



CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS AUSTRALIA

NAPLAN REPORTING REVIEW SUBMISSION

14 MARCH 2019

About Catholic School Parents Australia

Catholic School Parents Australia is recognised as the national body representing and advocating for the parents/carers of over 764,000 children and young people who attend the 1740 Catholic schools across Australia. CSPA works in collaboration and consultation with the National Catholic Education Commission and is recognised by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference through the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education.

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Preamble to response

Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) understands that there is much discussion and debate currently in relation to large scale assessment. It seems that NAPLAN as a national point-in-time test has evolved from key aspects of its original purpose and has now being utilised more as a high stakes test for school comparisons than a diagnostic test to inform individual student learning.

Various members of CSPA have a range of experience with schools and this anecdotally informs the shared comments in relation to the dot points below.

1. Perceptions of NAPLAN and My School data, including the potential for misinterpretation or misuse

- Does the NAPLAN data currently available on the My School website provide an appropriate balance between the right to high quality information and the possibility of misinterpretation or misuse?

CSPA believes that data presented on the *My School* website is understood by some broad groups of parents but not others. While ACARA has strived to make information clear, some parents would still have limited understanding of information which is presented. A key use of the *My School* data is a check on a child's school for overall performance and a comparison with other schools.

- Is there anything you find difficult to understand or is there any different NAPLAN information you would like to see included on My School?

The % of students who did not undertake the various NAPLAN tests, for whatever reason, could be included in a highly visible place on the *My School* website as sometimes withdrawals/absences can skew results unfavourably for those schools who place high expectation on attendance versus schools who for whatever reason have significant numbers not taking the tests. This can facilitate unfair comparisons especially at local levels and flies in the face of intended comparisons. More specifically, it could be useful to know what proportion of withdrawn students were instigated by a school and what proportion was instigated by parents.

- Is the explanatory material on My School around “statistically similar schools” sufficiently explained, easy to understand and does this support fair comparisons for schools?

It is stated that *My School provides information to help make informed decisions about their child's education*. This would seem to be only achieved in the broad sense as the premise of how schools are categorised based on ICSEA has limitations. That is, ICSEA is determined by: parents' occupation; parents' education; a school's geographical location and proportion of Indigenous students, and some of these aspects can be misleading. For example, parents' occupation is a very broad category with wide variation and the continued labelling of students as indigenous or non-indigenous has obvious short comings. There are many instances where people see known schools with key differences falling within the 'like schools' categorisation and this diminishes the credibility of this aspect of *My School* data. Also, anecdotally, there is no general understanding of what is a 'like school' for parents.

- What consideration should be given to comparisons over time and between schools while schools progressively transition to NAPLAN online?

While work has been undertaken around achieving scaled comparisons between *paper & pencil* and *on-line* tests during the transition, it would seem that once all schools are *on-line* a new baseline could be established. During the transition, *My School* could be very clear in distinguishing which data were the result of *paper-pencil* tests and which were *on-line*.

2. How My School and NAPLAN contribute to understanding of student progress and achievement

- To what extent do schools and school systems use NAPLAN student progress and achievement data, including comparisons with statistically similar schools, to inform their school improvement strategies?

It would seem that schools and systems broadly use NAPLAN achievement to note trends around improvement with the tests and more broadly with their teaching and learning agenda. These include year by year comparisons and more importantly individual student growth between NAPLAN testing. However, there would seem to be some concern in student attitude especially towards the Yr 9 tests and many schools have less than half a year with their Yr 7 cohort of students prior to their NAPLAN testing. There would seem to be little comparison with statistically similar schools to inform a school's improvement agenda; this is more likely informed through the year on year comparisons and student growth between NAPLAN tests.

- To what extent is whole-population assessment data necessary to meet school systems' and governments' need for sound information to support school improvement?

CSPA understands that whole-population assessment data is necessary for various purposes including accountability however a focus here is on the undertaking of testing for individual learner diagnostic purposes. NAPLAN can achieve both of these purposes however there needs to be the teacher and parent PD around fully interpreting the data for individual students. Without such analyses NAPLAN becomes a waste of time for its most key purpose of informing student learning. Also there is some question around aspects of validity of some components of NAPLAN, e.g. Writing – are there other standardised tests that could be used for this.

It is suggested that an alternative to NAPLAN could be a broad suite of standardised tests that are available to schools through ACARA. These could be locally selected by schools or systems from a broad bank of available tests and government/system agencies could access a sample of schools' testing for accountability purposes. Such a framework could utilise various standardised tests on an as needs basis and at a time that is suitable to schools/cohorts of students. Also, there could be testing at various year levels for aspects of the curriculum, not just 3, 5, 7 and 9. The costs of purchase and scoring of these tests could be subsidised for schools by government.

3. How schools use achievement data, including NAPLAN, to inform teaching

- To what extent are NAPLAN data and the My School website used to inform teaching?

Observations by various members of CSPA indicate that there seems to be varying use of NAPLAN data to inform teaching and learning. In schools where there is a school-wide coordinated use of data, including NAPLAN, there is more likelihood of NAPLAN data being used as a diagnostic tool for individual student learning. Clearly the more these data are known by teachers, students and their parents the more likely that the data will be used to differentiate for learning. If NAPLAN is not used for this purpose it is easy to understand why teachers, students and their parents question why NAPLAN tests are undertaken.

Many schools/systems seem to use NAPLAN data as a measure of overall school improvement. However, this would seem more likely when a school is part of a system and there is a system-wide expectation.

- Which assessment tools, approaches and data analytics services do schools and school systems use to inform teaching?

Most schools undertake a suite of tests and follow up data analytics to inform teaching and learning. ACER testing including PAT-M and PAT-R tests are commonly used and schools/systems are likely to have benchmarks as part of goal setting in place re these tests. Various other tests regarding reading, writing, numeracy and spelling seem to be commonly undertaken in many schools and make up a data plan to inform teaching and learning. It would seem that it is highly varied re the degree to which individual teachers utilise these data, however it is increasingly an expectation of schools and systems that all teachers will utilise such evidence to inform their decision making/planning. For example, in some jurisdictions where programs have been developed to assist the interpretation of data together with related remediation strategies for educators (e.g. SunLANDA (QCAA) in Qld.) there might be greater instances of differentiation resulting from system-wide expectations for its use.

Many schools have taken up elements of visible learning and the higher the flexibility of learning spaces the higher the likelihood that differentiated teaching/learning is implemented.

- What opportunities are there to improve the timeliness of NAPLAN reporting?

If NAPLAN or any testing is to be useful there needs to be a minimum period of time between testing and reporting. NAPLAN on-line, once taken up by all schools, will greatly shorten the current lengthy lag time between administration and availability of results of NAPLAN tests - at the moment the impact of their use as a diagnostic tool are greatly diminished. Currently, as of March 2019, the most recent NAPLAN data available through the *My School* website is for 2017. It is acknowledged that individual schools and parents/students do have 2018 data.

4. How My School and NAPLAN data are reported to students and parents

- To what extent do schools communicate individual, whole school and comparative NAPLAN data to students, parents and families?

It is understood that in the best case scenarios that NAPLAN data (individual and whole school) are made available to parents soon after it is received by schools, however this seems to vary from school to school. The current lag in the availability of data from ACARA diminishes the use of these data as a diagnostic tool. The sooner this lag time can be reduced to weeks rather than months the better – this would also give more credibility to NAPLAN data.

- To what extent do parents and families use NAPLAN data on My School to make informed judgements, make choices and engage with their children's education?

The degree to which NAPLAN data are understood and utilised is most likely in some proportion to the education levels of families and the degree to which a school promotes these data within their school community. Importantly, though a measure of the use of any diagnostic/school wide testing is the degree to which the educating authority takes steps to educate all parents and teachers around the data and what strategies can be undertaken to improve individual student learning.

It is vital that parents are able to easily access 'user friendly' NAPLAN data so that they will be better able to work in partnership with the school with regards their children's education and well-being. Through such parent engagement, fuller use might be made of the diagnostic benefits of such testing – one of the key original purposes for setting up NAPLAN.

When NAPLAN testing consistently shows some specific areas where learning is lacking, perhaps some implications could be drawn for more targeted focus in teacher training in these areas of literacy and numeracy. Also, more teacher training in strategies to better engage parents in their children's learning and well-being would help to improve overall learning outcomes for all students.

What NAPLAN reporting information do students need in order to contribute to their own education?

It would seem reasonable to inform students of the data that they generate through their testing. The more students understand the data perhaps the higher it might be used diagnostically and the greater the credibility in the data and the testing.

As far as possible, national testing such as NAPLAN should be culturally appropriate tests such that there are acceptable levels of content validity in relation to the tests used.

The widespread negative reporting about NAPLAN no doubt must impact some student attitudes to these tests. For example, where there is an unusual dip in NAPLAN performance in some schools (e.g. at year 9) this might be attributed to student attitude rather than teaching and learning. Perhaps some brief attitudinal data could be collected prior to the start of each NAPLAN test to develop some trend data around this.

Submission to NAPLAN Reporting Review 2019

March 2019

The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS)

**Blaise Joseph, Research Fellow
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Executive Summary

- The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to NAPLAN Reporting Review 2019.
- NAPLAN provides a high quality school, system, state and national overview of student achievement in foundational educational skills.
- NAPLAN is a key element of government transparency and accountability
- There is very little evidence of widespread misuse or misinterpretation of MySchool.
- There is some evidence that high-achieving schools use NAPLAN data to track student progress and improve teaching over time.
- There is also evidence that Australian parents care about literacy and numeracy skills, and often find the NAPLAN results published on MySchool helpful.
- The availability of NAPLAN results on MySchool facilitates parents making an informed school choice if they wish; but there is no evidence of a dramatic effect on school enrolments.
- MySchool is generally easy to understand and has clear caveats regarding the interpretation of results. Only minor changes are necessary.
- A sample test instead of a population test would not have the major benefits of NAPLAN. In particular, it would not provide all parents with the option to receive individualised results.
- The transition to NAPLAN online is an opportunity to improve the timeliness and accuracy of results.
- The CIS published a research report examining the benefits and common criticisms of NAPLAN and MySchool, *Why We Need NAPLAN*, in May 2018.¹ This submission is based partly on the research report, which is attached as an annexure.
- NAPLAN and My School are valued by parents and the public, and should be retained. While there may be room for some improvements their benefits outweigh the alleged negative impacts.

1. Perceptions of NAPLAN and My School data, including the potential for misinterpretation or misuse of data

Does the NAPLAN data currently available on the My School website provide an appropriate balance between the right to high quality information and the possibility of misinterpretation or misuse?

There is very little rigorous evidence to suggest that the NAPLAN data currently available on MySchool is being misinterpreted or misused. Use of MySchool is voluntary — only parents who are interested in their child's school's NAPLAN results use it, and the website has existed since 2011 without any clear documented negative consequences. Furthermore, the website contains numerous caveats and presents the data in multiple formats, which reduces the possibility of data misuse or misinterpretation.

The evidence for misuse or misinterpretation of MySchool is mostly anecdotal. There have been no recent rigorous large-sample studies examining how the publishing of NAPLAN results on MySchool influence school choice. There have been some surveys and studies considering how MySchool data is used:

- A 2018 ACARA survey:²
 - Sample of 1,228 parents.
 - Found one third of parents have used MySchool.
 - Among parents who had used MySchool, a majority had used it to see how their child is performing in literacy and numeracy, to inform decisions in relation to their child's education, and to fairly compare their child's schools' performance with similar schools.
- A 2013 Newspoll survey:³
 - Sample of 568 parents.
 - Found 17% of parents said they had visited the MySchool website in the past 12 months in order to compare the NAPLAN results of their child's school with others.
- A 2013 Grattan Institute study:⁴
 - Analysed a sample of 1,361 schools.
 - Found a weak relationship between change in NAPLAN scores and change in school enrolments
 - Indicates that My School did not have a dramatic impact on enrolments.
- A 2012 survey:⁵
 - Sample of 1,062 school principals, based off on an earlier survey of all school principals with a response rate of 21%.
 - Found 67% of principals said the MySchool website had a neutral effect on their school, 24% said it had a negative effect, and 8% said it had a positive effect.
- A 2012 survey:⁶
 - Sample of 8,353 teachers.
 - Teachers were invited to participate in the survey through Australian teacher unions.
 - The survey response rate was only 4%.
 - The survey has serious methodological issues, with all participants being from teacher unions, a very low response rate, and probably teachers who had strong negative perceptions of NAPLAN and MySchool were far more likely to respond to the survey.
 - Found 72% of teachers said the purpose of NAPLAN is to rank schools and 46% said it was to assist parent choice.

