing with each other is important*.
- 68% of students perceived it was true that *students feel that they are being compared with others*, in contrast to 67% for *students feel they are encouraged to cooperate with others*.

5. Parental involvement in school activities

PISA measures parental involvement by asking principals about the percentage of students' parents in their school who, during the previous school year, participated in four school-related activities:

- Discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative
- Discussed their child's progress on the initiative of one of their child's teachers
- Participated in local school government (eg parent council or school management committee)
- Volunteered in physical or extra-curricular activities.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 57-58) include:

- On average, principals in Australian schools reported 54% of parents *discussed their child's progress on the initiative of one of their child's teachers*, 42% of parents *discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative*, 10% of parents *volunteered in physical or extra-curricular activities* and 7% of parents *participated in local school government*.

- Across OECD countries, principals were most likely to report parental engagement in the form of a discussion on their child's progress as initiated by one of their child's teachers.
- Reports by principals of parental involvement in school activities increased between PISA 2012 and 2018. For instance, there was a 16 percentage point increase in Australian parents who *discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative* and a 14 percentage point increase in parents who *discussed their child's progress on the initiative of one of their child's teachers*.
- Students whose principals reported parents *discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative* scored 26 points (equal to around three-quarters of a year of schooling) higher in reading literacy performance than students whose principals reported this activity occurred less frequently among parents, while principals reported the students whose parents *volunteered in physical or extra-curricular activities* scored 26 points (also equal to three-quarters of a year of schooling) higher in reading literacy performance than students whose principals reported this activity occurred less frequently among parents.

ACER reports significant sector differences in parental participation (pages 61-62):

- Principals in government schools reported a lower percentage of parents *discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative* (38%) and *discussed their child's progress on the initiative of one of their child's teachers* (51%) than parents in Catholic schools (49% and 60% respectively) and independent schools (45% and 57% respectively).
- A higher percentage of parents in Catholic schools (10%) *participated in local government* (e.g. parent council or school management committee) than parents in government schools (6%).
- A significantly higher percentage of parents in independent schools (17%) *volunteered in physical or extra-curricular activities* than parents in government schools (7%) or Catholic schools (11%). Of interest is that higher frequency of parent engagement in voluntary physical or extra-curricular activities is associated with higher student achievement in reading literacy (page 66).

Percentage of parents involved in school-related activities, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students' whose principals reported parents participated in school-related activities			
	Discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative	Discussed their child's progress on the initiative of one of their child's teachers	Participated in local school government	Volunteered in physical or extra-curricular activities
Government	38	51	6	7
Catholic	49	60	10	11
Independent	45	57	7	17

There was an increase in the percentage of parental participation in school-related activities between PISA 2012 and 2018 across all school sectors. As can be seen in the figure below, there was a lower rate of increase in the independent sector, serving to narrow a far wider gap in parent participation between the independent and other sectors reported in PISA 2012.

ACER notes (page 61) that:

- In 2018, irrespective of school sector, a greater proportion of parents *discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative*. There was a 10 percentage point increase over 2012 in independent schools, a 16 percentage point increase for in government schools, and a 20 percentage point increase in Catholic schools.
- In 2018, a greater proportion of parents *discussed their child's progress on the initiative of their child's teachers*, representing a 9 percentage point increase in independent schools, a 13 percentage point increase in government schools, and a 19 percentage point increase in Catholic schools.

Percentage of parents involved in school-related activities at school in PISA 2012, and the difference compared to PISA 2018, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students' whose principals reported parents participated in school-related activities					
	Discussed their child's progress with a teacher on their own initiative		Discussed their child's progress on the initiative of one of their child's teachers		Participated in local school government	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	22	▲ 16 pp	38	▲ 13 pp	4	▲ 2 pp
Catholic	28	▲ 20 pp	41	▲ 19 pp	5	▲ 5 pp
Independent	35	▲ 10 pp	48	▲ 9 pp	7	0 pp

Notes: Change over time represents the percentage point (pp) difference between PISA 2018 and 2012.

▲ ▼ Change over time significant.

6. Students' exposure to bullying

PISA measures students' exposure to bullying by asking students how frequently a range of experiences (including those that happened in social media) as represented by the following statements occurred in the 12 months prior to participating in the PISA Student Questionnaire:

- Other students left me out of things on purpose.
- Other students made fun of me.
- I was threatened by other students.
- Other students took away or destroyed things that belonged to me.
- I got hit or pushed around by other students.
- Other students spread nasty rumours about me.

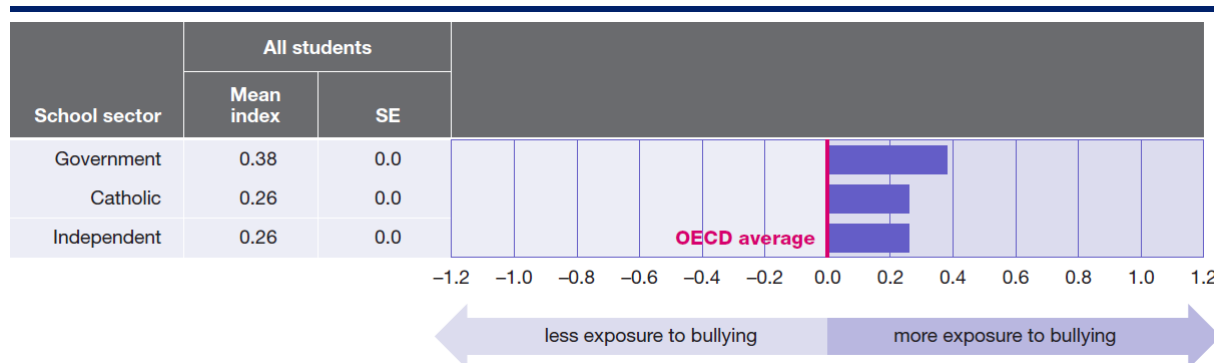
Frequency was rated on a four-point scale – 'never or almost never', 'a few times a year', 'a few times a month', and 'once a week or more'. The first three statements were used to construct an index of exposure to bullying.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 67-68) include:

