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## ATA wins 2012 NTA Excellence in Research Award

In mid 2011 the ATA Board decided to conduct a national survey in order to find out from parents exactly what their view and use of tuition was. The survey was prompted by an assessment of the poor understanding of journalists across all media forms in regards to private tuition and the reasons for its growth. At the time Prof Mark Bray, an international academic expert in private tuition, confirmed that no such study had been conducted in his awareness in any nation anywhere.

The survey created widespread media interest and led to much wider opportunity for the ATA to raise issues of importance in regards to the private tuition sector nationally.

At the end of December 2011 nearly 1,000 parents had completed the survey. There has been great interest in the findings, which are being selectively released by the ATA over time.

The Board of National Tutoring Association of America, the pre-eminent tuition body in the USA wrote to the ATA Board recently and announced that the ATA had won the 2012 Excellence in Research Award. ATA CEO, Mohan Dhall, who will be travelling to the 2012 NTA Conference to deliver a keynote address, will pick up the Award on behalf of the members and Board of the ATA. He said, "This Award represents the hard work of the members of the ATA who encouraged their parents and others to have their say, in order to get a true picture of the state of play of tuition in Australia".

*Dear Mohan,*

*Congratulations! On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors of the National Tutoring Association, I am honored to inform you that the Australian Tutoring Association has been awarded the 2012 NTA Excellence in Research Award.*

*So that you may be acknowledged by your colleagues and peers in tutoring, your award will be presented at the NTA 20th Annual Conference in Scottsdale, AZ, March 17-21, 2012. The awards luncheon will be held on Monday, March 19, 2012 from 12:00pm to 2:00pm. Please feel free prepare 2-3 minutes of remarks to share with our members as you accept this award.*

*We are honored to provide you with one complimentary conference registration so that you may personally attend the conference and accept this prestigious honor. Please complete and fax your registration form to me at your earliest convenience. Simply mark "Award Recipient" on the form. Please note that the complimentary registration applies to the main conference only and does not include any pre- or post-conference workshops. All conference and registration information is located on our website ([www.ntatutor.org](http://www.ntatutor.org)).*

*Congratulations again on your achievement. We look forward to seeing you in Scottsdale.*

*Sincerely,  
Dr. Sandi Ayaz  
NTA - Executive Director*

## More on the Education Tax Rebate (ETR)

Over the past couple of years there has been some debate about the merits of the components of the Education Tax Rebate (ETR), most specifically what is included for deductibility and what is excluded. The merits of including school uniform have been widely promoted: it stops bullying and promotes a sense of inclusion, and so forth. The ETR inclusions and exclusions are shown in the box.

### Australia's Education Tax (ETR) rebate

#### What items can I claim?

Eligible expenses include the cost of buying, establishing, repairing and maintaining any of the following items:

- home computers and laptops, computer-related equipment such as printers, USB flash drives, and disability aids to assist in the use of computer equipment for students with special needs and computer repairs
- home internet connections
- computer software for educational use
- school textbooks and other printed learning material, including prescribed textbooks, associated learning materials, study guides and stationery, and School-approved uniforms purchased from 1 July 2011 (including hats, footwear and sports uniforms) approved by the school as its uniform can be claimed in the 2011/12 tax year.

#### What items can't I claim?

You cannot claim:

- school fees
- student attendance at school-based extra curricular activities such as excursions and camps
- tutoring costs
- sporting equipment, musical instruments, library book fees, school photos, donations, waiting list fees
- transport

<http://www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au/what-can-i-claim.html>

The ATA has consistently stated that if there is a competition between form ('uni-form') and substance (how a child is taught and learns) then surely tuition wins every time. A scan of the publicly available research appears to support the ATA position.

Recent discourse on public school reform has focused on mandatory uniform policies. Proponents of such reform measures emphasize the benefits of student uniforms on specific behavioral and academic outcomes. This research empirically tests the claims made by uniform advocates using 10th grade data from The National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988. Our findings indicate that student uniforms have no direct effect on substance use, behavioral problems or attendance. A negative effect of uniforms on student academic achievement was found. These findings are contrary to current discourse on student uniforms. Uniform policies may indirectly affect school environments and student outcomes by providing a visible and public symbol of commitment to school improvement and reform.

