



**Independent  
Schools Victoria**

# Media Release

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## School Choice is a Complex Issue

Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) welcomes the recent release of research into the contributors to the educational development of children, but is disappointed at the media focus on school sector as the key criteria of concern.

Research in the latest edition of Labour Economics concludes that 'sending children to Catholic or other Independent primary schools has no significant effect on their cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes'. However, it also finds that a range of child-specific factors have a significant impact on a child's development. These include the child's birth weight, the amount of time a mother spends with her child, and the education level of both parents.

ISV Chief Executive, Ms Michelle Green, says that the research has demonstrated what educators have long known – that the most important factors in determining a child's performance and development at school are inherent in the child.

'Once a student's individual characteristics are taken into account, the greatest impact on a child's learning is the quality of the classroom teacher', she said.

Ms Green applauded the recognition in this research that school education is about more than just NAPLAN or ATAR scores, and that it addresses both the cognitive and non-cognitive development of children.

However, contrary to what has been implied in the media, ISV does not believe that this research is useful for parents considering whether to send their children to a government, Independent or Catholic school.

'This research did not discuss – because it did not investigate – the complex and extensive list of issues considered by parents when they make the decision about which school is best for their children,' Ms Green says.

'Parents choosing a school for their child are influenced by a variety of considerations, including the subjects on offer and how they are taught; whether the school is coeducational or single sex; its emphasis on sport, the arts and activities outside the regular curriculum; and its location in relation to home and public transport. It is less about finding the 'best school' but rather what is the school that is best for your child.

**For more information, or to interview Michelle Green  
Contact Nigel Bartlett on (03) 9825 7200.**