- On average, Australian students reported levels of exposure to bullying at school higher than the OECD average and higher than students in Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Among comparison countries, only students in New Zealand reported higher levels of bullying.
- In Australia, the following bullying behaviours occurred at school a few times a month or more: 7% of students reported that *other students took away or destroyed things that belonged to me* a few times a month or once a week or more, 9% of students reported that *I was threatened by other students*, 9% of students reported that *I got hit or pushed around by other students*, 13% of students reported that *other students spread nasty rumours about me*, 14% of students reported that *other students left me out of things on purpose*, and 21% of students reported that *other students made fun of me*.
- Students' exposure to bullying at school increased in the three years between PISA 2015 and 2018. The largest increase in bullying-related behaviours for Australian students in this period was in *other students made fun of me*, which increased by 6 percentage points overall (and by 7 percentage points in the independent sector).
- For high achieving students, exposure to bullying from PISA 2015 to 2018 remained the same, while exposure to bullying generally increased over this period for low and middle performers.
- Male students reported more exposure to bullying at school than female students.
- The most disadvantaged students reported more exposure to bullying at school than the least disadvantaged students.
- Students in remote schools reported more exposure to bullying than students in regional schools, who in turn reported more exposure to bullying than students in metropolitan schools.
- Indigenous students reported more exposure to bullying at school than non-Indigenous students.
- Australian-born students reported more exposure to bullying at school than first-generation students, who in turn reported more exposure to bullying than foreign-born students.
- Students in the highest quartile of the bullying index scored on average 30 points lower (almost one year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER notes (page 73) that students in government schools reported more exposure to bullying at school than students in Catholic and independent schools, while students in Catholic and independent schools reported similar levels of exposure to bullying.

PISA 2018 Australia
Exposure to bullying index, by school sector



Students in government schools reported the various behaviours indicative of bullying as occurring more frequently than students in Catholic or independent schools, except for one of the behaviours, *I got hit or pushed around by other students*, where students in government and Catholic schools reported a similar frequency of this behaviour.

**Percentage of students who reported on exposure to bullying at school,
by frequency, by school sector**

School sector	Percentage of students who reported the following occurred at least <i>a few times a month</i>					
	Other students left me out of things on purpose	Other students made fun of me	I was threatened by other students	Other students took away or destroyed things that belonged to me	I got hit or pushed around by other students	Other students spread nasty rumours about me
Government	15	22	11	8	10	14
Catholic	12	19	7	5	9	11
Independent	12	19	6	6	7	10

Between PISA 2015 and PISA 2018, there was an increase across all sectors in the percentages of students who experienced three of the bullying-related behaviours (*other students made fun of me*, *I was threatened by other students* and *I got hit or pushed around by other students*).

The increase in bullying in the independent sector served to narrow the gap between independent and other schools.

Percentage of students reporting exposure to bullying in PISA 2015, and the difference compared to PISA 2018, by frequency and school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported the following occurred at least a few times a month					
	Other students left me out of things on purpose		Other students made fun of me		I was threatened by other students	
	2015	Change over time	2015	Change over time	2015	Change over time
Government	14	△ 1 pp	17	▲ 5 pp	9	▲ 2 pp
Catholic	11	△ 1 pp	14	▲ 5 pp	5	▲ 2 pp
Independent	11	△ 1 pp	12	▲ 7 pp	5	▲ 1 pp

School sector	Other students took away or destroyed things that belonged to me		I got hit or pushed around by other students		Other students spread nasty rumours about me	
	2015	Change over time	2015	Change over time	2015	Change over time
	2015	Change over time	2015	Change over time	2015	Change over time
Government	7	▲ 1 pp	7	▲ 3 pp	13	△ 1 pp
Catholic	4	△ 1 pp	5	▲ 4 pp	10	△ 1 pp
Independent	4	▲ 2 pp	4	▲ 3 pp	8	▲ 2 pp

Notes: Change over time represents the percentage point (pp) difference between PISA 2018 and 2015.

▲▼ Change over time significant.

△▽ Change over time not significant.

7. Student absenteeism and lateness

PISA measures student absenteeism and lateness by asking students how frequently the following occurred during the two weeks of school prior to the PISA assessment:

- I skipped a whole school day.
- I skipped some classes.
- I arrived late for school.

Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a four-point scale: 'never', 'one or two times', 'three or four times' or 'five or more times'.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 80-81) include:

- On average, around 8% of Australian students reported that *I skipped a whole day of school* and *I skipped some classes* at least three times during the two weeks prior to the PISA assessment; similar to students from comparison countries, Australian students (16%) were more likely to report that *I arrived late for school* during the same period.
- Australian students' frequency of absenteeism and lateness increased between PISA 2012 and 2018. The largest increase was by 6 percentage points for students who reported *I arrived late for school*.
- A higher percentage of male students reported skipping school or arriving late for school than female students.
- A higher percentage of the most disadvantaged students reported being absent, skipping classes or arriving late for school than the least disadvantaged students.
- A higher percentage of students in regional and remote schools reported skipping school or skipping classes than students in metropolitan schools.

- A higher percentage of Indigenous students reported being absent, skipping classes or arriving late for school than non-Indigenous students.
- Students who reported missing whole days of school at least three times in a two week period scored 47 points (almost one-and-a half years of schooling) lower in reading literacy performance than students who reported never missing whole days of school.
- Students who reported skipping classes at least three times in a two week period scored 76 points (around two and one-third years of schooling) lower in reading literacy performance than students who reported never skipping classes this often.
- Students who reported arriving late for school at least three times in a two week period scored 61 points (almost two years of schooling) lower in reading literacy performance than students who reported always arriving on time.

ACER notes (pages 83-84) that a higher percentage of students in government schools reported being absent, skipping classes or arriving late for school than students in Catholic or independent schools.

**Percentage of students who reported being absent or late for school,
by frequency, by school sector**

School sector	Percentage of students who reported the following <i>at least three times in the two weeks prior to the PISA assessment</i>		
	I skipped a whole day of school	I skipped some classes	I arrived late for school
Government	9	7	18
Catholic	6	4	13
Independent	5	4	13

Between PISA 2012 and PISA 2018, there were significantly more students across all school sectors who reported *I skipped some classes* and *I arrived late for school* at least three times during the last two weeks.