- Found 93% of teachers said poor results would negatively impact a school’s ability to attract and retain students, and 65% said poor results would have a negative impact on a school’s ability to attract or retain teachers.
- It is problematic to rely on teacher responses alone regarding how parents generally use NAPLAN data published on the MySchool website, as their perspective tends to be from inside of the school system.
- A 2012 study:⁷
 - Small case study of just five families.
 - Found the participating families did not use available data on the MySchool website in the process of choosing a school.
 - Given the very small sample size, few conclusions can be inferred from this study.
- A 2014 survey:⁸
 - Conducted by Independent Schools Queensland; sample of 1,048 parents across 67 independent schools.
 - Found just 5% of parents accessed the MySchool website when considering school selection.
 - Strong academic performance was only the ninth most important factor for parents in choosing a school.
 - The survey is not of a random sample and is not intended to be a scientific study, so limited conclusions can be drawn from it. But it does challenge the perception that parents are excessively concerned with the published school results on the MySchool website.

The small and limited amount of existing evidence does not enable a strong conclusion regarding how MySchool data is used by parents or the overall impact of the website on schools. Based on the available evidence, however, it appears MySchool data is only one factor among many considered by parents in choosing schools and the availability of NAPLAN results does not seem to have a significant effect on enrolments. It is obvious parents will make a school choice based on all available information, and data on academic achievement are one factor. Therefore, the evidence for widespread misuse or misinterpretation of MySchool is weak.

[Is there anything you find difficult to understand or is there any different NAPLAN information you would like to see included on My School?](#)

The NAPLAN information on the MySchool website is already made easy to understand through the presentation in multiple formats — both numbers and graphs — and the use of colour-coding to designate above or below average scores.

One possible addition that could be considered is results from state and territory Year 12 assessments for high schools. This addition may be logistically difficult to include, but would have significant benefits. It would give parents information about the academic performance of a high school beyond Year 9, and also alleviate the concerns that the MySchool website academic achievement data relies too much on one set of tests. More comprehensive information on high school performance over time at a central information source would be helpful for many parents.

[Is the explanatory material on My School around “statistically similar schools” sufficiently explained, easy to understand and does this support fair comparisons for schools?](#)

The explanatory material on MySchool concerning statistically similar schools is both easy to understand and sound from a statistical perspective. This is currently the default option when viewing NAPLAN results for a school, so it does support a fair comparison for schools.

It is important, however, to also retain the results for every school compared to the national average, not just the average of statistically similar schools. The ability to compare a school's absolute performance compared to the national average — rather than just its relative performance compared to previous years or other similar schools — facilitates a far more rigorous assessment of a school's results.

What consideration should be given to comparisons over time and between schools while schools progressively transition to NAPLAN online?

Changes in national assessments create significant difficulties in comparisons over time and between schools. The trend line is essentially broken when a new form or mode of assessment is introduced, as it is not possible to completely obviate the impact of the change on student results.

One way to preserve a trend line for a population is to run a sample of the old assessment (e.g. paper-based NAPLAN) for several years concurrent with the new assessment (e.g. NAPLAN online) and report both sets of results. It may be too late to do this with the transition to NAPLAN online, but it would be advisable to do so.

2. How My School and NAPLAN reporting contribute to understanding of student progress and achievement

To what extent do schools and school systems use NAPLAN student progress and achievement data, including comparisons with statistically similar schools, to inform their school improvement strategies?

A recent CIS research project involved conducting interviews with school principals and staff at nine top-performing disadvantaged schools (based on NAPLAN data and ICSEA scores). All nine principals at these high-achieving schools indicate they use NAPLAN data to improve literacy and numeracy teaching, as an external benchmark against which the progress of the school or individual students can be measured. Examples include monitoring school-wide trends overtime, identifying particular areas the school needs to improve, determining the work of learning support specialists for the next year, having a comparison for teacher-written test results, and tracking individual student and cohort growth.

This provides some evidence to suggest high-achieving schools are utilising NAPLAN data to improve student performance over time.

To what extent is whole-population assessment data necessary to meet school systems' and governments' need for sound information to support school improvement?

Whole-population assessment data are necessary to support school system improvement over time. Collecting data on every student makes it possible to track progress from the national level all the way down to individual students, using an objective benchmark that is comparable between school systems and students. This also means greater confidence can be placed in conclusions drawn from the data.

A sample test — instead of a population test which assesses all students — has been proposed as an alternative to the current NAPLAN. But the main benefits of population NAPLAN would be undermined if it was a sample test:

- *Tool to improve schools and teaching.* A sample test would mean NAPLAN results could not be used as a tool to guide individual student or class or school teaching, because only a small proportion of students and schools would be assessed regularly, and the sample group would change each year.
- *Transparency.* There would no longer be transparency regarding student outcomes at the school level. Parents would not have any consistent objective data upon which to base their assessment of local school performance, and instead would be forced to attempt to assess performance based on a number of subjective indicators like reputation.
- *Accountability.* School systems, schools, and governments would no longer be accountable for literacy and numeracy results throughout all of primary and secondary school. Schools could be significantly underperforming while parents would have no knowledge.

International tests that are based on samples, such as PISA and TIMSS, are only sample tests because of necessity and practicality. It is unnecessary for the OECD's purposes to assess all school students in participating countries. But in contrast, it has already been proven for 10 years that it is possible and practical to conduct a yearly national test for all Australian students.

In addition, a sample test would inevitably include some biases compared to a population test. It would be difficult to find a random national sample of students that accurately assesses national performance, or state and territory performance. Governments could dismiss the results of such a test on the grounds of methodology, unlike a population test.

It is clear the alternative of a sample test would be completely insufficient for the purposes of a national literacy and numeracy assessment.

3. How schools use achievement data, including NAPLAN, to inform teaching

What opportunities are there to improve the timeliness of NAPLAN reporting?

The transition to NAPLAN online should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the utility of the data by minimising schools' wait to receive results, and giving a more responsive and therefore accurate assessment of student performance. In the recent CIS research project cited above, involving nine high-achieving disadvantaged schools, principals mentioned they were looking forward to the transition to all NAPLAN tests being conducted online. The main benefit cited was that it will reduce the wait for test results from months to weeks, thereby making the results more timely and more useful for informing teaching practice — in addition to other benefits, such as lessening the administrative burden and allowing for testing catered to individual student ability.

4. How My School and NAPLAN data are reported to students and parents

To what extent do parents and families use NAPLAN data on My School to make informed judgements, make choices and engage with their children's education?

School choice is firmly embedded in Australia's school system. Over one third of students attend a non-government school,⁹ more than double the OECD average of 16%.¹⁰ This means ensuring parents have the data necessary to make an informed school choice is especially important in Australia.

There is some evidence that parents generally value the NAPLAN data on MySchool. The 2018 ACARA survey of parents mentioned above found a third of parents had used MySchool, and three-quarters of parents believed it is important for parents to access MySchool and the information it provides.¹¹ Among parents who had used MySchool, a majority had used it to see how their child is performing in literacy and numeracy, to inform decisions in relation to their child's education, and to fairly compare their child's schools' performance with similar schools.

News reports indicate a significant recent increase in the number of users on the MySchool website, rising from 839,000 in 2015 to 1.74 million in 2017.¹²

More broadly, Australian parents are concerned about their children's literacy and numeracy skills. A recent Monash University survey of more than 2,000 Australians found 70% of people think basic literacy and numeracy are the most important part of education, and 75% think maths and English should be prioritised.¹³ The NAPLAN data on MySchool helps parents understand their child's progress in these key learning areas and provides a useful cross-check with teacher assessment of student progress.

It is preferable for parents to include academic achievement in their decision making. Using NAPLAN results to inform school choice — an objective measure of school performance — is better than the alternative of just relying upon school reputation, school websites, and school location. Parents being able to make choices based on the academic achievement of schools is a significant benefit of the MySchool website.

It is also likely that if future results were not published on the MySchool website, many parents would still use the last year of published NAPLAN results to determine school choice; which is an inferior measure to more up-to-date information. Given parents will make a choice of school regardless, it is better the choice is informed by all available information — including the latest NAPLAN results.

What NAPLAN reporting information do students need in order to contribute to their own education?

Individual student NAPLAN reports list the questions in each assessment that the student answered correctly and incorrectly. This allows students who are interested in knowing how they might have achieved a higher score to identify areas they may need to work on. Because NAPLAN online will provide this information to students with less delay than the paper NAPLAN, students will be able to respond to the results more quickly.

About The Centre for Independent Studies



The Centre for Independent Studies (CIS) is the leading independent public policy think tank in Australia. Founded in 1976, our work is informed by a commitment to the principles underpinning a free and open society:

- individual liberty and choice, including freedom of association, religion, speech and the right to property;
- an economy based on free markets;
- democratic government under the rule of law; and
- an autonomous and free civil society.

The CIS works on aspects of social and economic policy affecting Australia. The Centre prides itself on being independent and non-partisan in its funding and research. It is funded by donations from individuals, companies, and charitable trusts, as well as by subscriptions and events.

‘Independent’ in our name means:

- we are politically non-partisan;
- our research is not directed by our supporters; and
- we are financially independent of government.

Endnotes

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- ¹² Courier Mail. 2018. *Parents in support of NAPLAN*. Print edition, 4 April 2018
- ¹³ Leahy, D. & Selwyn, N. 2019. *Public opinions on Australian schools and schooling*. Monash University. https://www.monash.edu/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1653548/Education-Futures-Research-Report-Public-Opinions.pdf pp. 10, 12



Why We Need NAPLAN

Blaise Joseph



A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
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Why We Need NAPLAN

Blaise Joseph



Research Report 36

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Any errors or omissions remain my own.



Executive Summary

- The National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is a crucial national assessment, but is coming under increasing criticism.
- There are three major benefits of NAPLAN:
 1. Tool to improve schools and teaching.
 - NAPLAN results enable the identification of problems in the school system over time, and are a means for evaluating potential solutions, from the national level all the way down to individual students.
 2. Transparency.
 - Literacy and numeracy results are made transparent at a national, state and territory, and school level. Parents are also able to see how their children are progressing against an objective national benchmark.
 3. Accountability.
 - NAPLAN holds governments and schools accountable for literacy and numeracy results, which is important given the significant financial investment made in them by taxpayers and parents.
- There are four common criticisms of NAPLAN, which are not supported by rigorous evidence:
 1. No significant improvement since NAPLAN was first introduced in 2008.
 - NAPLAN results have improved significantly in some areas since 2008, and the overall trend has been positive, with the exception of writing skills.
 - It is unreasonable to blame the NAPLAN tests for lack of further improvement, as NAPLAN identifies issues in the school system and does not solve them by itself.
 - Nevertheless, the fact that NAPLAN results have not improved more since 2008 warrants further investigation.
 2. Harms students.
 - The claim that NAPLAN tests harm students and causes significant student anxiety is based on surveys and small studies with serious methodological issues. A strong conclusion cannot be drawn based on the existing evidence to date.

- In general, it is not clear that testing by itself harms students. Low-level student anxiety in preparation for any test is normal, and this is very different from serious mental health issues.
3. Publication of results on MySchool website harms schools.
 - There have been no rigorous studies of how parents use MySchool data, and no substantial evidence to suggest MySchool has a negative effect on schools. Academic achievement is one of many factors parents use in choosing a school.
 - It is far better for parents to have access to objective NAPLAN data in their decision-making, rather than having to rely solely on other factors like school reputation, school uniforms, and school websites.
 4. The NAPLAN tests are too narrow.
 - Reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and numeracy are all necessary skills for students to succeed in later education and career paths.
 - It has not been established that broader capabilities like creativity can be taught or assessed effectively.
 - A focus on literacy and numeracy is appropriate given the large number of Australian children who do not have adequate skills in these areas.
- The suggested alternative to NAPLAN of having a sample test instead would be woefully inadequate. A sample test would not have the same major benefits of NAPLAN, could not be used as a tool to help individual students, and would not promote school transparency and accountability.
 - NAPLAN should be retained — because it has major benefits, and claims that it harms the school system have not been confirmed by reliable evidence — but it can be improved; and common concerns from teachers and parents should be taken into account and investigated further.
 - A possible future review of NAPLAN could consider:
 - how results can be better used as a tool to improve schools and teaching;
 - what is preventing schools and systems from responding more effectively to NAPLAN results;
 - how the purpose and benefits can be better communicated to stakeholders;
 - how the administration of the tests can be improved; and
 - whether or not the assessments are too narrow a measure of student ability.
 - Moving NAPLAN tests online will have significant benefits; including providing more timely results to schools to facilitate earlier intervention, and allowing for computer-adjusted testing tailored to individual student ability.
 - Australian taxpayers invest more than \$50 billion per year in the school system. NAPLAN is an important measure of the return on this investment, and provides valuable information for schools, teachers, parents, and students.

Introduction

The National Assessment Plan — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests have been the subject of much controversy since they were first introduced by the Rudd Labor government in 2008. The implementation of NAPLAN — and the availability of school results on the MySchool website since 2010 — were among the major reforms of the then education minister Julia Gillard.

Literacy and numeracy testing had been done at a state and territory level since the 1990s, but following agreement between the federal and state and territory governments, NAPLAN was introduced so Australia had standardised national testing. NAPLAN is part of a broader trend across the OECD of school systems recognising the importance of assessment, evaluation, and accountability.¹

NAPLAN is controversial because some stakeholders — such as teacher unions and education policymakers — are concerned about what they perceive to be an unreasonable level of accountability for schools and teachers, an excessive focus on testing, and potential for causing student stress.

