

Excellence for All Students: Opportunities and Contexts

Michael Sciffer (PhD Student)

Murdoch University

Session overview

- Socioeconomic disadvantage – What is it?
 - A framework of educational inequality
 - Socioeconomic Inequality in Australian schools
 - Policy recommendations
-

Social Disadvantage

- Unequal access to resources due to belonging to social groups.
 - Gender, ethnicity, migration status, indigeneity, rurality, intersectionality
 - Socioeconomic status
 - A person's position within a of social hierarchy – class, occupation, prestige
 - A person's access to socially-valued resources
 - Common indicators:
 - Education level (Year 11, Year 12, Diploma, Degree, Higher Degree)
 - Occupation (Unskilled, Skilled, Professional, Senior Management)
 - Income/Wealth
 - Combination of indicators
-

A Framework of Educational Inequality

- Unequal outcomes
 - academic achievement, qualifications, skills, aspirations, post-school opportunities
 - Unequal opportunities
 - qualified teachers, academic curricula, learning interventions, facilities, class sizes, extra-curricula, funding
 - Unequal contexts
 - school climate and culture, student-teacher interactions, parental engagement, peer influences, school composition
-

Unequal Outcomes: Low versus High SES Students

Percentage difference in students achieving minimum NAPLAN benchmarks: 2021

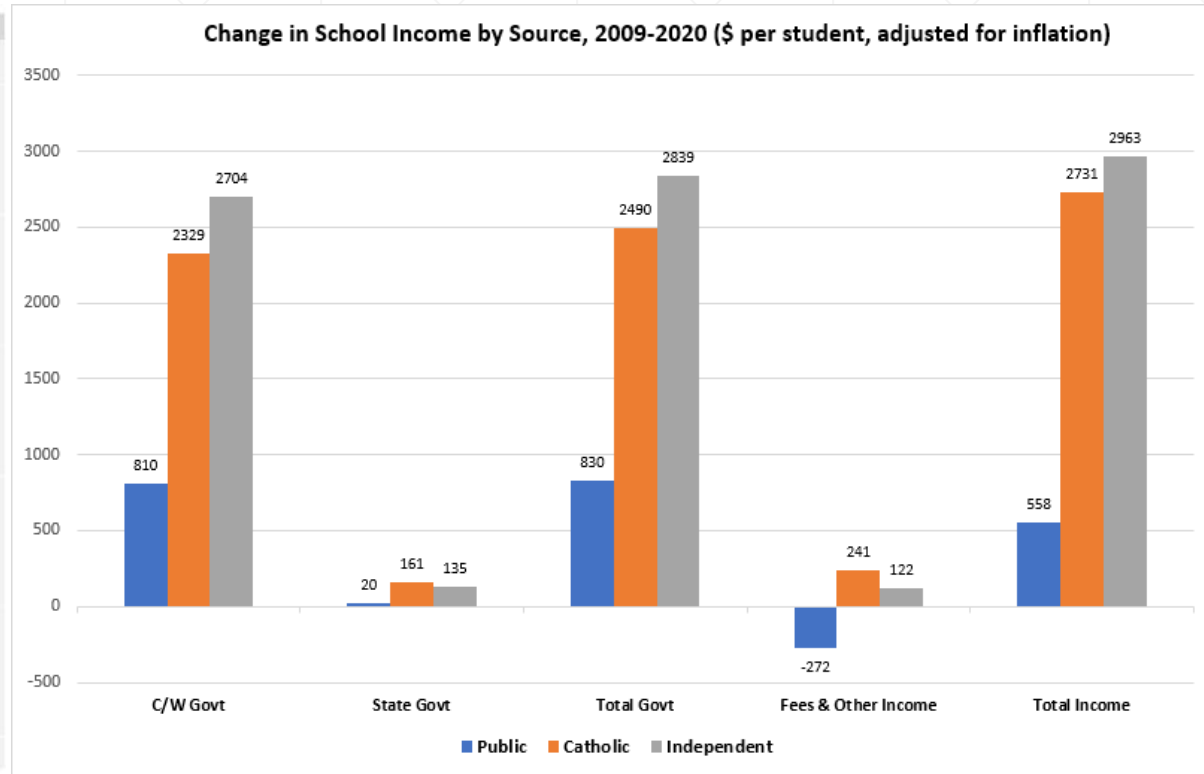
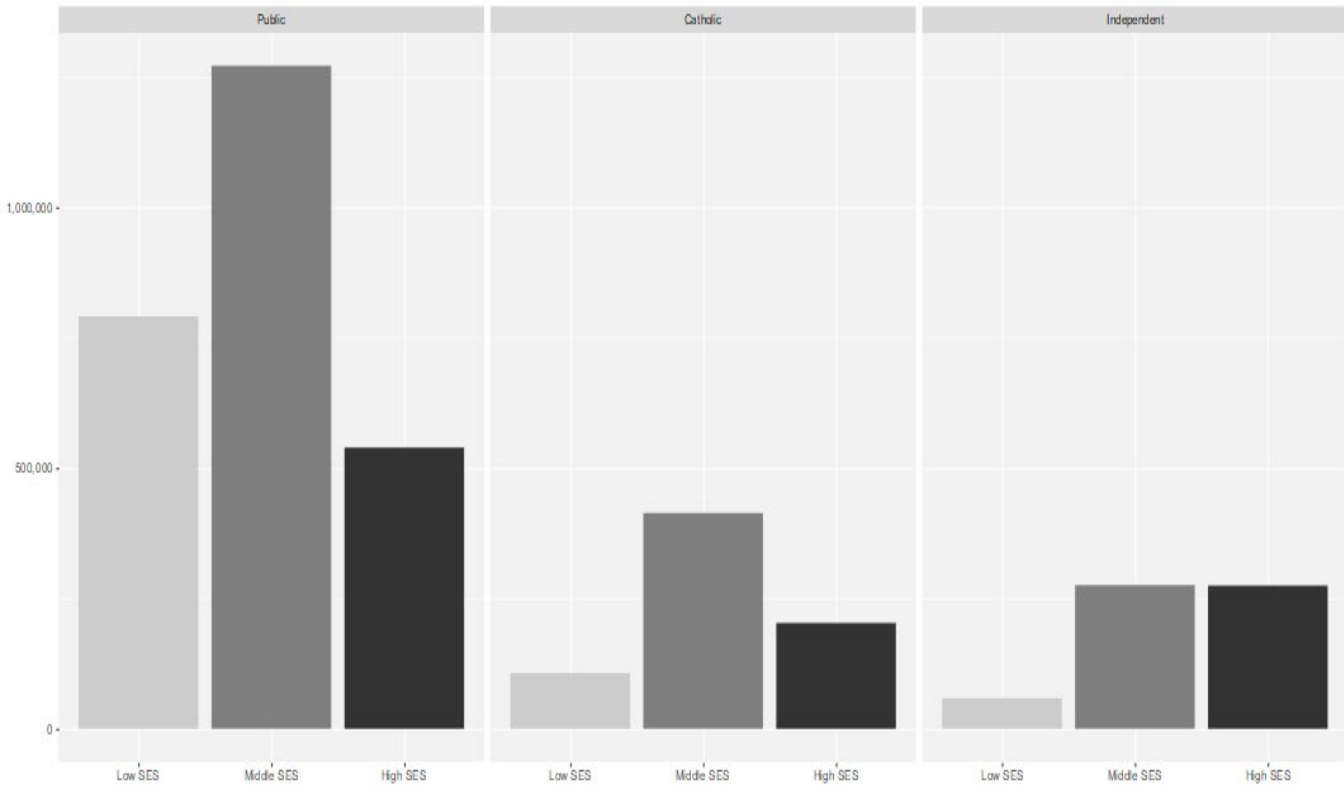
	Reading		Writing		Numeracy	
	Parental Education	Parental Occupation	Parental Education	Parental Occupation	Parental Education	Parental Occupation
Grade 5	16.3	14.5	18.8	16.4	16.8	15.0
Grade 9	26.1	24.1	35.8	33.8	15.8	15.1