**Percentage of students reporting absenteeism and lateness in PISA 2012, and
the difference compared to PISA 2018, by frequency and school sector**

School sector	Percentage of students who reported the following <i>at least three times in the two weeks prior to the PISA assessment</i>					
	I skipped a whole day of school		I skipped some classes		I arrived late for school	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	7	▲ 2 pp	4	▲ 3 pp	12	▲ 6 pp
Catholic	5	△ 1 pp	2	▲ 2 pp	8	▲ 5 pp
Independent	4	△ 1 pp	2	▲ 2 pp	8	▲ 5 pp

Notes: *Change over time* represents the percentage point (pp) difference between PISA 2018 and 2012.

▲ ▼ Change over time significant.

△ ▽ Change over time not significant.

8. Class disciplinary climate

In PISA 2018, disciplinary climate was measured by asking students how frequently the following behaviours occurred in their language of instruction classes as represented by five statements:

- Students don't listen to what the teacher says.
- There is noise and disorder.
- The teacher has to wait a long time for students to quieten down.
- Students cannot work well.
- Students don't start working for a long time after the lesson begins.

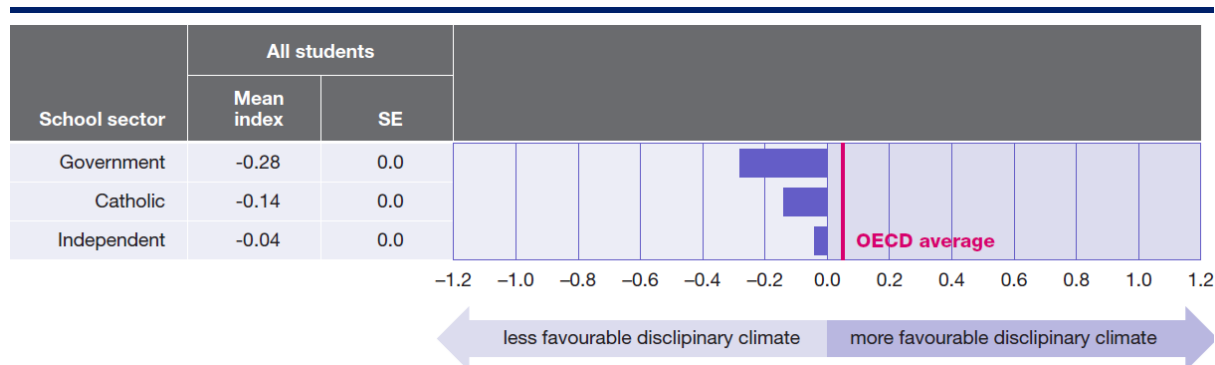
Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a four-point scale: 'every class'; 'most classes'; 'some classes'; or 'never or hardly ever'. An index of disciplinary climate in language of instruction classes was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 88-89) include:

- On average, Australian students reported similar levels of disciplinary climate in their English classes to students in New Zealand, and a less favourable disciplinary climate than the OECD average. Students in Korea, B-S-J-Z (China) and Japan reported the most favourable disciplinary climate among comparison countries.
- On average, approximately one-fifth of Australian students reported that *students cannot work well*, one-quarter reported that *students don't start working for a long time after the lesson begins*, approximately one-third reported that *the teacher has to wait a long time for students to quieten down* and that *students don't listen to what the teacher says*.
- On average, almost one-half of Australian students reported that there is noise and disorder in most English classes.
- Female students reported a more favourable disciplinary climate than male students.
- The least disadvantaged students reported a more favourable disciplinary climate than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools reported a more favourable disciplinary climate than students in regional schools, who in turn reported a more favourable disciplinary climate than students in remote schools.
- Students in the highest quartile of the disciplinary climate index scored on average 55 points higher (around one and two-thirds of a year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.
- Since PISA 2009, when students last reported on behaviour in language of instruction classes, disciplinary climate has generally deteriorated. For instance, there was a 5 percentage point increase for Australian students who reported that *students don't listen to what the teacher says* in most English classes.

ACER notes (page 94-95) that students in Catholic and independent schools reported a more favourable disciplinary climate than students in government schools, although still below the OECD average.

PISA 2018 Australia
Disciplinary climate index, by school sector



Students in government schools were more likely to report the various behaviours as occurring in most classes or every class than students in Catholic or independent schools.

Percentage of students who reported the occurrence of behaviours related to disciplinary climate in their English classes, by frequency and school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>most classes or every class</i>				
	Students don't listen to what the teacher says	There is noise and disorder	The teacher has to wait a long time for students to quieten down	Students cannot work well	Students don't start working for a long time after the class begins
Government	39	46	35	24	29
Catholic	35	40	29	18	23
Independent	31	38	27	16	21

Of interest is that, while independent schools have experienced a deterioration in disciplinary climate between PISA 2009 and PISA 2018, the disciplinary climate essentially remained unchanged in government and Catholic schools. Despite this decline, students in independent schools still experience less class disruption: as seen in the discussion on parental engagement above (pages 10-12), in measures of some school characteristics, time has served to narrow the gap between the independent and other school sectors.

Percentage of students who reported behaviours related to disciplinary climate in their English classes in PISA 2009, and the difference compared to PISA 2018, by frequency and school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>most classes or every class</i>					
	Students don't listen to what the teacher says		There is noise and disorder		The teacher has to wait a long time for students to quieten down	
	2009	Change over time	2009	Change over time	2009	Change over time
Government	36	▲ 3 pp	44	△ 2 pp	33	△ 2 pp
Catholic	31	△ 4 pp	37	△ 3 pp	27	△ 2 pp
Independent	23	▲ 8 pp	28	▲ 10 pp	19	▲ 8 pp

School sector	Students cannot work well		Students don't start working for a long time after the class begins	
	2009	Change over time	2009	Change over time
Government	21	▲ 3 pp	28	△ 1 pp
Catholic	16	△ 2 pp	20	▲ 3 pp
Independent	10	▲ 6 pp	14	▲ 7 pp

Notes: *Change over time* represents the percentage point (pp) difference between PISA 2018 and 2009.

▲▼ Change over time significant.

△▽ Change over time not significant.

9. Student behaviour hindering learning

In PISA 2018, school principals were asked to report against a four-point scale ('not at all', 'very little', 'to some extent' and 'a lot') the extent to which they perceived student learning was hindered by the following factors:

- Student truancy
- Students skipping classes
- Students lacking respect for teachers
- Student use of alcohol or drugs
- Students intimidating or bullying other students
- Students not being attentive.