10 years after the introduction of NAPLAN, it is timely to consider again the costs and benefits of NAPLAN. While NAPLAN retains popular support from parents, there are some stakeholders who continue to express concerns relating to unintended consequences and student wellbeing. These arguments need to be evaluated.

No test is perfect. But assessment is an integral part of education, and important for both school systems and individual students. The efficacy of national testing programs like NAPLAN should be a significant part of the education policy debate in Australia.

How does NAPLAN work?

The yearly NAPLAN tests cover four domains — reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation), and numeracy — for students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9. School students sit NAPLAN test only four times in their entire schooling, and the tests take up one week of the school year, although most students take the tests over three partial days.

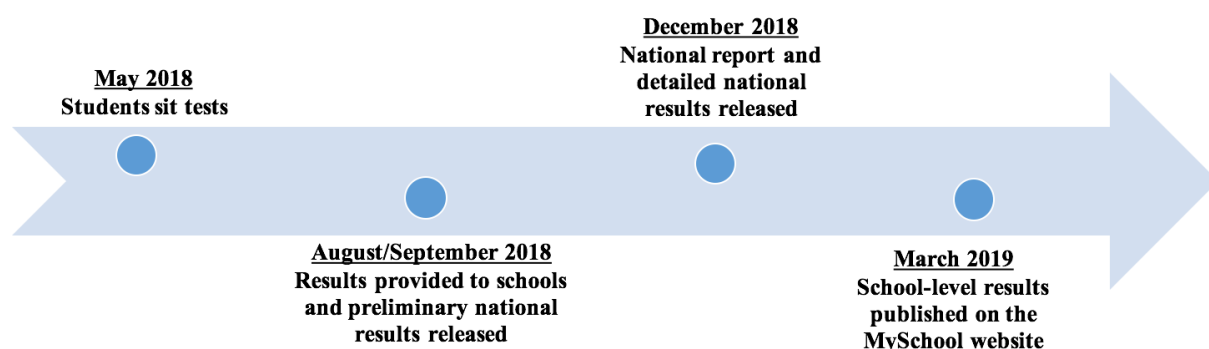
NAPLAN is administered by The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The school-level test results are published on the MySchool website, which allows for comparisons to the national average and to schools with similar students in terms of disadvantage, measured by the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).

NAPLAN is compulsory for schools, but not for individual students. Parents who do not wish their children to sit the tests may opt out. More than 1 million school students sat NAPLAN tests in 2017. The percentage of children sitting NAPLAN in 2017 has fallen slightly since 2008: the participation rate for tests in 2008 ranged from 93% to 97%, and in 2017 the participation rate ranged from 91% to 96% (a decline of around 1% or 2% for most tests).² However, in the Northern Territory (for example), participation rates have significantly increased.

Almost all Australian school students continue to sit NAPLAN. For all intents and purposes, NAPLAN is a national population test of students, not a sample test.

NAPLAN is not a high-stakes test by the standard definition of the term,³ insofar as there are no negative consequences for students who perform poorly on the tests, and teacher salaries and school funding are not determined by NAPLAN results.

Figure 1: NAPLAN 2018 timeline⁴





The purpose and benefits of NAPLAN

In the financial year 2015-16, \$55.7 billion of taxpayer money was spent in recurrent funding for schools, of which \$42.4 billion was spent on the government school system.⁵ State and federal governments have a responsibility to ensure this money is spent well. No one advocates testing just for the sake of it. The whole point of assessment is to benefit students, teachers, parents, and school systems.

Tool to improve schools and teaching

Assessment is an essential part of schooling. It serves many functions, but among them is providing data that can enable student improvement. Assessments written and administered on the individual school or teacher level are beneficial, but are not comparable across schools and classes, and do not provide an objective benchmark against which student progress can be measured. Therefore, standardised assessments are necessary.

NAPLAN as a standardised assessment serves the function of a diagnostic tool for schools and systems; that is, it enables the identification of problems in the education system over time and a means for evaluating potential solutions.

NAPLAN results — being objective, standardised data — help improve literacy and numeracy on different levels, as illustrated in Figure 2.

By being administered every year for students in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9, NAPLAN is a measurement tool for assessing student progress over time. This allows the evaluation of the effectiveness of different parts of the school system, all the way from teachers' practices up to federal government policy interventions. For instance, NAPLAN data is regularly used to identify best practice case studies that have led to substantial student gains in literacy and numeracy, informing the practices of other schools.⁶

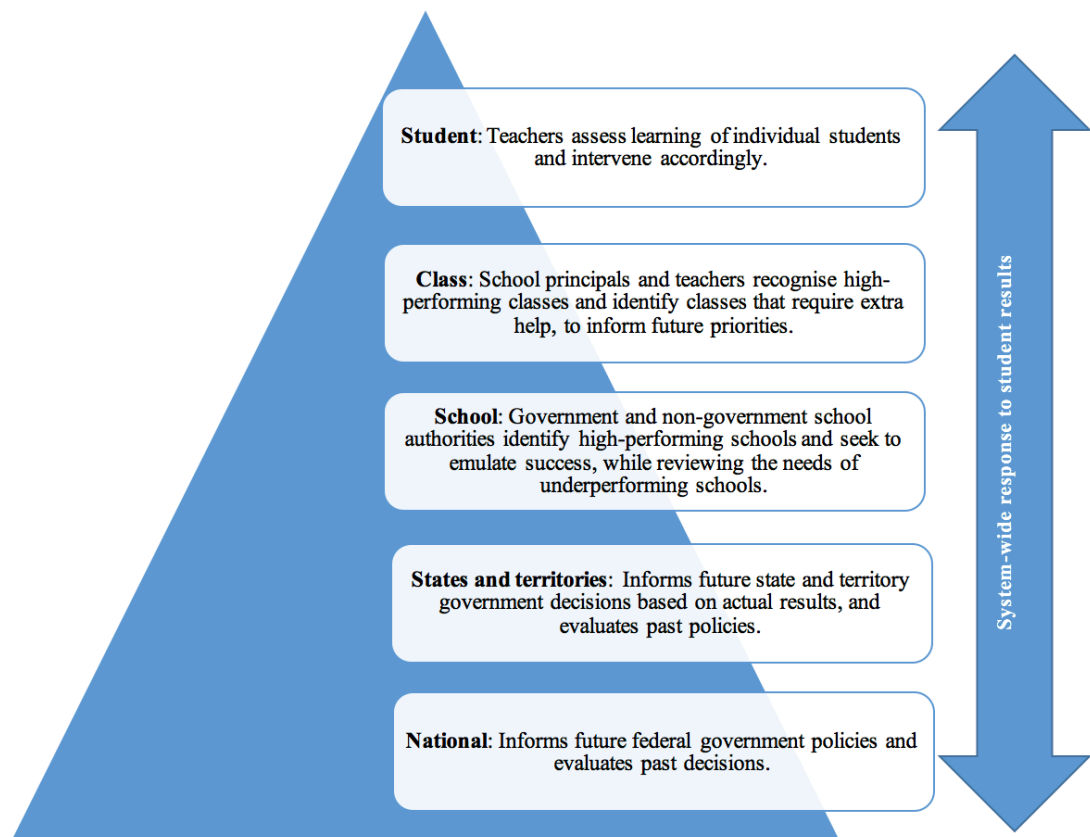
NAPLAN data can be used to identify students who are underperforming and in need of extra help at school, to ensure they do not fall behind in literacy and numeracy. It can be used in the same way on the class, school, state and territory, and national levels.

As argued by Australian parents' groups in a recent statement reiterating support for NAPLAN, the test results are an objective tool for parents to give a snapshot of their children's literacy and numeracy skills, and to cooperate with teachers in future to improve student performance.⁷

Transparency

NAPLAN results are made transparent by being published on an aggregate national and state and territory level. This ensures there is transparency regarding literacy and numeracy results. If a particular state is significantly

Figure 2: Levels of use of NAPLAN data



underperforming, for example, this is made transparent so all Australians have the same knowledge.

The MySchool website shows results at the school level. This transparency empowers parents to make decisions regarding their child's education, and ensures school-based assessments are presenting an accurate picture of a student's performance consistent with national standards. If individual schools are underperforming, all parents have equal access to information showing this is the case.

An alternative approach of collecting the data but then withholding the information from the public would mean a small group of individuals in positions of influence (such as academics and education department officials) have access to the data, while the vast majority of parents are kept unaware. Most parents would have to rely on guesswork, gossip, and school reputation to assess the academic performance of schools. This would be unfair and go against the fundamental governing principle of transparency with respect to policy outcomes.

Accountability

All levels of government and the school system maintain that literacy and numeracy skills are vital.⁸ NAPLAN

results ensure the entire school system — from the federal government all the way down to individual schools — is held accountable by parents and taxpayers for their literacy and numeracy outcomes, like any other area of public policy.

Given that the importance of schooling is universally recognised — and the yearly cost to the taxpayer of the school system is tens of billions of dollars — federal and state governments should be held particularly accountable for the results of their education policies. Similarly, it is important non-government schools are held accountable for their literacy and numeracy results, given the financial investment made by parents and taxpayers.

Without NAPLAN, there would be no standardised data by which to measure literacy and numeracy nationwide in a way that holds governments and schools to account for their results. As part of any sound governance arrangement, the responsible authorities should have to answer questions on how they have spent money and why their results have not improved if they have been spending more — which has occurred in the past 10 years in Australia, where real government spending per student has increased by over 15%.⁹



The common criticisms of NAPLAN

Most students do not enjoy tests. In general, students prefer not sitting tests, teachers prefer not administering them, and marking is an arduous process. However, the fact that tests are unenjoyable is not a good reason to abandon an important tool of better governance. Inevitably, no test is perfect, and test results do not provide a complete picture of student progress. The genuine concerns of teachers, parents, and other stakeholders regarding NAPLAN must be taken into account. However, given the benefits of NAPLAN, any criticism — for example: that it is useless, harms students and schools, and is an unreasonably narrow assessment — should be thoroughly scrutinised.

No significant improvement in results

A reason frequently given to argue NAPLAN has been a failure is that there has been no significant improvement in results since the tests were first introduced in 2008.¹⁰

But it is illogical to use NAPLAN results alone as a basis for determining if NAPLAN has succeeded or failed. Testing is primarily a measure of student performance and NAPLAN is not an exception to this rule. Whether or not a test leads to improved performance largely depends on how teachers respond to the test results. A test cannot be blamed for a lack of improvement — this would be analogous to blaming a thermometer for a hot day or criticising scales for a lack of weight loss.

The NAPLAN results are broadly consistent with Australia's trend in performance on international literacy and numeracy tests. Australia's results have stagnated or declined on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests in the past 10 years,¹¹ which indicates NAPLAN is accurately identifying weaknesses in Australia's school system.

In any case, the premise of this argument against NAPLAN is not entirely correct. Table 1 shows the statistically significant changes in mean results, by state and territory, between 2008 and 2017 (the domain of writing is only comparable from 2011 onwards). The other published performance measure is the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard. But this does not measure the change in results of the vast majority of students who are above the standard — and arguably is based on a low standard; so this is an inferior measure to the mean results. The MySchool website also publishes student gain data, which is arguably a better measure of school performance since it shows the extent to which schools have actually added to the achievement of students; but this is not available on an aggregate state or national level.

Since school policy — including literacy and numeracy strategies — is largely determined at the state and territory level, examining the performance of states and territories provides a more accurate representation of trends in NAPLAN results than considering the national average.

Table 1: Statistically significant changes in mean NAPLAN results between 2008 and 2017¹²

Domain	Students	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT	AUS
Reading	Year 3	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
	Year 5	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	-	↑	↑
	Year 7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Writing ¹³ (change between 2011 and 2017)	Year 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 5	↓	-	-	-	↓	-	-	↓	-
	Year 7	-	-	↓	↓	↓	-	-	-	↓
	Year 9	-	↓	↓	-	↓	-	-	-	-
Spelling	Year 3	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	↑	-	↑
	Year 5	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	↑	-	↑
	Year 7	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 9	-	-	-	↑	-	-	-	-	-
Grammar and Punctuation	Year 3	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	-	↑	↑
	Year 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 7	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Numeracy	Year 3	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 5	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	-	↑	↑
	Year 7	-	-	-	↑	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 9	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	-	-	-

There have been some statistically significant national improvements in Years 3 and 5, especially in reading, but this has not been consistent across all states and territories. (Queensland and Western Australia, for instance, have seen far more consistent improvements.) For the majority of tests, and particularly Years 7 and 9, results have generally not changed — while writing results have declined.

Even if the measure of NAPLAN's success was the overall trend in results, and there are good reasons to argue it is not, it is incorrect to argue NAPLAN has failed on this basis.

Harms students

A frequent argument against NAPLAN is that it harms students and causes stress.¹⁴ The evidence presented to support this claim is often anecdotal or self-reported. To date, there has not been a significant amount of rigorous research done on the topic.