The following context and analysis comes from: Source: <http://www.gate.net/~rwms/UniformBrunRock.html>, however the authors are unknown.

Brunsmas and Rockquomore wanted to investigate the extraordinary claims being made about how wonderful school uniforms are, particularly from the Long Beach California. It was being claimed that mandatory uniform policies were resulting in massive decreases (50 to 100 percent) in crime and disciplinary problems. It is typically assumed, as exemplified in Long Beach, that uniforms

are the sole factor causing direct change in numerous behavioral and academic outcomes. Those pronouncements by uniform proponents have raised strident objections and created a political climate in which public school uniform policies have become highly contested. The ongoing public discourse is not only entrenched in controversy but also largely fueled by conjecture and anecdotal evidence. Hence, it now seems critical that empirical analysis should be conducted to inform the school uniform debate. In this study, we investigated the relationship between uniforms and several outcomes that represent the core elements of uniform proponent's claims. Specifically, we examined how a uniform affects attendance, behavior problems, substance abuse, and academic achievement. We believe that a thorough analysis of the arguments proposed by uniform advocates will add critical insight to the ongoing debate on the effects of school uniform policies. (Brunsma and Rockquemore, 1998, pg. 54)

The authors point out that if uniforms work, they should see some of the following trends in schools with uniforms:

1. Student uniforms decrease substance use (drugs).
2. Student uniforms decrease behavioral problems.
3. Student uniforms increase attendance.
4. Student uniforms increase academic achievement.

They suspected that when other variables affecting these four items were accounted for, it would be shown that uniforms were not the cause for improvement.

### How They Did Their Study

They used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), and three follow-up studies. These studies tracked a national sample of eighth graders (in 1988) from a wide variety of public and private schools and followed their academic careers through college. Some of the data collected in the studies included uniform policies, student background (economic and minority status), peer group (attitudes towards school and drug use), school achievement, and behavioral characteristics (how often did each student get into trouble, fights, suspensions, etc.). The authors concentrated on data from the students 10th grade year. Some of the independent variables they considered were sex, race, economic status, public or private school, academic or vocational "tracking", rural or urban district, peer proschool attitudes, academic preparedness, the student's own proschool attitudes, and most importantly, whether or not the students wore uniforms. The researchers wanted to determine if there was a tie between these variables and desirable behavior by the students. The areas that they were looking for improvement as a result of the previous variables included reduced absenteeism, fewer behavioral problems, reduced illegal drug use, and improved standardized test scores. The researchers considered this second group of variables to be the dependent variables. The goal of their study was to determine if there was any relationship between the independent variables (particularly uniforms) and the dependent variables.

The authors took all of the data for these variables from the NELS:88 study and performed a regression analysis to see if any of the independent variables were predictors of any of the dependent variables. If there was a strong tie in the data between any two variables (uniforms and absenteeism, for example), it would show up in the study as a correlation coefficient close to 1 or -1. A correlation coefficient near 0 indicates no relationship between the two variables. So, if wearing uniforms had a large effect on behavior, we would expect to see a correlation coefficient of say 0.5 between uniforms and measures of good behavior. If we see a very low correlation coefficient between these two, then we know that wearing uniforms has no real effect on behavior.

### Results

The only positive result for uniforms that the study showed was a very slight relationship between uniforms and standardized achievement scores. The correlation coefficient was 0.05, indicating a very slight possible relationship between the two variables, but showing that uniforms are a very poor predictor of standardized test scores and that the relationship is much weaker than has been indicated in the uniform debate. Notice that 0,05 is much closer to 0 than to 1. Other than this one weak, possible relationship, uniforms struck out. In the authors own words:

Student uniform use was not significantly correlated with any of the school commitment variables such as absenteeism, behavior, or substance use (drugs). In addition, students wearing uniforms did not appear to have any significantly different

academic preparedness, proschool attitudes, or peer group structures with proschool attitudes than other students. Moreover, the negative correlations between the attitudinal variables and the various outcomes of interest are significant; hence, the predictive analysis provides more substantive results.

In other words, the authors saw no relationship between wearing uniforms and the desirable behavior (reduced absenteeism, reduced drug usage, improved behavior). They did, however, see a strong relationship between academic preparedness, proschool attitudes, and peers having proschool attitudes and the desirable behaviors. Furthermore, they saw no relationship between wearing uniforms and the variables that do predict good behavior (academic preparedness, proschool attitudes, and peers having proschool attitudes).