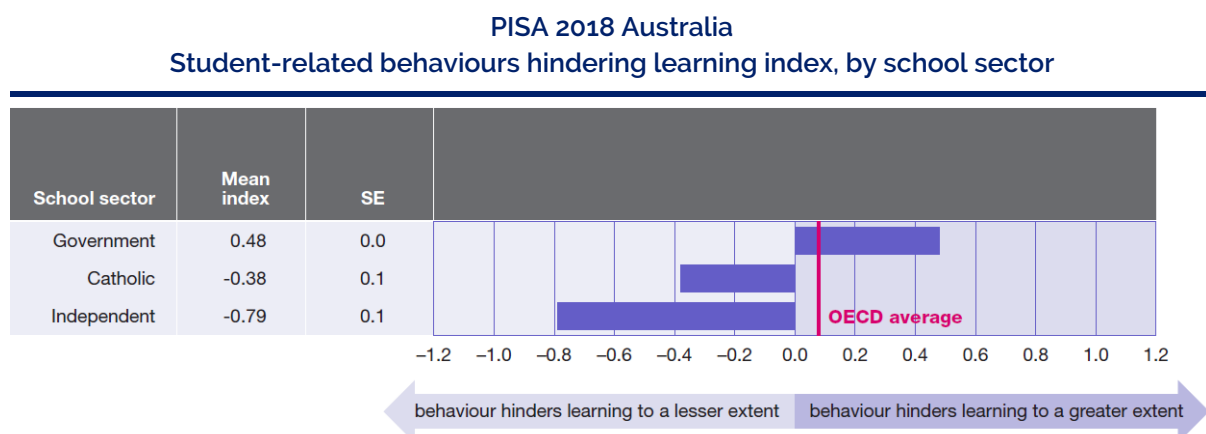
An index of student behaviour hindering learning was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 101-102) include:

- On average, principals of Australian students reported similar levels of student behaviour hindering learning by principals of students in Korea, Chinese Taipei, Estonia, Ireland, Germany and the OECD average. Principals of students in countries including Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), Singapore, the United Kingdom, Japan, Denmark and Poland reported lower levels of student behaviour hindering learning than Australian principals.

- On average, 50% of principals of Australian students reported student learning was hindered to some extent or a lot by *students not being attentive*. The percentages were lower for *student truancy* and *students lacking respect for teachers* (about one-third of principals), *students skipping classes* and *students intimidating or bullying other students* (approximately one quarter), and *student use of alcohol or drugs* (one in ten principals).
- Principals reported student behaviour hindering learning increased between PISA 2012 and 2018. For instance, there was a 7 percentage point increase for Australian principals who agreed to some extent or a lot that *students lacking respect for teachers* and *student use of alcohol or drugs* hindered learning, and a 4 percentage point increase for *students intimidating or bullying other students*.
- Principals reported that student behaviour hindered learning for male students to a greater extent than female students.
- Principals reported that student behaviour hindered learning for the least disadvantaged students to a lesser extent than the most disadvantaged students.
- Principals of students in remote schools reported to a greater extent than principals of students in regional schools that learning was hindered by student behaviour. Principals of regional schools in turn reported to a greater extent than principals of students in metropolitan schools that learning was hindered by student behaviour.
- Principals reported that student behaviour hindered learning for Indigenous students to a greater extent than for non-Indigenous students.
- Principals reported that student behaviour hindered learning for Australian-born students to a greater extent than for first-generation students.
- Students in the highest quartile of the student behaviour hindering learning index scored on average 67 points lower (about two years of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER notes (pages 107-109) that principals of students in government schools reported student behaviour hindered learning to a greater extent than did principals in Catholic schools, who in turn reported to a greater extent than principals in independent schools that student learning was hindered by student behaviours.



Overall, principals of students attending government schools were more likely to report student behaviour significantly impacted student learning than principals in Catholic and independent

schools. There were also significant differences between the Catholic and independent sectors relating to student truancy, students lacking respect for teachers and students not being attentive.

Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported a behaviour hindering learning, by frequency, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported behaviour occurring <i>to some extent or a lot</i>					
	Student truancy	Students skipping classes	Students lacking respect for teachers	Student use of alcohol or drugs	Students intimidating or bullying other students	Students not being attentive
Government	50	40	45	17	32	62
Catholic	16	4	12	4	11	40
Independent	5	2	7	2	11	23

Comparison of results from PISA 2012 and PISA 2018 reveals an interesting finding. While principals of independent schools reported an increase in students intimidating or bullying other students to some extent or a lot, other student behaviours hindering learning declined in independent schools while increasing in other sectors.

Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported a behaviour hindering learning in PISA 2012, and the difference compared to PISA 2018, by frequency and school sector

School sector	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported behaviour occurring <i>to some extent or a lot</i>					
	Student truancy		Students skipping classes		Students lacking respect for teachers	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	50	0 pp	40	0 pp	33	▲ 12 pp
Catholic	5	▲ 11 pp	2	△ 2 pp	7	△ 5 pp
Independent	7	▽ 2 pp	3	▽ 1 pp	10	▽ 3 pp

School sector	Student use of alcohol or drugs		Students intimidating or bullying other students	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	6	▲ 11 pp	26	△ 6 pp
Catholic	1	▲ 3 pp	8	△ 3 pp
Independent	3	▽ 1 pp	9	△ 2 pp

Notes: *Change over time* represents the percentage point (pp) difference between PISA 2018 and 2012.

▲ ▼ Change over time significant.

△ ▽ Change over time not significant.

There is no comparison for students not being attentive as this statement was not administered to students in PISA 2012.

10. Students' self-efficacy

In PISA 2018, student self-efficacy, or competence, was measured by asking students to report the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about themselves:

- I usually manage one way or another.
- I feel proud that I have accomplished things.
- I feel that I can handle many things at a time.
- My belief in myself gets me through hard times.
- When I'm in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it.