But there have been some recent studies published on the effects of NAPLAN on students, particularly regarding the impact of the tests on student anxiety:

A 2016 study:¹⁵

- Sample size of 465 students, 346 parents, and 40 teachers, across 11 independent schools in Western Australia.
- Based on a survey of participants in each group, asking them to rate their experience of six adjectives — happy, worried, calm, sad, confident, and afraid — on a scale of 1 to 4, to measure distress.
- Found an average increase in levels of distress during NAPLAN for students and across all groups compared to after the testing, but this level of distress was low.

A 2012 study:¹⁶

- Sample size of 159 students in 1 regional public Queensland school.
- Based on a sequence of surveys before and after NAPLAN tests.
- Found that students' performance goals and self-efficacy reports remained stable after NAPLAN testing, although it appeared students experienced a greater level of anxiety than they had expected before the test.

A 2017 study:¹⁷

- Sample size of 105 students across 2 Catholic schools in Queensland.
- Based on an analysis of focus group discussions and student drawings about their test experiences.
- Found that a majority of students had contributed entirely negative responses.
- Has the smallest sample of the three studies, and relies upon apparently less rigorous data of student drawings and student descriptions of their own drawings.

All of these studies have small sample sizes and rely on student self-reporting. They provide conflicting evidence, but overall there can be no strong conclusion regarding NAPLAN causing significant student stress. If anything, it appears NAPLAN has little or no effect on student stress, and any negative effects are inconsistent.

There have also been some surveys of parents and teachers, regarding their perceptions of the effects of NAPLAN on students:

A 2013 Newspoll survey:¹⁸

- Sample of 568 parents.
- Found that 52% of parents perceived NAPLAN had no impact on their child's self-esteem, 23% perceived it had a positive impact, and 23% perceived it had a negative impact.
- 41% of parents reported their child exhibiting some signs of stress or anxiety as a direct result of NAPLAN testing, while 59% did not.
- This indicates that 3 in 4 parents think NAPLAN has either a positive impact or no impact on their child's self-esteem, and a clear majority report their child exhibits no sign of stress or anxiety as a result of NAPLAN.
- 56% of parents were in favour of NAPLAN, while 34% were against. It is obviously unlikely parents would support NAPLAN if they perceived it to have a negative effect on their child's well-being.
- The data is limited in usefulness insofar as self-esteem and the breakdown of the signs of stress and anxiety are unclear regarding severity, or how parents have determined a direct causal connection between these signs and NAPLAN.

A 2012 survey:¹⁹

- Sample of 8,353 teachers.
- Teachers were invited to participate in the survey through Australian teacher unions.
- The survey response rate was only 4%.
- Found a majority of teachers reported at least 1–10 of their students had said NAPLAN had caused stress, negative impacts on self-esteem, feeling sick before the test, fear of parental reaction to results, fear of freezing during the test, sleeplessness, and crying.
- The survey has serious methodological issues, with all participants being from teacher unions, a very low response rate, and probably teachers who had strong negative perceptions of NAPLAN were far more likely to respond to the survey.
- It is unclear from the framing of the questions (for each area of student well-being, teachers were asked to report if 1–10 or 11 or more students had said they exhibited the stated negative reactions to NAPLAN) exactly how widespread the occurrence of each student well-being issue is. For example, there is a significant difference between most teachers suggesting only 1 student they knew of had exhibited the signs of distress, or if teachers were actually suggesting 10 students had.

A 2014 qualitative study:²⁰

- Sample of 16 principals, 29 teachers, 26 parents, and 70 students.
- Based on interviews with participants.
- Found widespread concerns in each group regarding NAPLAN's negative impact on student health and well-being.
- A relatively small sample and has the inherent limitations of qualitative studies with no consistent, comparable data.

These surveys provide conflicting evidence, but again no strong conclusion can be drawn about the extent to which NAPLAN causes student stress. There are inevitable limitations of asking parents and teachers if they have observed signs of student stress, as these perceptions can be misplaced and different individuals may have different ideas of what is meant by stress. There is nothing inherently more stressful about NAPLAN tests compared to the normal stress of taking a test. There are no consequences for low performance or rewards for high performance. If students are experiencing high levels of anxiety, it is arguable that this is the result of pressure or anxiety transmitted from the adults around them.

None of the studies or surveys discussed above actually examine if there is a direct causal connection between NAPLAN and student stress — at most they indicate correlation.

Further, none of them investigate if the reported incidences of student anxiety are typical of those students, or if students exhibit similar behaviour during NAPLAN as they do for any test, including the usual teacher-written tests for each subject, or indeed for other schools activities such as camps or carnivals.

Finally, it is not clear from any of the findings if the perceptions of student stress are actually serious mental health issues, or are just low-level anxiety that typically come from a desire to perform well on any test. It is to be expected that most students would prefer not to

do tests, and many students would exhibit at least low levels of nervousness when being tested.

It can be concluded from the existing literature on the subject that there is no rigorous evidence suggesting NAPLAN itself has a negative impact on student health and well-being. More rigorous research is needed in this area to come to a strong conclusion either way.

In conclusion, the common claim that NAPLAN harms students is not supported by the existing evidence to date.

Box 1: Is frequency of testing related to student stress?

Recent international evidence suggests more testing by itself does not increase student stress.

A 2017 OECD study, using data from the international PISA tests, considered the relationship between frequency of testing (as reported by school principals), student anxiety (as reported by students), and science test results.²¹ It concluded, after controlling for socio-economic status, that:

"Neither test anxiety nor science performance is related to the frequency of testing."²²

This finding was the same for both teacher-written tests and mandatory standardised tests (like NAPLAN or the HSC).²³ While the study considered science tests, there is no reason to suggest the result would be different for literacy and numeracy assessments. The study does rely on self-reporting regarding student anxiety; so it has similar limitations to the Australian evidence discussed above.

The OECD study also found 59% of students worry about taking tests and 66% worry about getting poor grades.²⁴ This indicates test anxiety is very common around the world, regardless of the type of test or national assessment policies.

Another finding was that students are less anxious about tests when they feel supported by teachers and parents.²⁵ Ultimately, ensuring appropriate levels of student support on the school level is the best way to manage inevitable student feelings of nervousness before tests, irrespective of the kind of testing being conducted. This issue is far broader than NAPLAN.

Publication of results on the MySchool website harms schools

It has often been argued that publication of NAPLAN results on the MySchool website harms schools by making them focus excessively on doing well on NAPLAN tests.²⁶ It is claimed there are harmful effects of increased competition between schools, as parents will not enroll their children at schools with relatively poor results on the MySchool website, which means NAPLAN is a high-stakes test for schools.

The evidence for this argument is mostly anecdotal. There have been no rigorous large-sample studies examining how parents use the published NAPLAN results on the MySchool website, or the extent to which these determine school choice. There have been some surveys and studies considering how MySchool data is used, and the impact of the website on schools:

A 2013 Newspoll survey:²⁷

- Sample of 568 parents (discussed in previous section).
- Found just 17% of parents said they had visited the MySchool website in the past 12 months in order to compare the NAPLAN results of their child's school with others.

A 2012 survey:²⁸

- Sample of 1,062 school principals, based off on an earlier survey of all school principals with a response rate of 21%.
- Found 67% of principals said the MySchool website had a neutral effect on their school, 24% said it had a negative effect, and 8% said it had a positive effect.

A 2012 survey:²⁹

- Sample of 8,353 teachers (with serious methodological issues discussed in previous section).
- Found 72% of teachers said the purpose of NAPLAN is to rank schools and 46% said it was to assist parent choice.
- Found 93% of teachers said poor results would negatively impact a school's ability to attract and retain students, and 65% said poor results would have a negative impact on a school's ability to attract or retain teachers.

- It is problematic to rely on teacher responses regarding how parents generally use NAPLAN data published on the MySchool website.

A 2012 study:³⁰

- Small case study of just five families.
- Found the participating families did not use available data on the MySchool website in the process of choosing a school.
- Given the very small sample size, few conclusions can be inferred from this study.

A 2014 survey:³¹

- Conducted by Independent Schools Queensland; sample of 1,048 parents across 67 independent schools.
- Found just 5% of parents accessed the MySchool website when considering school selection.
- Strong academic performance was only the ninth most important factor for parents in choosing a school.
- The survey is not of a random sample and is not intended to be a scientific study, so limited conclusions can be drawn from it. But it does challenge the perception that parents are excessively concerned with the published school results on the MySchool website.

The small and limited amount of existing evidence does not enable a strong conclusion regarding how MySchool data is used by parents or the overall impact of the website on schools. It appears MySchool data is only one factor among many considered by parents in choosing schools. It is obvious parents will make a school choice based on all available information, and data on academic achievement would be one factor.

According to news reports, there has been a significant recent increase in the number of users on the MySchool website, rising from 839,000 in 2015 to 1.74 million in 2017, indicating it is a valuable resource for many people.³²

It is preferable for parents to include academic achievement in their decision making. Using NAPLAN results to inform school choice — an objective measure of school performance — is better than the alternative of just relying upon school reputation, school websites, and school location. Parents being able to make choices based on the academic achievement of schools is a significant benefit of the MySchool website.

It is also likely that if future results were not published on the MySchool website, many parents would still use the last year of published NAPLAN results to determine school choice; which is an inferior measure to more up-to-date information. Given parents will make a choice of school regardless, it is better the choice is informed by all available information — including the latest NAPLAN results.

Even if school NAPLAN results were not published on the MySchool website, some stakeholders would still have access to this data. Groups such as politicians, academics and education department officials would be able to find out how individual schools are performing, while most parents would not; resulting in a clearly unfair and inequitable situation.

In any case, the debate about publishing the results of standardised tests is broader than NAPLAN. Data on academic achievement for secondary schools is publically available in some states, such as HSC results by school in NSW. In these cases, NAPLAN data on the MySchool website can be used as a supplement and ensure parents do not need to rely on only one set of data to assess school academic performance.

Finally, there is a significant amount of evidence to suggest parental involvement in school education is beneficial for student learning and well-being, as argued by a recent OECD report.³³ In Australia, there have been calls for parents to be more engaged in their children's education and involved in the school community. The published NAPLAN results on the MySchool website allows parents to have information relating to academic performance of their children and their school with respect to national benchmarks. This information facilitates parental involvement with their own child's progress over time.

It would appear contradictory to suggest parents should be involved in their children's learning and be active participants in the school community, while also arguing parents should not have any knowledge of how their children or their school are performing compared to national literacy and numeracy standards.

Testing is too narrow

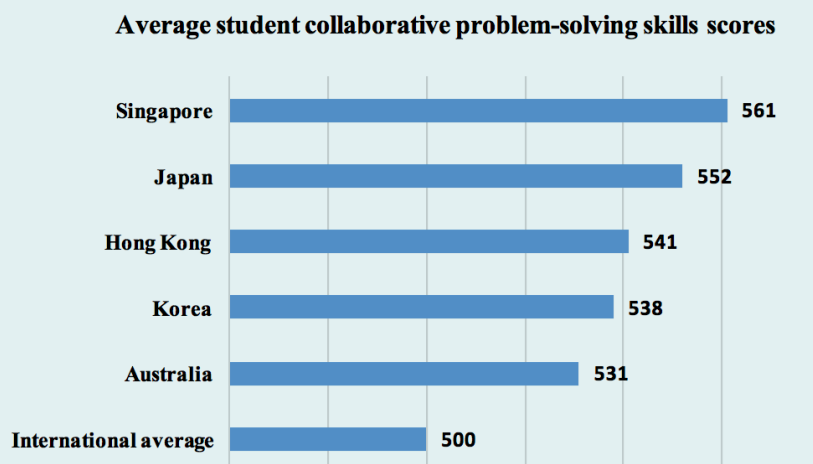
Reading, writing, spelling, grammar, and numeracy are all necessary skills for students to succeed in later education and career paths. But NAPLAN has been criticised for only assessing these areas and not broader skills.³⁴

Broader capabilities which are commonly known the '4 Cs' of 21st century learning — critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity — are not specifically assessed in NAPLAN. But claims about the importance of 21st century learning have not been substantiated by evidence. It has not been established that school systems can teach general capabilities effectively, and there are significant difficulties with trying to assess these skills objectively.³⁵ Students need to master the fundamentals of a subject before they can be creative or think critically about the content.³⁶ In other words, broader capabilities like creativity are domain-specific, not generic, skills.

Box 2: Does focusing on literacy and numeracy stifle the development of other skills?

The OECD standardised tests (PISA) rank countries' education results, and while typically these tests focus on literacy and numeracy, more recently they have also tested collaborative problem-solving ability.³⁷

52 countries participated in the collaborative problem-solving tests. The top four performing countries were Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, and Korea:³⁸



These top four countries tend to have traditional approaches to schooling, and were also among the top-performers in the literacy and numeracy tests,³⁹ which indicates that concerns about traditional schooling resulting in rote learning and stifling creativity are unfounded.