**Conclusion**

Based upon this analysis, the authors were forced to reject the ideas that uniforms improved attendance rates, decreased behavioral problems, decreased drug use, or improved academic achievement. The authors did find that proschool attitudes from students and their peers and good academic preparedness did predict the desired behavior. They saw that wearing uniforms did not lead to improvements in proschool attitudes or increased academic preparation.

**References**

David L. Brunsma, D.L. and Rockquemore, K.A. (1998), Effects of Student Uniforms on Attendance, Behavior Problems, Substance Abuse, and Academic Achievement, The Journal of Education Research Volume 92, Number 1, Sept./Oct. 1998, pp. 53-62, From: <http://www.members.tripod.com/rockqu/uniform.htm>

*The analysis above comes from an unknown author or authors who summarised the finding of the following paper: "The Effects of Student Uniforms on Attendance, Behavior Problems, Substance Use, and Academic Achievement", by David L. Brunsma and Kerry A. Rockquemore, Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556, Manuscript accepted for publication in The Journal of Educational Research, February 13, 1998 (manuscript #03-97-83)*

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- Email orders can be sent to: **[corporate@dymocks.com.au](mailto:corporate@dymocks.com.au)**
- (Please note: The Dymocks website is a convenient way to assist you with your book selection, but in order to access the discount please send all orders via the method above.)

Please note. Dymocks Booklover Rewards card can't be used in conjunction with the above offer. Discount applies to books marked at RRP. Sale items, DVD, CD and software excluded.

## IN THE PRESS

The ATA has been proactive this year in sending out Press Releases in advance of major educational announcements and events. Thus, in preparation for the Scholarship Tests nationally that are used as entry into the private school sector from the public sector, a Press Release was issued that emphasised the costs saving associated with gaining entry into a private school. Thus, tutors were seen as a wise investment choice for parents seeking to help their children gain an academic scholarship.

Bethany Hiatt, the Education Editor for the West Australian paper wrote an article titled, "Coaching push to win scholarships", on 25th February in which she looked at the issue of fee relief as a benefit of tuition. On the same day Andrew Stevenson and Elizabeth Pratt, writing for the Sydney Morning Herald in an article titled, "Private schools cast the net for brightest but not all take the offers", and looked at the possible saving of \$150,000 that parents were eyeing. Predictably, a principal of a private school, the beneficiary of the tuition, was quoted as saying that she was concerned about "students getting on that treadmill of tutoring". No doubt she says the same about the use of sporting coaches, debating coaches and musical mentors.

Earlier in the year, also in the Sydney Morning Herald, Rachel Olding looked at the increase in numbers of students in Year 12 who do some sort of revision courses in the January holidays. Titled, "Students ditch the beach to get a head start on HSC", this article quoted from students, as well as some of the important findings from the ATA National Tuition Survey of Parents. Again, the overall message was positive.

These articles can all be viewed on the ATA website: [www.ata.edu.au](http://www.ata.edu.au) - follow the 'Downloads Tab' and choose 'ATA In The Press'.

## AUSTRALIA

Shireen Khalil, writing an excellent article for the Inner West Courier in Sydney, said this:

'A NEW study has shown that parents place a high dependence on tuition, with 92 per cent saying it boosts the self-esteem or confidence of their children.

The National Tuition Survey, conducted by Croydon-based Australian Tutoring Association, found that parents who have their children tutored are not simply chasing academic results. CEO Mohan Dhall said parents valued education and realised the importance of early intervention. "The common misinterpretation that tutoring is singularly used as a tool to coach students for high stakes exams is completely disproved by this data," he said. "It is well known early intervention is likely to lead to the best outcomes educationally."

## MEANWHILE IN INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### EUROPE

In Europe in mid-March the national tutoring associations of Germany, Turkey, Portugal, Cyprus and Greece shall meet in Turkey for the signing of an international agreement creating a supra-national tuition body for Europe. This body, called the European Network for Educational Support (ENES) will align the interests of member nations. The ATA was invited to attend but no representative from the Board could go and a message was sent by video-link at the request of the ENES organising committee.