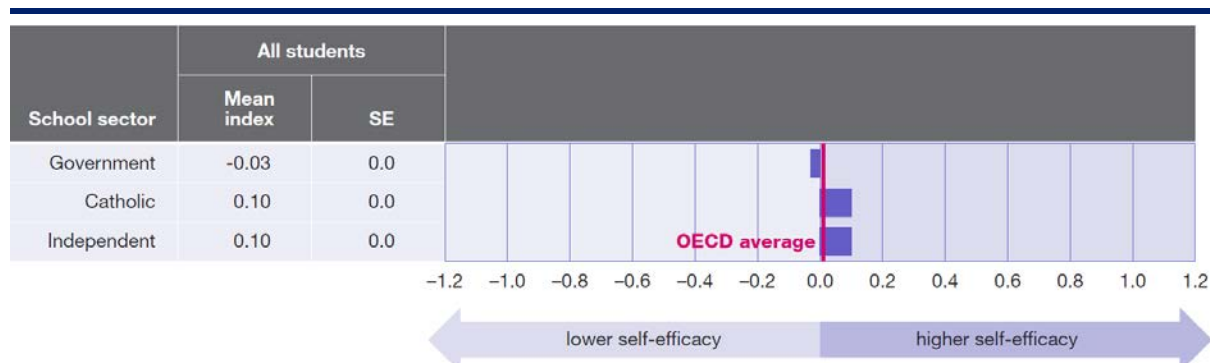
An index of self-efficacy was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 116-117) include:

- On average, Australian students reported similar levels of self-efficacy to students in Denmark, Singapore, and were very close to the OECD average. They reported higher self-efficacy than students in Japan, Macao (China), Hong Kong (China), and Chinese Taipei. Students from the United States reported the highest level of self-efficacy.
- On average, over 90% of Australian students agreed or strongly agreed with the statements *I usually manage one way or another* and *I feel proud that I have accomplished things*. Over two-thirds of Australian students agreed or strongly agreed with the statements *my belief in myself gets me through hard times*, and *when I'm in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it* and three-quarters of Australian students agreed or strongly agreed with *I feel that I can handle many things at a time*.
- Female students reported lower self-efficacy than male students.
- The least disadvantaged students reported greater self-efficacy than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools reported greater self-efficacy than students in regional schools, who in turn reported having greater levels of self-efficacy than students in remote schools.
- Non-Indigenous students reported greater self-efficacy than Indigenous students.
- Australian-born students reported lower self-efficacy than first-generation and foreign-born students. First-generation and foreign-born students reported similar levels of self-efficacy.
- Students in the highest quartile of the self-efficacy index scored on average 24 points higher (around three-quarters of a year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER notes (page 121) that students in Catholic and independent schools reported similar levels of self-efficacy, and greater self-efficacy than students in government schools.

PISA 2018 Australia
Student self-efficacy index, by school sector



While the mean index score on students' self-efficacy showed sector differences overall, a similar proportion of students reporting high levels of self-efficacy was similar across all sectors.

**Percentage of students who reported high levels of self-efficacy,
by school sector**

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>				
	I usually manage one way or another	I feel proud that I have accomplished things	I feel that I can handle many things at a time	My belief in myself gets me through hard times	When I'm in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it
Government	93	91	71	66	85
Catholic	94	94	74	69	87
Independent	95	93	74	67	88

11. Students' fear of failure

In PISA 2018 fear of failure was measured by asking students to report the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about themselves:

- When I am failing, I worry about what others think of me.
- When I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent.
- When I am failing, this makes me doubt my plans for the future.

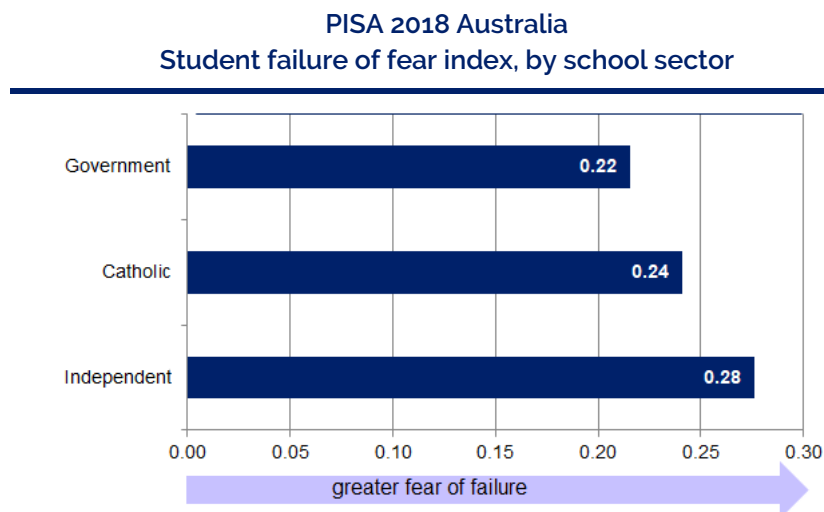
An index of fear of failure was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 125-126) include:

- On average, Australian students reported similar levels of fear of failure to students in Ireland and New Zealand and greater fear of failure than the OECD average. Students in Chinese Taipei, Singapore and Macao (China) reported the greatest fear of failure, while students in Germany, Finland and Estonia reported the least fear of failure.
- On average, about two-thirds of Australian students agreed or strongly agreed with the statements *when I am failing, this makes me doubt my plans for the future* and *when I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent*.

- On average, three-fifths of Australian students agreed or strongly agreed with *when I am failing, I worry about what others think of me*.
- Female students reported greater fear of failure than male students.
- The least disadvantaged students reported greater fear of failure than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools reported greater fear of failure than students in regional and remote schools, while students in regional and remote schools reported similar levels of fear of failure.
- Non-Indigenous students reported greater fear of failure than Indigenous students.
- Australian-born, first-generation and foreign-born students reported similar levels of fear of failure.
- Students in the highest quartile of the fear of failure index scored on average 45 points higher (just over one and a quarter of a year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER notes (page 129-130) that, overall, students in independent schools reported greater fear of failure than students in government and Catholic schools. (The OECD average is -0.01 on the failure of fear index.)



Considering only those students who reported a level of agreement (and not disagreement) to statements on fear of failure, there was greater congruence between sectors, although students in independent schools were more likely to agree or strongly agree that *When I am failing, I worry about what others think of me* or that *they might not have enough talent*.