The country rankings were similar for both test types. Performance on collaborative problem-solving is highly correlated with science, reading, and maths performance.⁴⁰ Australia, which was ranked 10th in collaborative problem-solving, was one of the exceptions because its relative performance was significantly higher in collaborative problem-solving than for the other tests.⁴¹

There is little evidence to suggest that a focus on giving students high levels of literacy and numeracy is incompatible with developing students who are creative problem-solvers. Furthermore, it appears broader capabilities like collaborative problem-solving tend to correlate closely with literacy and numeracy skills anyway, and so do not require separate tests.

It should also be noted that NAPLAN writing tests require students in all year groups to write a response to a prompt in the narrative or persuasive genre, which involves critical thinking and creativity. Tasks like these show NAPLAN is not a narrow assessment of student ability.

There have been two surveys of teachers that found widespread concern about the narrowing of the curriculum due to NAPLAN:

- A survey of 767 teachers across South Australia and Western Australia found most teachers reported NAPLAN had caused them to teach to the test, spend less time on other areas of the curriculum, and use more teacher-centred instruction.⁴²
- A survey of 8,314 teachers (based on the same survey discussed above with methodological issues) also found most teachers reported NAPLAN had led to a reduction in time spent on other areas of the curriculum and an adjustment of teaching practices to mirror the tests.⁴³

Neither of these surveys is of a representative national sample of teachers; which means only limited conclusions can be drawn from their findings. More significantly, it is unclear if 'teaching to the test' is actually an undesirable practice if many students do not have adequate literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers focusing more on core literacy and numeracy skills is likely to be beneficial for disadvantaged students in particular. Further, the finding that NAPLAN leads to more teacher-centred instruction is not necessarily a cause for concern, given the large body of research across decades indicating teacher direct instruction is highly advantageous for student learning.⁴⁴

It appears there is no rigorous evidence to support the claim that NAPLAN testing is too narrow.

The future for NAPLAN

For the sake of students and taxpayers, NAPLAN must stay. It fulfills the vital role of providing transparency and accountability in the school system, while also being a tool that improves schools and teaching over time. The common criticisms of NAPLAN are not primarily evidence-based. Nevertheless, stakeholder concerns about NAPLAN must be heard and acted upon. NAPLAN can certainly be improved in future without losing its core functions.

The alternative of a sample test would be inadequate

A sample test — instead of a population test which assesses all students — has been proposed by some groups as an alternative to NAPLAN.⁴⁵ But the main benefits of NAPLAN (a tool to improve schools and teaching, transparency, and accountability) would all be undermined if it was a sample test:

- *Tool to improve schools and teaching.*
A sample test would mean NAPLAN results could not be used as a tool to guide individual student or class or school teaching, because only a small proportion of students and schools would be assessed regularly, and the sample group would change each year.
- *Transparency.*
There would no longer be transparency regarding student outcomes at the school level. Parents would no longer have any consistent objective data upon which to base their assessment of local school performance, and instead would be forced to attempt to assess performance based on a number of subjective indicators like reputation and word of mouth.
- *Accountability.*
Schools and teachers would no longer be accountable for literacy and numeracy results throughout all of primary and secondary school. Schools could be significantly underperforming while parents would have no knowledge.

International tests that are based on samples, such as PISA and TIMSS, are only sample tests because of necessity and practicality. It is unnecessary for the OECD's purposes to assess all school students in participating countries. But in contrast, it has already been proven for 10 years that it is possible and practical to conduct a yearly national test for all Australian students.

In addition, a sample test would inevitably include some biases compared to a population test. It would be difficult to find a random national sample of students that accurately assesses national performance, or state and territory performance. Governments could dismiss the results of such a test on the grounds of methodology, unlike a population test.

It is clear the alternative of a sample test would be completely insufficient for the purposes of a national literacy and numeracy assessment.

Moving online will be a significant improvement

NAPLAN testing is moving towards being entirely online, with the transition commencing from 2018. This has the potential to greatly improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the tests. The major benefits include:

- *More timely results.*
Online tests facilitate a quicker turnaround time for student marks to be returned to schools, occurring in a matter of weeks instead of months.⁴⁶ This will enable the NAPLAN data to be used in a more timely fashion as a tool for teachers and schools to intervene to help individual students.
- *Tailored questioning for students' abilities.*
Students will be given questions of different difficulties depending on their responses to the first questions, allowing the tests to be tailored for ability levels.⁴⁷ This ensures students are asked questions appropriate for their own level, and the tests more accurately assess their literacy and numeracy skills. A recent study of 12,736 Australian students who sat pilot computer-adaptive NAPLAN tests found online testing also has other benefits, such as significant positive effects on achievement-measure precision, student motivation, and student engagement.⁴⁸
- *Remove the need to have all students sitting a test at the same time.*
Currently students sit NAPLAN tests simultaneously to ensure fairness and reduce the possibility of cheating. However, with tailored questioning as described above, in future there should be no need for all students to be doing the test at exactly the same time, because the test would be adjusted depending on the individual student. Further, it means schools should be able to move to online testing even if they do not already have technological capacity for the entire year group to sit the test online at the same time.

There are some potential risks of moving NAPLAN online — such as schools not having the technology capacity, security concerns about hacking, and possible effects on students' handwriting abilities — which will need to be managed. But none of these potential challenges are insurmountable.

What a possible review should consider

Education policies, like all other areas of government policy, should be the subject of ongoing review and improvement. NAPLAN should be no different. There

have been growing calls for a review, and the Education Council (made up of the federal, state, and territory education ministers) has agreed to draft terms of reference for a possible review.⁴⁹

Given 2018 is the 10-year mark since the beginning of NAPLAN, it could be timely to conduct a review — although to date a substantive case has not been made for reviewing the fundamentals of NAPLAN, especially since there have already been two senate inquiries into NAPLAN.⁵⁰

It is reasonable to review how NAPLAN data can be better utilised to improve future results, and to question why NAPLAN results have not improved more consistently over the past 10 years, in particular with respect to writing.

Concerns expressed by students, teachers, and parents in the small samples that have been surveyed should be examined. There may be better ways NAPLAN can be administered in future to ensure all stakeholders have a clear understanding of what NAPLAN involves and its purpose; so as to minimize any potential negative student reactions.

The content of NAPLAN tests should also be subject to ongoing review. The teacher surveys discussed above do warrant further investigation to determine if the NAPLAN questions should be broader or could be improved in other ways.

For instance, a recent review of the NAPLAN writing tests, undertaken by an overseas academic commissioned by a teachers' union, argued that the writing tests are seriously flawed.⁵¹ Criticisms included the lack of informative writing in the assessment, the arbitrariness of the grading scales and marking rubrics, and that the tests encourage a narrow formulaic writing style. ACARA is already in the process of reviewing the writing tests, and has said these criticisms will be taken into account.⁵² This is an example of how there appears to be valid criticisms of specific NAPLAN tasks, and also suggests ACARA periodically reviews potential issues with test questions.

NAPLAN must continue to be a population test to serve its core purpose. A sample test is obviously insufficient for the purposes of NAPLAN, so it would be unnecessary to consider this in a review.

Furthermore, it would be unwarranted for a review to consider not publishing school NAPLAN results on the MySchool website. The notion of collecting population school data and then keeping it secret from the public clearly goes against the sound governing principles of transparency and accountability.

However, this does not mean a review of NAPLAN should not be considered. There are aspects of the implementation and administration of NAPLAN testing that can potentially be improved. There are genuine concerns from some stakeholders, which must be listened to and acted upon.

A review could add value if it addressed the following five questions:

1. How can NAPLAN data be used more effectively as a tool to improve student outcomes on an individual, class, school, state, and national level? How can student gain data be combined with student achievement data to give a better measure of student performance over time?
2. What is preventing schools and systems from responding more effectively to low or static NAPLAN results to create improvement?
3. How can the purpose and benefits of NAPLAN be better communicated to stakeholders?
4. Can NAPLAN be administered better so as to minimize any stress or inconvenience for teachers, parents, and students?
5. Is NAPLAN testing currently too broad or too narrow? If so, how can NAPLAN questions be improved in future?

An independent review chaired by an expert panel with terms of reference like these could be beneficial for Australia's school system, and ensure NAPLAN continues to improve as an educational tool that also provides transparency and accountability. But a review with terms of reference questioning the existence of NAPLAN is not justified by the evidence to date.



Conclusions

It is clear NAPLAN has significant positive utility. Results can be used as a tool to identify issues with student and school performance, and facilitate intervention to improve results over time. NAPLAN provides transparency and accountability for Australia's school system, from the federal government right down to individual schools. Abandoning NAPLAN or the MySchool website would amount to a retrograde move away from transparent and accountable government.

The common criticisms of NAPLAN are not supported by rigorous research. There is no strong case that NAPLAN harms students, harms schools, or results in an undesirably narrow curriculum. The evidence against NAPLAN to date are based on surveys and small studies with considerable limitations.

NAPLAN can still be improved. In particular, moving online will ensure the test results are timelier so they can be used more effectively as tool for improving teaching and learning, and also allow the test difficulty to be tailored to the individual needs of students, which appears to positively influence student motivation and engagement.

There is no strong case for reviewing the existence of NAPLAN. Although there could potentially be some benefits to reviewing aspects of NAPLAN, with terms of reference to answer the following five questions:

1. How can NAPLAN data be used more effectively as a tool to improve student outcomes on an individual, class, school, state, and national level? How can student gain data be combined with student achievement data to give a better measure of student performance over time?
2. What is preventing schools and systems from responding more effectively to low or static NAPLAN results to create improvement?
3. How can the purpose and benefits of NAPLAN be better communicated to stakeholders?
4. Can NAPLAN be administered better so as to minimize any stress or inconvenience for teachers, parents, and students?
5. Is NAPLAN testing currently too broad or too narrow? If so, how can NAPLAN questions be improved in future?

Australian taxpayers invest more than \$50 billion per year in schools. The NAPLAN tests fulfill the vital role of ensuring accountability for the return on this investment. NAPLAN must stay — and policymakers should focus on its continual improvement — for the sake of taxpayers, parents, teachers, and students.

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Australian Government
Department of Education and Training

ACT Government's Review of NAPLAN Data Presentation

Australian Government Department of Education and Training Submission

March 2019

Executive Summary

All Australian governments play an important role in building the national evidence base to assess the overall performance of Australia's education system and support improvement. Evidence on student progress including through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) are crucial to understanding how Australia's education system is performing in international and national contexts.

This important information helps governments, policy makers, parents and the community to engage with their schools and make informed comparisons at the local, regional, service type, jurisdiction or national level. The *My School* website (*My School*) plays an important role in this respect by providing relevant and important information directly to the community in an easy to understand and contextualised way. *My School* helps to ensure that all schools in Australia's education system, who benefit from the \$58 billion dollars in annual public spending¹ on education (from all levels of government), are accountable and that their outcomes are transparent and not kept from the communities they serve.

The case for NAPLAN data being presented on *My School* is already well established. Education Ministers have committed to the principles of accountability and transparency. International research shows that public accountability improves student results. *My School* has been reviewed several times and overall, parents and the community support NAPLAN data being on *My School* and find it a valuable resource.

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training supports the on-going publication of *My School*, including the presentation of school level NAPLAN data, and its important role in contributing to the national evidence base on education.

The call to strengthen accountability and transparency

In December 2008, all Education Ministers signed the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians and agreed to strengthening accountability and transparency in the education sector:

"Good-quality information on schooling is important for schools and their students, for parents and families, for the community and for governments."

"Information about the performance of individuals, schools and systems helps parents and families make informed choices and engage with their children's education and the school community."

The Melbourne Declaration states "Parents and families should have access to:

- data on student outcomes
- data that allows them to assess a school's performance overall and in improving student outcomes
- contextual information about the philosophy and educational approach of schools, and their facilities, programs and extra-curricular activities, and information about a school's enrolment profile"

¹ Australian Government and State/Territory Government Spending 2016-17 – Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2019 Report on Government Service (RoGS).

***My School* has led to increased transparency and accountability**

When First Ministers at the 29 November 2008 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting agreed to the publication of indicators at the school level, one of the key objectives was to improve transparency and accountability. The COAG communiqué¹ noted that:

“greater transparency and accountability for the performance of our schools is essential to ensure that every Australian child receives the highest quality education and opportunity to achieve through participation in employment and society.”

Before the publication of NAPLAN data on *My School* there was no nationally comparable performance information on Australian schools.

International evidence shows that public accountability leads to improved student performance and is considered best practice in monitoring school systems. The OECD has made recommendations to education systems developing evaluation and assessment frameworks to ensure that:

“The performance of the education system is monitored via a range of tools and the results are publicly available.”^[1]

The OECD also found that “...analysis in international literature finding that the introduction of accountability measures such as *My School* has a positive impact on student performance”^[2]

For parents, *My School* provides information to help make informed decisions about their child's education. For the community it is about understanding the context of their local schools.

It is important to note that *My School* is not meant to directly assist teachers, as they have own robust assessment and analytical tools to help guide their teaching practices. Schools may use *My School* to better understand how they compare to other schools throughout Australia, however, *My School* is about parents, families and communities understanding their local schools and providing public accountability and transparency.

Parents and the public support NAPLAN and *My School*

Colmar Brunton was commissioned by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to conduct research with parents, principals, partners and representative groups (parent, teacher and principal) on the *My School* website.

