

25 May 2016

To: The Australian Government Productivity Commission

Re: Inquiry into Education Evidence Base

Please find attached a report recently completed by Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs Master of Public Administration students. The report was completed as a Capstone Project for the Brookings Institution Center for Universal Education, and is entitled *My School Australia Case Study: Transparency in Education*. The report was written by Diana Gerbase, Chiara Lawry, Sarah Lux-Lee, Kiran Palukuri, Hannah Poquette, Vincent Quan, with support from Faculty Advisor Dr. Hans-Martin Boehmer. The authors' backgrounds are included in the report.

Efforts to increase learning outcomes through transparency and accountability initiatives are increasingly discussed in the education sector. This report provides a case study of *My School* Australia as one such policy, analyzing its development and implementation.

In 2010, the Australian Government launched *My School*, to enhance transparency and accountability in the Australian education system by providing centralized data on schools. *My School* publishes information on schools' operational context, finances and resources, and student performance, and can be a model for other countries looking to implement transparency initiatives in education policy.

This case study is designed as a reference tool for policy makers, researchers and others, documenting the factors that both facilitated and hindered the development of *My School* in Australia. The enabling factors explored in the case study included national leadership, the policy context, government structures, political alignment, and existing data and technological capacities. The challenges included governmental and school sector coordination, opposition from stakeholders, and data protection concerns.

The case study also investigates the ways in which *My School* is used by various stakeholders, with findings indicating that the site is a useful tool for some parents, policymakers, education researchers, and the wider community. While there continue to be opportunities to strengthen and refine *My School*, stakeholders broadly agree that the site has become part of Australia's education landscape.

We hope that this report may be of value to the Australian Government Productivity Inquiry into an Education Evidence Base. Specifically, we hope it may help to answer the questions at page 31 of the Issues Paper:

- How do parents use the data provided on My School?
- How has My School affected parents' engagement with schools?

Chiara Lawry and Sarah Lux-Lee are available to respond to any follow-up questions. Contact details are included in the report.

Kind regards,

Chiara Lawry and Sarah Lux-Lee