Percentage of students who reported agreement on aspects of
fear of failure, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree</i> or <i>strongly agree</i>		
	When I am failing, I worry about what others think of me	When I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent	When I am failing, this makes me doubt my plans for the future
Government	60	63	68
Catholic	62	65	68
Independent	66	66	68

12. Growth mindset

In PISA 2018, students' belief in a growth mindset (defined as the belief that one's ability and intelligence can be developed with persistence, effort, and a focus on learning) was measured by asking students the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, 'Your intelligence is something about you that you can't change very much'. Belief in growth mindset was aligned with disagreement to the statement.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 134-135) include:

- On average, over two-thirds of Australian students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement *your intelligence is something about you that you can't change very much*, which was higher than the three-fifths of students from across the OECD countries, and higher than the OECD average. A higher percentage of students in Estonia, Denmark, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom, and a similar percentage in the United States and Canada, believed in a growth mindset than Australian students.
- Female students reported a stronger growth mindset than male students.
- The least disadvantaged students reported a stronger growth mindset than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools reported a stronger growth mindset than students in regional and remote schools.
- Non-Indigenous students reported a stronger growth mindset than Indigenous students.
- First-generation students reported a stronger growth mindset than Australian-born and foreign-born students.
- Australian students who reported a stronger growth mindset scored 71 points higher (over two years of schooling) in reading literacy than students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (thereby reflecting they had a fixed mindset).

ACER notes (page 137) that nearly three-quarters of students in independent schools reported a stronger growth mindset, in comparison to two-thirds of students in government schools.

Percentage of students who believe in growth mindset,
by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who <i>disagreed or strongly disagreed</i> with the statement
	Your intelligence is something about you that you can't change very much
Government	65
Catholic	70
Independent	73

13. Teacher enthusiasm

In 2018, PISA asked students about their perceptions of the enthusiasm of their teachers in their two language-of-instruction lessons prior to sitting the PISA test. Teacher enthusiasm was measured by asking students to report the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements as they applied to those classes:

- It was clear to me that the teacher liked teaching us.
- The enthusiasm of the teacher inspired me.
- It was clear that the teacher likes to deal with the topic of the lesson.
- The teacher showed enjoyment in teaching.

An index of teacher enthusiasm was constructed using the responses to these statements.

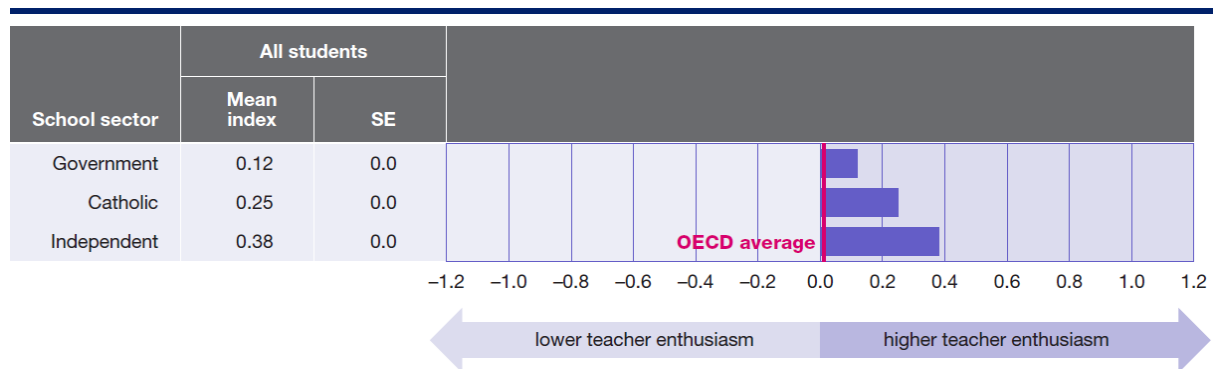
National key findings reported by ACER (pages 140-141) include:

- On average, Australian students perceived similar levels of teacher enthusiasm in their English classes to students in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, and higher levels of teacher enthusiasm than the OECD average. Students from Korea perceived teacher enthusiasm to be the highest, while students in Poland and Japan reported the lowest levels of teacher enthusiasm.
- On average, over four-fifths of Australian students agreed or strongly agreed with the statements *it was clear that the teacher likes to deal with the topic of the lesson* and *the teacher showed enjoyment in teaching*. Over three-quarters of students agreed or strongly agreed with *it was clear to me that the teacher liked teaching us*, while three-fifths of Australian students agreed or strongly agreed with *the enthusiasm of the teacher inspired me*.
- Female students perceived higher levels of teacher enthusiasm in their English classes than male students.
- The least disadvantaged students perceived higher levels of teacher enthusiasm in their English classes than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan, regional and remote schools perceived similar levels of teacher enthusiasm in their English classes.

- Non-Indigenous students perceived higher levels of teacher enthusiasm in their English classes than Indigenous students.
- Australian-born, first-generation and foreign-born students perceived similar levels of teacher enthusiasm in their English classes.
- Students in the highest quartile of the teacher enthusiasm index scored on average 44 points higher (around one and one-third years of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER notes (pages 144-145) that, overall, students in independent schools reported higher levels of teacher enthusiasm in their English classes than students in Catholic schools, who in turn reported higher levels of teacher enthusiasm than students in government schools.

PISA 2018 Australia
Teacher enthusiasm index, by school sector



Students in independent schools were also more likely to report agreement with all teacher enthusiasm statements.

Percentage of students in schools who perceived their English teacher as enthusiastic, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported <i>agree or strongly agree</i>			
	It was clear to me that the teacher liked teaching us	The enthusiasm of the teacher inspired me	It was clear that the teacher likes to deal with the topic of the lesson	The teacher showed enjoyment in teaching
Government	76	60	84	80
Catholic	80	64	88	83
Independent	83	66	90	86

14. Teacher support

In PISA 2018, teacher support was measured by asking students how frequently a range of teacher behaviours occurred in their language of instruction classes, as represented by the following statements:

- The teacher shows an interest in every student's learning.
- The teacher gives extra help when students need it.
- The teacher helps students with their learning.
- The teacher continues until the students understand.