The research found that:

- “...parents appreciate having a range of information about schools available in a central online location as provided by *My School*.”
- “Overall *My School* provides information in a format which is relatively easy to navigate and understand.”

[1] <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264116610-1-en.pdf?expires=1550205081&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=5EC603CBA0445F70EAA721ABBA21545F>

[2] *Delivering School Transparency in Australia: National Reporting Through My School*, OECD Publishing, Paris

- “Parents, principals, partners and other stakeholders all accept that the community has a right to know the outcomes of NAPLAN testing and the other school-related information available on the website.”
- “Parents, principals, partners and other stakeholders generally agree that placing the information on a public website does, by definition, provide transparency at an individual school level.”

A joint statement from Australia's national parent associations on NAPLAN released on 19 April 2018 stated:

“As representatives of Australia’s national parent organisations, which advocate for parents of students around Australia, we support the useful role NAPLAN plays in the education of children.

NAPLAN is an objective tool for parents that provides a point-in-time assessment – a snapshot of a student’s literacy and numeracy achievement compared with class, school and national achievement. NAPLAN provides parents with additional information to have informed conversations with teachers about their child’s educational progress.”^[5]

The 2014 Review of *My School* by Grahame Cook found public support for *My School* and led to improvements in the website.^[6] The Review found that:

- “Parents and students, as the primary clients of schools, are interested in a wide range of information regarding schools’ educational experience and quality.”
- “*My School* is used as one source of information.”
- “...there is anecdotal and qualitative research evidence that some parents use *My School* as source of information and data to engage in a dialogue with their school outside the normal course of events. For example, a parent may use the website as contextual background to inform a discussion about their child’s performance.”

The timeliness of data on *My School* will be soon be improved

One of the changes to *My School* that could improve its value to the public is data being made available quicker. NAPLAN Online will increase the speed with which data can be made available to parents, teachers, principals, schools and the public. Once all schools have transitioned to NAPLAN Online (expected by 2020) *My School* should be able to be updated in a much quicker manner.

- Online testing will deliver a more engaging test for students and allow for the faster turnaround of results with richer information about students’ strengths and areas for improvement
- A key reason for moving NAPLAN online is to provide NAPLAN results to teachers, parents and students as soon as possible.
- NAPLAN Online will provide better assessment, more precise results and faster turnaround of information.

^[5] <http://www.medianet.com.au/releases/158669>

^[6] <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/review-my-school-website-0>

Public accountability and transparency are key areas of government responsibility

Increasingly, governments are being held to higher levels of public accountability and transparency and this is also true for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

The 2017 ANAO audit of the Australian Government Department of Education and Training recommended that:

- The Department of Education and Training establish a risk-based approach to monitoring compliance with requirements established under the Australian Education Act 2013 and, in keeping with the intent of the Act, increase the transparency surrounding the allocation and use of Australian Government School funding; and
- The Department of Education and Training make greater use of available data to better understand the impact of funding on educational outcomes and to inform the development and refinement of education policy.

In February 2019, Parliament's Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit report on Australian Government Funding² stated:

"The transparent and accountable administration of Commonwealth funding is integral to the way the Australian Government supports the critical areas of education and health, so the Parliament and the Australian public can be assured of the effectiveness of government programs."

"School funding is highly significant in that education represents the third largest budget expense for the Australian Government, with \$16.1 billion and \$17.5 billion in funding allocated to schools funding in 2016 and 2017 respectively, with over 60% provided to non-government schools."

The committee recommended:

- "that Education establish arrangements to monitor the impact of Australian Government school funding in accordance with the Australian Education Act 2013, and provide greater assurance that funding is being distributed on the basis of need"; and
- "that Education improve its approach to measuring progress against the achievement of reform directions under the National Education Reform Agreement and report back to the Committee on the progress and outcomes of the proposed National School Resourcing Board review."

The Australian Government, through the National School Reform Agreement, is working with states and territories to improve how Australian children are educated and provide more support for teachers, with a focus on ensuring that students learn the basics of literacy and numeracy.

These reforms are about directing funding where it is most needed to provide better support for schools and their communities. The national policy initiatives include supporting student learning and student achievement, school improvement and enhancing the national evidence base. Without good quality data,

²www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Public_Accounts_and_Audit/SchoolsIndigenousHealth/Report_476

including at the school level, understanding the impact of these initiatives and tailoring policies and programs to drive improvements will not be evidence based.

My School represents a unique nationally comparable dataset on schooling in Australia. It is the only source of information on Australian Government funding at the school level. It is important that information on a school's profile, attendance, senior secondary outcomes and NAPLAN results are maintained to meet the department's obligations to the public and for measuring progress against reform directions.

Recommendations

My School is critical to maintaining public accountability and transparency. It is important that any changes to how NAPLAN data is presented on *My School* remains focused on ensuring that the data is easy to understand and interpret, is meaningful and contextualised, and is not about reducing our collective national commitment to transparency and public accountability.

The department recommends that the review focuses on the broad public interest of reporting NAPLAN data on *My School*, public accountability and transparency and that any complex, technical issues are left to the technical experts to consider.

NORTHERN TERRITORY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUBMISSION

The Department of Education (the department) performs the functions of the Test Administration Authority (TAA) for both government and non-government schools. Over 44 000 students are enrolled in 189 NT schools, with 152 government schools and 37 non-government schools implementing national assessments, including the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

The department's *Education NT Strategy 2018-22* outlines the strategic objectives for government schools, with key performance measures including improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for students. The department is implementing actions across five focus areas to meet the needs of schools and accelerate school improvement, ensuring that each child in the NT has the opportunity to engage, grow and achieve. School priorities set by the department also track student gain between NAPLAN testing to measure growth and improvement.

1. Perceptions of NAPLAN and My School data

It is important for schools and the sector to be able to statistically compare similar schools, in analysing student growth, achievement and trajectories to plan for student and school improvement. To this end, comparison of NAPLAN results against schools with similar Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage scores is a reasonable starting point. It may be beneficial for other variables that impact student achievement to be considered, such as participation and student retention. This is particularly important in the NT due to the large number of schools with small enrolment numbers and the churn in student enrolments.

2. How My School and NAPLAN contribute to understanding of student progress and achievement

NAPLAN data is a reliable and longitudinal data set used by schools and the system to track and monitor student progress and achievement. NT schools are encouraged to use a range of data sets to measure growth and identify areas of improvement, with NAPLAN data being one of many that are available.

NT schools use NAPLAN results to identify features of successful practice to determine if these can be transferred to other areas of student learning; to identify areas for improvement; or to inform action planning for student cohorts. While this information is important for systems and schools, it is only one element of the information needed to inform a holistic approach to student improvement.

Improving data literacy across all NAPLAN users is critical to maximise the effectiveness of NAPLAN in identifying opportunities for school and student improvement and ensure that the results are correctly interpreted. The department works closely with schools to improve data literacy to use the tools available and to interpret results and plan for student improvement.

3. How schools use achievement data, including NAPLAN to inform teaching

The department provides and supports classroom analytic tools such as eDash and the Business Intelligence Centre. These tools present student dashboards, school reports and classroom reports that include NAPLAN data. The student dashboards present a range of data sets to promote the use of multiple measures of data to pinpoint student learning needs. The NT TAA supplies all schools with a Reporting and Analysis Achievement Data file and access to student scripts (Pearson Writing Task Website) each year.

An opportunity for further use of achievement data could be to report on benchmark expectations for student growth between test years. This will provide a benchmark for growth, rather than focusing on the minimum standard. This could assist in linking the evidence, with progress and achievement. While the department is working towards embedding this process in schools and continues to build data literacy, there is an opportunity for emphasis on this work nationally, in line with some of the work happening under the National School Reform Agreement.

4. How My School and NAPLAN data are reported to students and parents

In August and September each year, NT schools send an individual student report to families for each child who participated in NAPLAN that calendar year. Schools also report their NAPLAN results through a range of mediums including newsletters, school website and social media, and announcements at school council board meetings and parent information evenings.



CEW2019/0083

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Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon
NAPLAN Reporting Review 2019
Australian Capital Territory Education Directorate
220 Northbourne Avenue
BRADDON ACT 2612

Email: naplanreporting@gmail.com

Dear Emeritus Professor Loudon

Thank you for your letter of 1 February 2019 alerting us to the opportunity to provide a response to the Review of NAPLAN Data Presentation Issues Paper.

As discussed at our 6 March 2019 meeting, NAPLAN is one of a suite of tools South Australia uses that provide important information about student numeracy and literacy growth.

I would like to highlight the following points on the review Issues Paper:

NAPLAN Online

- South Australia strongly supports the move to NAPLAN online, which will greatly assist the timeliness of reporting information to teachers and school leaders.
- In 2018, 20% of South Australian schools took NAPLAN online - this will grow to approximately 80% in 2019.
- Education Council has resolved to publish both written and online test results on My School. Given the work of the NAPLAN independent technical review (for which our department provided the secretariat) and AESOC's endorsement of ACARA's response, the Department for Education has confidence in the comparability between NAPLAN paper and online test results. We are committed to ensuring parents have access to key data about education outcomes.

School Improvement

- The department uses NAPLAN student progress as a key measure for considering student learning growth at a student, school and system level.
- South Australian schools use NAPLAN performance data to map their performance against the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) to inform comparisons and school improvement strategies.

- NAPLAN, amongst a range of student outcome data including wellbeing and year 12 attainment, is provided to South Australian schools through departmental school performance reports and the school improvement dashboard.

Informing students, parents and teachers

- Comprehensive school level NAPLAN data is reported in each school's Annual Report. The department also provides a suite of information to students and schools, including:
 - Individual Student Report (provided to students and parents using the ACARA template)
 - Individual Student Summary Report (provided to schools by South Australia)
 - School Summary Report (provided to schools by South Australia).
- Including learners in the analysis of their assessment results encourages them to take ownership of their learning and adds motivation for them to set their own learning goals.
- The department considers the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) values provide a useful comparative basis for identifying similar schools, which is easily understood by parents and the community.
- A major focus in South Australia is ensuring the NAPLAN data gets to teachers, and they are enabled to use it. This is especially important in relation to work on learning progressions and formative assessment tools being used in South Australia, and being developed at the national level.

The department will continue to work with ACARA and other jurisdictions to shape NAPLAN and My School through our membership of the various NAPLAN related national consultation bodies to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, with a focus on improving student outcomes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Persse', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rick Persse
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

25 March 2019



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education**

Your ref :
Our ref : D19/0114709
Enquiries :

Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon

Email: NAPLANreview2019@anu.au

Dear Professor Loudon

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Education Council review of the current approach to the presentation of the NAPLAN data, including information published on the *My School* website. Thank you also for meeting with me on 12 March 2019.

Please find attached the feedback from the Department of Education, Western Australia.

Should you wish to discuss the feedback, please contact Ms Alison Ramm, Director, Education Projects and Programs. Ms Ramm can be contacted at 9264 5018; 0438 924 649 or at alison.ramm@education.wa.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Rodgers
Director General

28 MAR 2019

Att.

NAPLAN Reporting Review 2019

Western Australian Department of Education

The Department of Education is supportive of NAPLAN, the reporting of NAPLAN data on My School and population testing.

Like other jurisdictions the Department provides some key reporting tools for teachers, schools and the public that include NAPLAN data. Importantly for schools NAPLAN data are linked with other key data sources at the individual student level including teacher grades, attendance and behaviour. These tools have been enhanced over the years. NAPLAN is a core part of school self-assessment, planning, action and reporting and it is a key component of the school improvement process. As a population assessment NAPLAN provides a national level, consistent reference point for student and school performance in respect of the aspects of the Australian Curriculum that it covers.

In the Western Australian context, it is evident that there has been quite substantial improvement in student performance since the introduction of NAPLAN in 2008. A wide range of factors account for this improvement but it is questionable as to whether such improvement would have been achieved without engagement with NAPLAN data, as it directly informs the school improvement process. At the very least NAPLAN allows the measurement of improvement over time.

The Western Australian Department of Education acknowledges that there are a diverse range of opinions amongst principals, teachers, parents, students, researchers and the community in relation to NAPLAN, its reporting and in particular the reporting of results through the My School website.

Review questions

The Department's comments in relation to these issues are provided below on the expectation that NAPLAN will continue and that the My School website will provide some information in relation to NAPLAN results.

1. Perceptions of NAPLAN and My School data, including the potential for misinterpretation or misuse

Does the NAPLAN data currently available on the My School website provide an appropriate balance between the right to high quality information and the possibility of misinterpretation or misuse?

Is there anything you find difficult to understand or is there any different NAPLAN information you would like to see included on My School?

Is the explanatory material on My School around "statistically similar schools" sufficiently explained, easy to understand and does this support fair comparisons for schools?

What consideration should be given to comparisons over time and between schools while schools progressively transition to NAPLAN online?