### BIHAR, INDIA

Shakuntla Sinha knows where to cut corners to keep the house running with her husband's Rs 15,000 salary. The couple maintain a strict, austere lifestyle and rarely indulge, except when it comes to their kids' education. A Rs.2,000 fund is exclusively kept for their private tuitions.

In Bihar, there are millions of parents like Shankuntla and her husband Sunil who are not satisfied with school education and think of tuitions as a basic necessity.

A recent report by the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2011-12 reveals that nearly 46.7% children in government schools in Bihar take tuitions while 60.8% in private schools take tuition -- the highest figures in the country. In comparison, nationally 23.3% of students in government schools and 21% in private schools take tuition. According to the report, the trend of school children opting for private tuitions indicate falling standards in school education and a dip in the quality of teachers.

"Private tuition is the most important element outside school. It provides the (children) support to solve problems related to studies at school," said Shakuntla. Then there's Guddan Khatoun who also prefers a private teacher over the school where her children study. "We feel tension-free with private tuitions because school teachers do not give them full attention," she says. Mukesh Singh, another parent, said there have been instances when he has detected spelling errors and even wrong math problems marked as correct by teachers. His daughter is a Class X student in a government-run high school here.

An 80-page report on "Elementary Education in Bihar: Progress and Challenges", released by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, said one out of every four boys and one out of every 10 girls in rural Bihar take private tuitions. According to data, there are over 20 million students in government schools in Bihar. Last year, a report revealed that 94.1% children in Bihar study in government schools, 5.7% in private schools and 0.2% in unrecognised madrassas. Another interesting finding of the report was that 6.6% of primary school teachers and 10.4% teachers of upper primary classes run private tuitions. Of them, 45.5% justified private tuitions as a "desirable practice".

Source: "Key Bihar Lessons: Private Tuitions are Necessities", Published on 30.01.12 by IANS Agency, from [http://www.dnaindia.com/academy/report\\_key-bihar-lesson-private-tuitions-are-necessities\\_1643856](http://www.dnaindia.com/academy/report_key-bihar-lesson-private-tuitions-are-necessities_1643856)

## DHAKA, BANGLADESH

A sudden surge in the private tuition business has caught the attention of the Bangladesh High Court and attracted a hail of criticism from Church educators.

There are now an estimated 50,000 coaching centers across the country, with 20,000 of them in the capital, Dhaka. Many have only opened recently.

Concerned by this development, the country's High Court called upon the Education Ministry to investigate. The ensuing report was highly critical of the standards at most centers and recommended that students should not be encouraged to enroll with them. Inadequate teaching and overcrowding were among its main concerns.

However, there is no law as yet against coaching centers or regulation of their conduct. Indeed, some of them claim to be government approved.

Some media reports say powerful business interests are involved in this multimillion taka trade, which may make the government reluctant to take a firmer stance.

Church leaders are most annoyed by the fact that some centers also adopt the names of well known Church-run institutes, implying that they are part of the same establishment.

The highly respected Notre Dame College in Dhaka is one victim of this practice. A coaching center called Buetec, which operates in nearby premises, claims to be run by former Notre Dame staff and goes so far as to guarantee admission to the college if one enrolls there.

A Buetec representative, who did not want to be named, said, "Yes, we do offer coaching for students aspiring to study at Notre Dame and many of them have made it."

Now Notre Dame has contacted all its students and parents, warning them not to be lured by this or any other center trading under its name.

"I simply hate this coaching business," said Holy Cross Father Benjamin Costa, the principal. "If these centers provided a true education, what would be the use of schools and colleges run by the Church?"

"The coaching is not acceptable anyway and I don't think they are useful. This is nothing but wasting money."

Brother Robi Purification, headmaster of St Gregory's High School, calls the coaching trade "the deadliest disease for education in Dhaka." But he acknowledged that prevailing conditions may force some teachers to offer private tuition or take "moonlight" jobs at a coaching center.

"We have always discouraged our teachers from it," he said. "But when we can't pay them more than 10,000 to 12,000 taka (US\$ 125-\$150) a month they simply have no option, with the cost of city living."

One teacher who runs a center near St Gregory's insisted there is nothing wrong with private coaching.