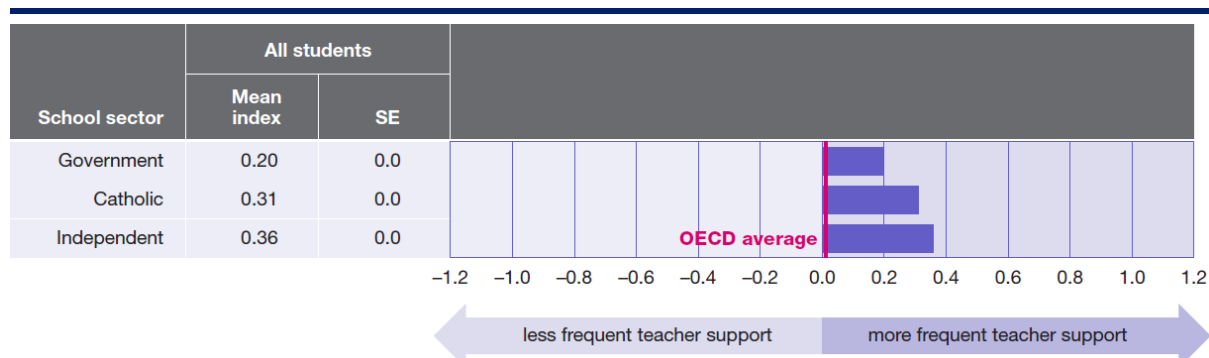
Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a four-point scale: 'every class', 'most classes', 'some classes' or 'never or hardly ever'. An index of teacher support was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 149-150) include:

- On average, Australian students reported similar levels of teacher support to students in New Zealand, Singapore and Finland and significantly more teacher support than the OECD average. Only students in B-S-J-Z (China) and the United Kingdom reported higher levels of teacher support.
- On average, over three-quarters of Australian students reported that in most or every English class *the teacher shows an interest in every student's learning, the teacher gives extra help when students need it, the teacher helps students with their learning, and the teacher continues teaching until the students understand in most English classes.*
- Similar levels of teacher support were reported for male students and female students, Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students, and immigrant students irrespective of their background.
- The least disadvantaged students reported receiving more teacher support than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools reported receiving more teacher support than students in regional schools and in turn, students in regional schools reported receiving more teacher support than students in remote schools.
- Students in the highest quartile of the teacher support index scored 22 points on average higher (around two-thirds of a year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER notes (page 154) that, overall, students in Catholic and independent schools reported more teacher support than students in government schools.

PISA 2018 Australia
Teacher support index, by school sector



Taking into consideration only those instances where students reported the two highest expressions of agreement to the teacher support statements, there was a greater level of congruence between sectors.

Percentage of students in schools who reported behaviours related to teacher support occurring in their English class, by frequency, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported the following things happen in <i>most or every</i> English class			
	The teacher shows an interest in every student's learning	The teacher gives extra help when students need it	The teacher helps students with their learning	The teacher continues teaching until the students understand
Government	77	80	84	74
Catholic	80	82	87	77
Independent	82	84	87	79

15. Teacher feedback

In PISA 2018, teacher feedback was measured by asking students how frequently a set of teacher behaviours occurred in their language of instruction classes, as represented by the following statements:

- The teacher gives me feedback on my strengths in this subject.
- The teacher tells me in which areas I can still improve.
- The teacher tells me how I can improve my performance.

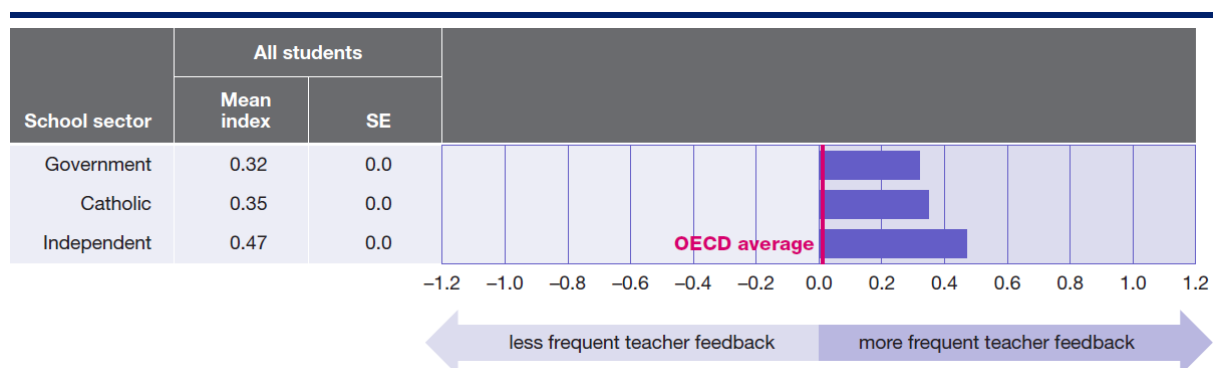
Students were asked to respond to each of the statements on a four-point scale: 'every class or almost every class', 'many classes', 'some classes' or 'never or almost never'. An index of teacher feedback was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 158-159) include:

- On average, Australian students reported similar levels of teacher feedback at school to students in Chinese Taipei and the United States, and significantly more teacher feedback than the OECD average. Students in only three comparison countries – the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Singapore – reported higher levels of teacher feedback than Australian students.
- On average, around half of the Australian students reported that *the teacher gives me feedback on my strengths in this subject* in most English classes, while almost 60% reported that *the teacher tells me in which areas I can still improve* and *the teacher tells me how I can improve my performance* in most English classes.
- Male students reported receiving more teacher feedback than female students.
- The least disadvantaged students reported receiving more teacher feedback than the most disadvantaged students.
- Students in metropolitan schools reported receiving more teacher feedback than students in regional schools.
- Similar levels of teacher feedback were reported for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.
- Foreign-born students reported receiving more teacher feedback than Australian-born and first-generation students. Australian-born and first-generation students reported receiving similar levels of feedback from their teacher.
- Students in the highest quartile of the teacher feedback index scored 12 points on average higher (around one-third of a year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.

ACER notes (pages 162-163) that, overall, students in independent schools reported receiving more frequent teacher feedback than students in government and Catholic schools.

PISA 2018 Australia
Teacher feedback index, by school sector



Considering only those responses of students who agreed that teacher feedback behaviours occurred in 'every class or almost every class', a higher proportion of students in independent schools reported greatest frequency of teacher feedback.

Percentage of students in schools who reported the highest frequency of teacher feedback in their English class, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students who reported the following things happen in <i>most or every</i> English class		
	The teacher gives me feedback on my strengths in this subject	The teacher tells me in which areas I can still improve	The teacher tells me how I can improve my performance
Government	50	56	55
Catholic	52	58	55
Independent	56	62	61

16. Teacher behaviour hindering learning

In PISA 2018, school principals were asked to report the extent to which they thought student learning in their schools was hindered by the following teacher behaviours:

- Teachers not meeting individual students' needs
- Teacher absenteeism
- Staff resisting change
- Teacher being too strict with students
- Teachers not being well prepared for classes.