NAPLAN data is valuable, however it isn't the only source of information for schools and parents. One of the biggest concerns expressed regarding the My School website is that there is significant emphasis on NAPLAN when a broad range of

indicators, including those related to student academic outcomes across the curriculum, are needed. NAPLAN provides a good snapshot in relation to the aspects of the Australian Curriculum that are tested. As important as some of these aspects may be, it is important to note that they are not all that matters.

Arguably, the problem here is not so much with NAPLAN but with the difficulties in providing other useful nationally consistent data. The multiple screens within My School related to NAPLAN and somewhat limited other data don't help to achieve an appropriate balance, leaving the user to inappropriately assume that only NAPLAN counts.

Consideration could be given to reducing the number of NAPLAN related screens and only presenting what is agreed to be the most useful data. As parents and the community in general are the primary audience for My School this should be kept in mind as more detailed representations within jurisdictions are already available for principals, teachers and other departmental staff.

Future enhancements could focus more on student gain, and remove some of the reporting which is less useful for parents, such as bands.

The decision several years ago to use student and parental background data as the basis for determining socio-educational advantage was a substantial improvement. Indeed, the Department uses a similar methodology as a component of its student-centred funding model and in its own like school analyses. ICSEA is widely accepted as being valid and reliable. However, further consideration of what it means to be a 'similar' school is needed if the schools identified are to be accepted as genuinely comparable.

The set of similar schools produced on a national basis through the My School website are considered to be problematic when they are not in the same State and/or geolocation, are not of a similar size, have different demographics, particularly in relation to EAL/D and intellectually disabled students, and sometimes are partial or fully selective schools. It should be noted that schools at the top end of the performance and ICSEA distributions find it useful to reference 'similar' schools across sectors and jurisdictions.

The Department supports the reporting of data for both paper and online schools in My School. It is considered important to indicate if the school undertook NAPLAN online and during the transition period the year of uptake is also important such that it is evident in the displays which data relate to paper testing and which to online.

There has been no reporting of simplistic NAPLAN league tables by the West Australian media in recent years, with the emphasis being on reporting in relation to schools that had achieved outstanding gains in cohort performance. This has been welcomed by the schools identified. Despite this the prospect of simplistic tables being produced is of ongoing concern.

2. How My School and NAPLAN contribute to understanding of student progress and achievement

To what extent do schools and school systems use NAPLAN student progress and achievement data, including comparisons with statistically similar schools, to inform their school improvement strategies?

To what extent is whole-population assessment data necessary to meet school systems' and governments' need for sound information to support school improvement?

NAPLAN data is used by both schools and the system to inform planning processes. Schools refer to both achievement and progress data in school self-assessment, planning and reporting processes. Any changes to the My School website should not diminish the reporting of achievement and most importantly progress. Schools use this data, in conjunction with other school based measures, to identify students requiring additional support, and to plan accordingly.

As a population assessment NAPLAN provides a national level, consistent reference point for student and school progress and achievement. The biennial nature of the program and common assessment scales for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 enable student and cohort progress to be reported. Local support systems that include extensive data on individual student performance and progress as well as relative school performance based on 'similar' schools are more extensively used than My School.

Sample-based assessments on a national basis would provide for reporting needs at the higher levels but not for individual students or schools. Population based testing provides the ability to measure each student and each school, and make comparisons over time.

3. How schools use achievement data, including NAPLAN, to inform teaching

To what extent are NAPLAN data and the My School website used to inform teaching?

What opportunities are there to improve the timeliness of NAPLAN reporting?

Which assessment tools, approaches and data analytics services do schools and school systems use to inform teaching?

In general, schools use a range of assessments, including formative assessments developed by teachers, to inform their daily teaching. NAPLAN is useful as a point in time snapshot to compare student, group, class and school performance on a consistent national basis.

NAPLAN data is used by schools to identify trends in student achievement, measure individual student growth and identify areas that need a greater focus. In many schools, NAPLAN is a key starting point for discussion about teaching and learning.

Teachers and schools tend to access information regarding NAPLAN provided on the Department's local system, rather than information from the My School website, to inform teaching and whole school planning. This is because of the additional information provided at the individual student level.

NAPLAN data have allowed schools to identify aspects of the tested curriculum where individual students and groups of students up to full cohorts, have strengths and weaknesses. To be most useful for the students tested in a given year the results have to be available very quickly. It is acknowledged that the move to online assessment is aimed, in part, at achieving this. In particular, the SSSR produced by NAPLAN Online, whilst still needing further refinement, (for example inclusion of students' scaled scores and more direct access to each of the available data displays) is a welcome development.

Ideally, the timing of provision of student results should be early enough to align with first semester reporting.

4. How My School and NAPLAN data are reported to students and parents

To what extent do schools communicate individual, whole school and comparative NAPLAN data to students, parents and families?

To what extent do parents and families use NAPLAN data on My School to make informed judgements, make choices and engage with their children's education?

What NAPLAN reporting information do students need in order to contribute to their own education?

Individual student reports are provided to parents and parents are encouraged to discuss the results with teachers. These discussions are most useful when they are aligned with the school's first semester reporting as an additional piece of information to be considered and potentially followed up at parent interviews.

It is useful for students to know where they are placed in terms of the full distribution. The individual student reports are valuable. What is potentially most important is how teachers make use of the information, alongside everything else they know, to engage with individual students, groups of students and classes and develop appropriate learning programs.

Public schools utilise NAPLAN data in their annual School Reports and may provide information to School Boards/Councils and through newsletters when the results are made available.

The extent to which parents and families use NAPLAN data on My School to engage with their children's education is not known. Anecdotal information confirms parents looking to select a new school make greater use of the My School website.

20 March 2019

**Gonski Institute for Education: Submission to the Education Council of the Council of
Australian Governments (COAG) NAPLAN Reporting Review 2019**

Emeritus Professor Bill Louden AM,

The core mission of the Gonski Institute for Education (UNSW Sydney) is to address growing inequality in Australian education as well as improving access for students to high-quality education wherever they may go to school. We believe that every young person has the potential to succeed in a leading education system defined by best-practice, care and inclusiveness but most importantly a system that is equitable.

With these objectives at the forefront of work undertaken by the Institute, please find herein our submission to the Education Council of COAGs review of the current approach to the presentation of the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data.

Much of the debate about standardised national testing occurs at a political level, heavily influenced by the national education agencies and the need for data. Similar debates and considerations about the role and impact of system-level student assessment take place in many other countries. For example, in Singapore, the Netherlands, Scotland, Alberta (Canada), and China education policies are shifting towards less-frequent and lower-stakes standardised assessments to give more room for teachers' professional judgment in assessment and reporting.

Our submission is based on a rigorous analysis of the large body of academic research literature about NAPLAN and the My School website with a focus on what is in the best interests of students. Our submission is also informed by a series of outreach events and professional learning activities that have both engaged and sought input from key stakeholders.¹ Furthermore, our submission has international perspective: it aims to make sure that Australia moves to the forefront when it comes to student assessment and monitoring education system performance.

The recommendations below are intended to help redesign the national assessment and reporting system for Australian schools.

It is beyond the scope of this submission to get into the technical details of what a new National Assessment System that includes diagnostic, formative and summative student assessments and the monitoring of school performance would look like. However, it is clear that it should be based on

¹ These activities include a symposium on the topic of *Beyond NAPLAN: What should come next?* held on Tuesday 12 March 2019, hosted by the Gonski Institute for Education together with the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI). This symposium brought together sixty representatives from the major Australian education stakeholders across all school sectors to discuss the future of national testing and reporting and to identify a new approach that would better serve the needs and interests of students.

commonly agreed policy and practice that is evidence-based and is informed by the profession and international research. The following recommendations, therefore, only focus on the role and function of standardised student assessments, reporting of the results of these tests, and linking other student and school assessments to the assessment system.

We believe that building a new national assessment system should follow the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: A national assessment and reporting system should have a single clearly defined purpose

It is problematic, if not impossible, for one student assessment to accurately serve a range of different purposes, i.e. formative, summative, school comparison and accountability, as NAPLAN does today.

Therefore;

- We recommend that the design of a national assessment and reporting system must be determined by the agreed, overarching purpose of education in Australia. That purpose, as informed by the Goals set out in the Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians ought to be that:
“Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence and that all young Australians become, successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.”
- It is paramount that this clearly defined and commonly shared purpose of education drives the redesign of the new national assessment and reporting system, not the other way around.
- Based on the above, we recommend that the sole purpose of the national assessment and reporting system should be to monitor education systems performance against the purpose of education, particularly on the issues of educational excellence, equity, wellbeing and students’ attitudes toward learning.
- We recommend that any national student assessment that is part of the national assessment system should only serve that one purpose in order to remain accurate, useful and valid.
- We recommend that a reformed national testing and reporting system should be regularly evaluated against an updated statement of National Education Goals for Young Australians.

Recommendation 2. A national assessment and reporting system should be based on scientific sampling and have a positive effect on student learning, wellbeing and equity in education

A national assessment and reporting system must have no negative consequences for students. Consideration of policy proposals against this recommendation should cause policy makers to think about the purposes of national assessment and reporting as part of the larger education policy ecosystem. Even if the purpose is not to lift student attainment, but rather to monitor educational performance and report on it, then the principle still applies.

Therefore;

- We recommend that an Australian national assessment system should use scientifically determined sampling of students rather than the current census approach. A sampling approach lowers the stakes that testing has on children, parents, and schools. Sampling rather than census also strengthens the role of classroom-based diagnostic, formative and summative assessments led by teachers and schools.
- It is important that a national assessment and reporting system positively influences classroom practices, supports collaborative professionalism in and between schools, and remains efficient in terms of administration. We therefore further recommend, that the new national assessment system would link system level standardised assessments to school and classroom level assessments and evaluations. This would ensure that the assessment would have a positive benefit for students and teachers, while also raising the quality and equity of education outcomes in schools and overall in Australia.

Recommendation 3: A national assessment and reporting system should provide rich, accurate and timely information to the community, school systems and the government

Schools, education systems and governments make decisions about the deployment of resources to schools and directly to students as well as guiding policy decisions. These decisions require information, including data that can be obtained through an effective national testing and reporting system. A national assessment and reporting system can play a critical role as a source of accurate, useful and valid information.

Therefore;

- We recommend, in order to provide information about the performance of Australian education, that regular assessments of students' knowledge and skills in different subjects and different year levels should include sample-based standardised tests, school level assessments of performance and classroom-based assessment by teachers. This assessment system should be supported by thematic evaluations, systematic research, and surveys on specific aspects of educational equity and outcomes.
- As a result of this change:
 - Publication of school-by-school results on the My School website will no longer be available. The My School website should continue to publish information about what the Gonski Institute for Education calls data on 'how is my school good?' instead of data on 'how good is my school?'.
 - The high stakes nature of the current national assessment system on both students and teachers will be dramatically reduced.
 - Removing the high stakes nature of the current national assessment and reporting system will reinstate the primary role of teachers and schools in student assessment and reporting will increase trust in teachers as professionals.
 - Unnecessary administrative burdens on school staff in administering the tests will be removed.
 - Overall cost of student assessment will decrease, and cost savings can be used to support the schools' role in assessment and reporting.
 - We recommend that the new national assessment system should also include resources that would support the role of schools' in reliably evaluating and reporting school-based assessments as well as other education outcomes, including student and teacher wellbeing and equity of schooling.

Recommendation 4. The design and implementation of a national assessment should be driven by the teaching profession and be effective, efficient and economical

Being confident in the quality of assessment and the data it produces is of fundamental importance in any national testing and reporting system. Stakeholders will be confident when the purpose of the assessment and what it is testing is clear, that it is testing what it was designed to test and that it is doing it in a fair and consistent way for all students.

The recent public and media discourse around NAPLAN suggests that there is work to be done in restoring teachers' and principals' confidence in the national student assessment system. Teachers as professionals should participate in a process that gives them a say in how well students do in school and how to improve their performance. Teachers are best positioned to keep student assessments safe from unintended consequences and policy changes that are not based on evidence or success elsewhere. Teachers expect education policies, including student assessment, that are consistent with the values of Australian education.

Therefore;

- We recommend that the role of teachers be strengthened in all levels of a new national assessment system. Teachers know what they need and what works in their classrooms and to that extent, systems must place more trust in the professionalism of their teachers and school leaders.
- We recommend that teachers be deeply involved in the development of a new national testing and reporting system, particularly redesigning and articulating its purpose and testing new instruments in their own work before they are implemented in schools.

Recommendation 5. A national assessment should be supported by reliable and effective communication

Clear, consistent and frequent communication on the purpose and benefits of assessment programs and strategies is essential.

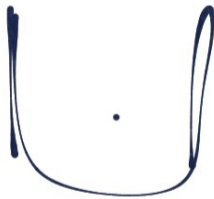
The recommendations proposed here align with those outlined in several national reports, such as 2011 *'Review of Funding for Schooling'* and the 2018 *'Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools'*, both led by David Gonski AC. These recommendations also resonate well with current international developments in student assessment and educational evaluation. The focus of a redesigned national assessment and reporting system ought to be redirected to individual student achievement and the introduction of new reporting arrangements that focus on both learning attainment and learning gain. This would provide meaningful information to students and their parents and carers about individual achievement and learning growth that comes from various purposefully determined sources, rather than from a sole standardised test. We strongly believe that Australia should be walking among the top nations in the world when creating a new national student assessment system that works for the benefit of all children, strengthens the professionalism of and trust in all educators, and provides parents and decisionmakers with a much more accurate picture of what young Australians learn in schools and what they need to live happy and healthy lives.