Note: Parental education is the achievement gap between highest parental education of bachelor degree (or higher) versus year 11. Parental occupation is the achievement gap between highest parental occupation of senior managers/professionals versus not in paid employment.

Unequal Outcomes: Low versus High SES Students

- PISA
 - 43% less likely to achieve proficient reading standard
 - School graduation
 - 27% less likely to attain year 12 certificate
 - Tertiary education
 - 39% less likely to attain a post-school qualification
-

Unequal Opportunities



Cobbold (2022)

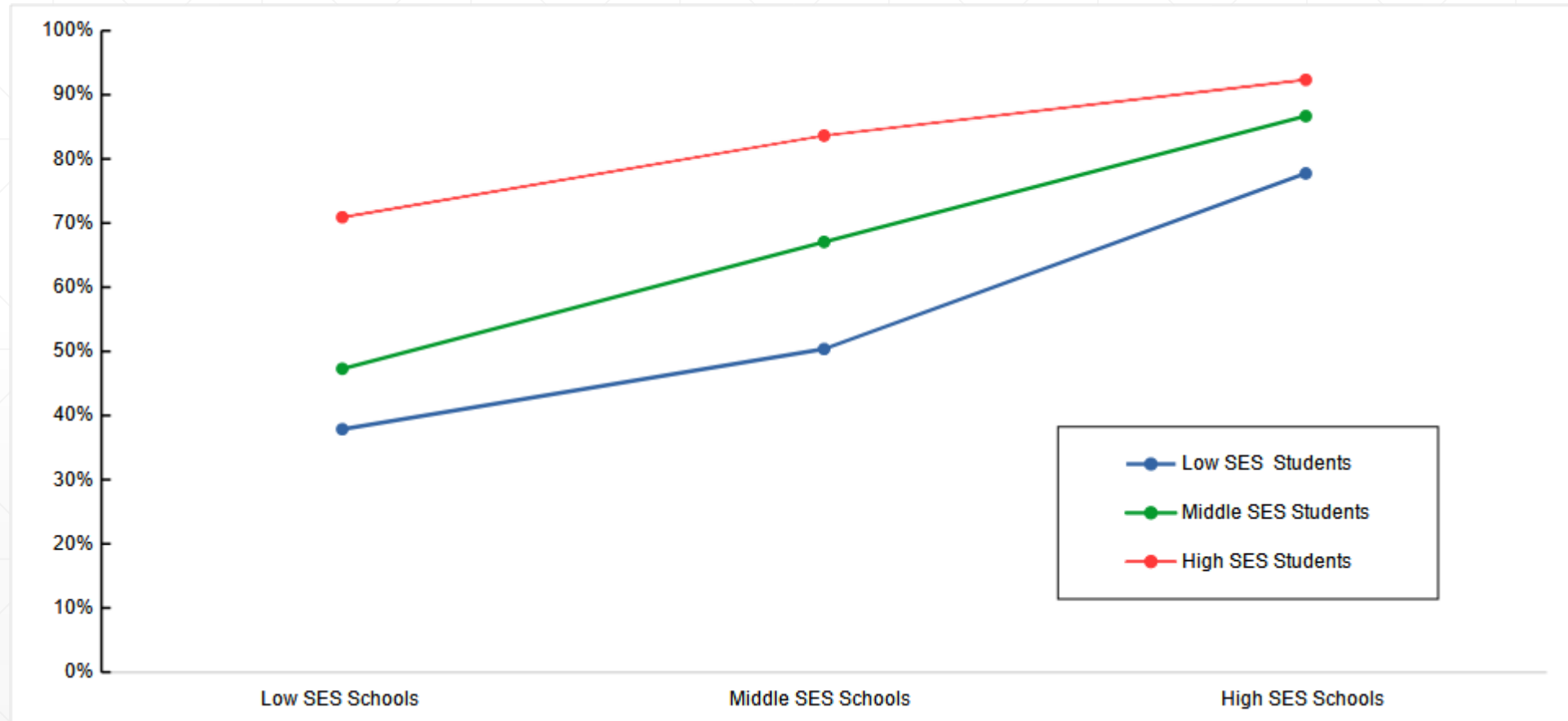
Unequal Opportunities: Low versus High SES Schools

- Resource gaps
 - Greater teacher shortages: largest in OECD
 - Less access to facilities and materials: 4 largest in OECD
 - Learning experiences
 - Classroom disciplinary environment
 - Stimulatory instructional strategies
 - Academic Curricula
 - Senior secondary access
-

Unequal Contexts

- Differences in social composition, culture and climate between advantaged and disadvantaged schools predict differences in student outcomes
 - Socioeconomic composition is the average SES of a school.
 - Socioeconomic composition predicts student outcomes separately from individual student SES.
 - Achievement growth (school effectiveness)
 - University entry
 - Social cohesion
-

Unequal Contexts



Policy Options: Equity and Excellence

- Compensatory: redress the outcomes of social disadvantage.
 - Amelioratory: close achievement gaps with the provision of additional resources.
 - Structural: reduce contextual differences between schools.
-

Compensatory Reforms

- US college reservation policies
 - Texas top 10% policy
 - Unintended consequence - lowered racial segregation in high schools
 - Australian options
 - Adjust ATAR to compensate for individual and school-level disadvantages
 - Reserve places in high-status degrees for disadvantaged students
 - Guaranteed accommodation for rural students
-

Amelioratory Reforms

- 2014 National Education Reform Agreement (Gonski)
 - Formula-based model of funding student need
 - Evidence base and transparent
 - Stalled progress
 - Public school to remain well below minimum resource standard by 2029
 - Funding for disability loading stalled
-

Structural Reforms

- Integration of private schools into public system
 - Canada and New Zealand
 - Common enrollment, suspension and expulsion policies
 - Abolition of fees
 - Require schools to be representative of the communities from which they enroll students
-

Conclusion

- Australia versus Canada
- Financial cost of inaction
- Financial benefits of equality

PISA 2018 (Reading)

	Australia	Canada
National average	503 (528)	520 (534)
SES Gap	89	68
Isolation index	0.20	0.12

Notes. 2018 versus (2000).

First versus fourth SES quartiles.

Normalised isolation index. 0=no segregation, 1 = total segregation.