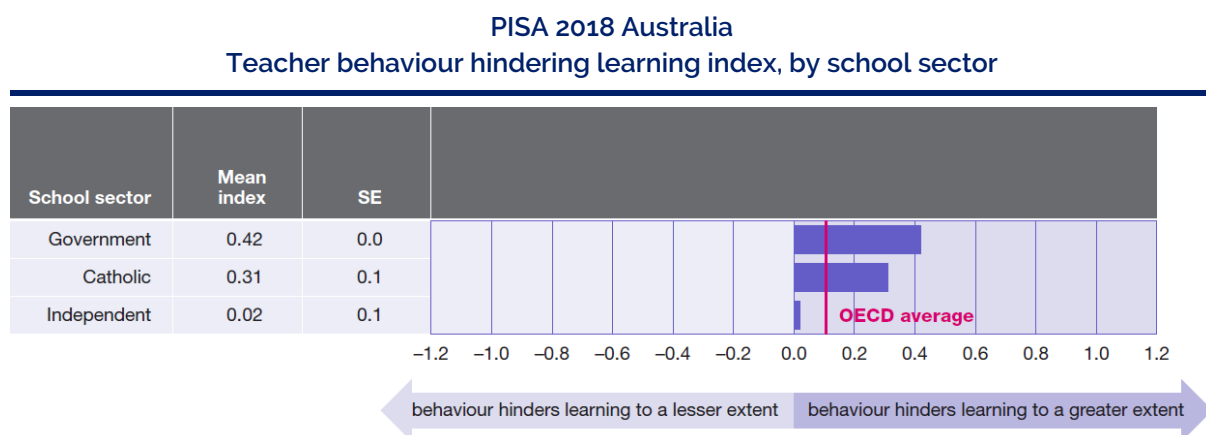
Principals were asked to rate each of the factors on a four-point scale: 'not at all', 'very little', 'to some extent' or 'a lot'. An index of teacher behaviour hindering learning was constructed using the responses to these statements.

National key findings reported by ACER (pages 167-168) include:

- On average, principals of Australian students reported similar levels of teacher behaviour hindering student learning to principals in New Zealand, Canada and Chinese Taipei, and to a greater extent than the OECD average. Principals in Japan were most likely – and principals in Poland the least likely – to report teacher behaviour hindering student learning.
- On average, two-fifths of principals of Australian students reported that teacher behaviour hindered student learning to some extent or a lot by *teachers not meeting individual students' needs* and *staff resisting change*, while one-fifth of principals reported *teacher absenteeism hindered student learning*
- On average, approximately one-tenth of Australian principals of students reported that to some extent or a lot student learning was hindered by *teachers not being well prepared for classes* and *teachers being too strict with students*.
- Principals of Australian students reported that teacher behaviour hindered student learning to a similar extent for female and male students.

- Principals of the least disadvantaged students reported that teacher behaviour hindered student learning to a lesser extent than was reported by principals of the most disadvantaged students.
- Principals of students who attended schools in regional areas perceived teacher behaviour hindered student learning more so than did principals of students in metropolitan schools.
- Principals of Indigenous students reported that student learning was hindered by teacher behaviour to a greater extent than was reported by principals of non-Indigenous students.
- Irrespective of students' immigrant background, principals of Australian-born students, first-generation and foreign-born students reported learning was hindered to a similar extent by teacher behaviour.
- Students in the highest quartile of the teacher behaviour hindering learning index scored on average 28 points lower (just under one year of schooling) in reading literacy performance than students in the lowest quartile.
- Principal reports of teacher behaviour hindering student learning increased between PISA 2012 and 2018. For instance, there was a 6 percentage point increase for Australian principals who agreed to some extent or a lot that *teacher absenteeism* hindered learning and a 3 percentage point increase for Australian principals who agreed to some extent or a lot that *teachers being too strict with students* hindered student learning.

ACER notes (pages 173-4) that principals of students in independent schools were significantly less likely to report that teacher behaviour hindered student learning than principals in the Catholic and government sectors – and well below the OECD average.



ACER also notes that a higher percentage of students attended government schools (42%) at which principals perceived teachers not meeting individual students' needs than in the Catholic (38%) or independent (24%) sectors.

A higher percentage of students attended government schools (23%) at which principals perceived teacher absenteeism hindered student learning than in independent schools (10%). Similarly, a higher percentage of students attended government schools (11%) at which the principals perceived teachers being too strict with students as hindering student learning compared to 3% in independent schools.

Principals in the independent sector were less likely to report teachers not being well prepared for classes than their counterparts in the government and Catholic sectors.

Percentage of students in schools whose principals reported teacher behaviours hindering learning, by frequency and school sector

School sector	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported behaviour occurring <i>to some extent or a lot</i>				
	Teachers not meeting individual students' needs	Teacher absenteeism	Staff resisting change	Teachers being too strict with students	Teachers not being well prepared for classes
Government	42	23	38	11	15
Catholic	38	18	41	9	15
Independent	24	10	30	2	8

Principals in all sectors reported an increase in teacher absenteeism between PISA 2012 and 2018. In the independent sector, the most significant increase in a teacher behaviour hindering student learning was reported for the factor *teachers not meeting individual students' needs*.

Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported teacher behaviours hindering learning in PISA 2012, and the difference compared to PISA 2018, by frequency, by school sector

School sector	Percentage of students in schools whose principal reported behaviour occurring <i>to some extent or a lot</i>					
	Teachers not meeting individual students' needs		Teacher absenteeism		Staff resisting change	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	45	▽ 3 pp	17	▲ 6 pp	40	▽ 2 pp
Catholic	29	△ 9 pp	9	▲ 9 pp	36	△ 5 pp
Independent	12	▲ 12 pp	2	▲ 8 pp	27	△ 3 pp

School sector	Teachers being too strict with students		Teachers not being well prepared for classes	
	2012	Change over time	2012	Change over time
Government	7	△ 4 pp	13	△ 2 pp
Catholic	5	△ 4 pp	7	△ 8 pp
Independent	4	▽ 1 pp	4	△ 4 pp

Notes: *Change over time* represents the percentage point (pp) difference between PISA 2018 and 2012.

▲ ▼ Change over time significant.

△ ▽ Change over time not significant.

Students' reports (sections 13-15) and principals' reports as outlined above confirm that parents' confidence in the quality of teaching in Australia's independent schools is well placed. ■