"The students who come here score well in examinations and get the chance to go to good schools, including some run by missionaries," he said. "We help weaker students who are not properly cared for by their institutes or at home."

*Source: Sumon, Corraya, "Church educators decry boon in private tuition – Church schools warn against predatory 'coaching centers'", from: <http://www.ucanews.com/2012/02/02/church-educators-decry-boom-in-private-tuition/>; 02.02.12 DHAKA, BANGLADESH*

## MEANWHILE IN KOREA....

### MOE'S PROPOSED BAN ON CRAM SCHOOLS RECRUITING STUDENTS UNDER 6 DRAWS CRITICISM

The China Post--A Ministry of Education's (MOE) proposed amendment to the Supplementary Education Act to bar cram schools from recruiting students under the age of 6 has drawn criticism from local cram schools.

According to the draft bill that passed the MOE's preliminary screening yesterday, cram schools offering language lessons, mental arithmetic and other courses for children's intelligence development are forbidden from recruiting students under 6.

Violators could be given a fine ranging from NT\$50,000 to NT\$250,000 for each offense. The penalty can be repeated until the illegal practice stops, according to the MOE bill.

The bill, however, would not apply to cram schools that help children learn body movement or cultivate their interest for art. The draft bill has to be approved both in the Executive Yuan and Legislative Yuan before taking effect.

Ke Jeng-feng, chief of the MOE's Department of Social Education, said the decision was made by a group of local educational experts to improve the development of young children's mental and physical health

The ministry proposed a similar amendment in 2009, but it failed to pass the Executive Yuan then, Ke noted.

The MOE's proposed ban, however, had immediately draw strong protest from local cram schools because once it passes by legislatures, it would deal a serious blow to the livelihood of nearly 19,000 cram schools in Taiwan that are specialized in language, especially English, teaching.

Voicing protest over the MOE's call, Chang Hao-jan, director-general of Taipei City's Supplementary Education Association, said cram school is not the root of all evils.

"It is simply a matter of supply and demand," said Chang, adding that it is because parents have the need and these schools are simply offering the service to meet it.

Chang said offering education service to young children is also beneficial to their future development. The MOE, however, repeatedly refused the claim made by local cram school business representatives, he said. He urged legislators to block the bill in the future.

Meanwhile, the Central News Agency quoted a mother surnamed Wu of saying that if the proposal passes, it would cause her great inconvenience, adding that the ministry should allow young children to attend cram schools.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2011/11/02/321677/MOEs-proposed.htm>

## Updates

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) has experienced change recently and also process consolidation. The process improvements were led by Michelle Giacoppo. Michelle has had to support her husband's growing business and no doubt it will flourish in her capable hands. The main effect of the process has been seen in a membership surge.

### Membership surge

Each month as ATA memberships are due an analysis is made of the level of 'churn' (turnover), the number of renewals, and the level of growth. Generally there is a 16% - 20% churn rate of people leaving the industry. Renewals therefore stand at about 80 – 85%. However, the ATA has grown from about 320 members this time last year to 420 members currently. This means an additional 8 memberships on average each month.

In February 2012 there were 26 new memberships and 30 existing. Of the 30 existing memberships 2 people are no longer tutoring. Thus the growth for the month has been huge! Apart from process improvements, the surge in membership may also be due to the high volume of publicity that the ATA has achieved over the past 15 months or so.

### The new ATA website

Currently under design, the ATA is getting a new website. This website should increase our functionality and our capacity to give more to members. Apart from a better look, the search facilities will be improved allowing visitors to the site to better source a tutor.

A new feature of the site shall be the capacity to pay for membership on-line. This will make applications processing easier and also quicker. In term of analytics the CRM features of the site will enable the Board to better serve its members and to better track KPIs.

### Within Tuition Editor

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## New Survey Results

On Saturday the 17th of March the Daily Telegraph ran the following poll: Do you use the services of a private tutor to get your children into a better school?

The results of the poll were:

27.74% (770 votes)	YES
72.26% (2006 votes)	NO

Of course, while interesting, alternative questions that could have been asked include: Should mainstream education recognise and work with private tutors? or Should private tuition be tax deductible?

Source: <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/sydney-nsw/expensive-learning-curve-as-fortunes-being-spent-on-selective-school-tutors/story-e6freuzi-1226302075287>

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