We have approached the terms of reference for this review through a series of commonly asked questions about NAPLAN. The supporting materials that are provided in Appendix 1 deal with each question in turn by considering the current research and stakeholder perceptions of NAPLAN and the My School website.

The time for action is now. We sincerely believe that a reformed national assessment and reporting system, capitalising on the potential of assessment to not only report on, but also support and drive learning, is within reach.

We would of course be happy to provide further input to the review and would welcome the chance to present our findings in person, should it be desired.

Kind regards,



Professor Adrian Piccoli
Director, Gonski Institute for Education



Professor Pasi Sahlberg
Professor of Educational Policy,
UNSW Sydney

Acknowledgments:

The Gonski Institute for Education would like to acknowledge the contributions made to this submission by Dr Rachel Wilson (Educational Measurement & Assessment Hub, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney) and Carol Taylor (Educational Measurement & Assessment Hub, Sydney School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney).

Appendix 1. Beyond NAPLAN: What Should Come Next?

NAPLAN's multiple purposes compromise its design

In 2010, then Education Minister Julia Gillard, in a letter to the President of the Australian Education Union made it clear that the Government was committed to:

1. the value of transparency and accountability for ongoing school improvement
2. effective assessment and reporting of student achievement including the diagnostic value of the NAPLAN
3. the power of accurate data to provide comparable national reporting of school effectiveness.

Minister Gillard also made her views on the purpose of NAPLAN and the My School website clear in a media statement on the 12th August 2008.

"We can learn from [Joel] Klein's methodology of comparing like-schools with like-schools and then measuring the differences in school results in order to spread best practice," she said. "Something Joel Klein is personally and passionately committed to is the identification of school need, the comparison of like-schools and the identification of best practice. (Ferrari and Bitá, The Australian, August 12, 2008)

It is clear that the aims and purposes of NAPLAN were very broad and ambitious. The originally stated purposes were further complicated by the additional uses that emerged with the creation of the My School website, such as competition between schools.

Sitting beyond the stated purposes was the underlying belief that NAPLAN would, through these various outcomes driven by NAPLAN, lift our national educational attainment.

Assessment purposes can be categorised into three ambitions:

1. Assessment which can inform day-to-day classroom learning (Assessment for Learning (AfL) through diagnosis and feedback)
2. Assessment to provide information beyond the pupil-teacher relations - to parents, other schools (for transition and/or selective entry), university, other education institutions and employers
3. Assessment for accountability

The first NAPLAN report released by the ACARA stated that:

"By locating all students on a single national scale, which maps the skills and understandings assessed, each scale provides significantly more information about the literacy and numeracy achievement of students than was previously available" (ACARA, 2008).

By the time of the 2013 Senate Enquiry, looking into the effectiveness of NAPLAN, it was clear that the purpose of NAPLAN had already become confused.

"Question on Notice: 6

It is apparent in the submissions to this inquiry that there is confusion and inconsistent statements about the purpose of NAPLAN."

For example, according to then ACARA Chief Executive Peter Hill (October 2010):

"The purpose of national testing has been to get a snapshot of student performance for reporting back at different levels. That was the purpose from the beginning, and the purpose has never been diagnostic assessment."

However, early and continued aims included 'diagnostic' and 'school improvement' purposes. According to ACARA Chair, Barry McGaw, for example:

“NAPLAN is not a test students can prepare for because it is not a test of content. The federal government’s intention in introducing and reporting NAPLAN results was to provide a diagnostic tool for teachers and parents, identifying gaps in students’ skills.” (March, 2011)

Confusingly, McGraw’s perspective contrasts with much ACARA documentation explaining the multiple purposes for which NAPLAN is now intended to satisfy.

It is evident that NAPLAN was expected to meet all of three of the purposes outlined above. Education assessment systems are evaluated primarily upon how they meet their stated aims – in gauging this we most often ask “Is assessment X fit for purpose?” (Harris, 2017). This multitude of purposes proposed for a mid-year assessment, which uses mostly multiple-choice questions of forty-minute duration every two years makes the simultaneous use of the data for some of these purposes questionable.

NAPLAN has only a limited value for teachers

There is apparent confusion on this matter as a result of different understandings of the term “diagnostic” in relation to NAPLAN assessments. The conventional meaning of a diagnostic assessment is an instrument that measures the level or state of development of a student’s knowledge and skills in a particular area prior to further instruction. Assessments designed to be diagnostic provide specific information that can be used to inform the content and strategy of a subsequent learning program. They are primarily used to analyse student difficulties and to guide lesson and curriculum planning so those difficulties can be remediated.

Within the body of commentary on NAPLAN it is clear that, from the beginning, at an individual student level, and even to some degree at classroom and school levels, the results have had limited diagnostic, or formative value. In large part, this was, and still is, due to the time lag of around four months between when students sit the tests and when the results become available. This was immediately apparent from the initial year and claims around the diagnostic, or even formative, usefulness of the tests continued despite the fact the timing issue has never been addressed.

Initially, many teachers, and their professional bodies, wanted to embrace the formative potential of the test, even if questioning its diagnostic credentials. State departments invested in programs to support and encourage this aspect. However, the pressures to teach to the test may have surpassed the potential to teach from the test. The diagnostic dimension failed to deliver on teachers’ expectations. Confusion, criticism and cynicism followed, and the credibility of the test was called into question (Carter, Manuel, Dutton, 2018).

The unintended consequences of NAPLAN and the My School

The school choice market, within sectors and between sectors, that My School platform was designed to inform imposed a new high stakes dimension upon the tests. Parents and other stakeholders use the results published on the My School website to compare and choose schools; and this created institutional pressure that cascaded down as stressors upon school leaders, teachers and in turn students.

While research shows that some parents value the information about their children provided by NAPLAN, they also share concerns regarding “disadvantage to less resourced schools, stress on students, diversion of teaching time from the curriculum, exclusion of students from the test and concerns as to whether NAPLAN accurately reflects student performance” (Colmar Brunton for ACARA, 2018, p. 7).

From the beginning the publication of NAPLAN scores on the My School website has proved controversial. Teachers were particularly doubtful and indeed predicted many of the unintended consequences that have since emerged. For the first time, assessment data together with other school information was presented to the public along with an invitation for audiences – parents, media etc - to make judgements about schools. In doing this, there is a strong argument in the body of commentary that the My School website has made test results ‘high stakes’ for schools and teachers, and consequently students and parents. Media and political hype served to increase the stakes, particularly through the construction of league tables and identification of winners and losers.

By adding high stakes element to the tests, MySchool has introduced other uses for the NAPLAN tests. These include:

- The use of results as a basis for students to transition from school to school
- The use of results, as part of a student profile, for admission to independent selective and non-selective schools (McDougal, 2011)
- The development of a wide range of commercial NAPLAN test-preparation products (Bousfield and Ragusa, 2014)
- The orientation of coaching schools and edu-business to NAPLAN-type instruction and test preparation (Bousfield and Ragusa, 2014)
- The generation of school league tables (see [here](#))
- Influencing the value of residential real estate (Schlesinger, 2015)

NAPLAN leads to teaching to the test and a narrowing of the curriculum

There is a consistent theme throughout the body of commentary that the high stakes associated with NAPLAN and My School have served to distort the curriculum, teaching and learning. Once an assessment becomes high stakes, more teaching time is devoted to teaching to the test. Teaching to the test may not be a bad thing if it is a good test, but many educators and international research studies suggest (Thompson & Harbaugh, 2013) that there is potential for the curriculum taught in the classroom to be narrowed because what is tested is only a subset of the broader areas of literacy and numeracy and an even smaller subset of the curriculum as a whole.

In a most recent survey of English teachers’ views on NAPLAN Carter, Manual and Dutton (2018) found common perspectives included:

- The tests added little to teachers’ understanding of literacy levels
- The assessment was a poor and narrow measure of student achievement
- Teachers felt pressured to prepare students for the tests and this detracted from other learning opportunities
- The pressure to “teach to the test” frustrated many teachers and reduced their sense of professional autonomy

NAPLAN students’ and teachers’ wellbeing

Schools fear that NAPLAN results defines their quality and effectiveness, significantly raising the stakes for the tests and the stress levels of students, teachers and parents. To date, the largest survey of teachers suggests that most commonly see the purpose of NAPLAN as “either a school ranking tool or a policing tool” (Dufler, Polesel & Rice, 2012, p.8). Analysis of the submissions of the 2010 NAPLAN Senate Inquiry demonstrated:

“adulthood in Australian schools, with children subjected to developmentally inappropriate expectations, pressure, stress and precocious knowledge in response to NAPLAN testing and reporting” (Bousfield & Ragusa, 2013, p.171)

While the Australian evidence base on the long term impact of NAPLAN upon students is unclear, there is in the body of commentary a prevailing view, that growing numbers of students are displaying symptoms of stress ranging from anxiety to suicidal thoughts around NAPLAN test time. A survey of more than 5,500 teachers showed that while over 40% felt that some children looked forward to undertaking NAPLAN, some 90% stated that at least some students reported feeling stressed and over 60% said that some students had reported anxiety. This is corroborated by students reporting negative feelings toward the test in both preparation and testing phases (Swain & Pendergast, 2018)

Another reasonably common assertion, supported by research (Davies, 2012) is that NAPLAN can be a negative experience for students with special needs because of the inadequate special provisions to allow these students to access and respond to the test questions in a fair way.

There have also been concerns over the culturally inappropriate nature of standardised testing that may prevent Indigenous, and other minority, students from fully engaging (Macqueen, Knoch, Wigglesworth, Nordlinger et al. 2018). Some teachers also suggest that significant amounts of teaching time has to be devoted to teaching test conventions to students (Carter, Manual, Dutton, 2018).

The pressure of public comparisons to perform well as a school under media scrutiny goes to the heart of their worth as a teacher. Some schools and teachers concerned about their reputations being damaged by poor student performance have allegedly encouraged low performing students not to participate in the tests. There are also assertions that teachers may be reluctant to take Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 classes because of the demoralising effect NAPLAN results have when they imply their worth as a teacher.

NAPLAN has not improved educational performance in Australia

Nationally, the magnitude of improvements in the quality of student achievement and equity of these outcomes have been insignificant and in many of the assessment domains show no improvement.

Significant gains are only seen in Years 5 and 9 numeracy, Years 3 and 5 reading, Years 3 and 5 spelling, and Years 3 and 7 grammar, all of which are significantly above the NAPLAN 2008 average. Thus, many year groups and domains show no significant progress. In particular, significant and consistent declines are evident in writing test results across Years 5, 7 and 9, since the first year writing was assessed in 2011.

It is fair to say that the learning outcomes measured by NAPLAN have not improved over time. In some areas, like writing, they are disturbing. Similar concern has been expressed regarding Australia's performance in international assessments, with substantial declines in mean scores in PISA, and lower than expected performance in TIMSS and PIRLS (Ainley and Gebhardt, 2013; Masters, 2016).

NAPLAN and My School are seen to represent an approach to education that is inconsistent with and detrimental to the values of Australian educators with particular reference to equity, fairness and

excellence. A common theme in the body of commentary is that NAPLAN and the way it is reported is undermining equity and fairness in Australian education.

A theme linked to equity, is that whilst My School purports to support parental choice about the school their children will attend, the fact is that not all parents have a full range of choices available to them depending on their location and their SES. This aspect of My School undermines the principle of equality of choice and the right of every child to attend a high-quality school by drawing attention to the inequality inherent in the social, economic and geographical features of Australian life.

Perhaps the most concrete evidence of the undermining effects of the current system is demonstrated through private tutoring. This industry is seen to capitalise on parental fears and aspirations and is only available to those who can access and afford it.

Parents' views about NAPLAN and My School

ACARA's recently commissioned survey of parents shows that one in three parents use the My School website (Colmar Brunton for ACARA, 2018). Although parent engagement with My School is relatively low, this does not appear to have restrained the performance pressure experienced, or perceived, by schools. The My School website provides data that is easily misinterpreted and risks poor and incorrect conclusions being drawn about school effectiveness.

Despite attempts to provide more information designed to contextualise results, there is little evidence that most users of the website bother to read or have an understanding beyond the red and green colour-coding. Providing more contextual information does not always appear to prevent audiences making incorrect judgements.

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22 March 2019

Submission to the NAPLAN Reporting Review 2019

Peter Goss and Julie Sonnemann

Summary

We welcome the opportunity to present our views to the NAPLAN 2019 Reporting Review, commissioned by The Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments. Our submission addresses the terms of reference on how to improve presentation of NAPLAN, but also draws attention to the broader debate on NAPLAN.

We argue that NAPLAN should not be scrapped, nor moved to sample testing; it is a vital tool for adaptive education systems to monitor student performance and improve government support over time. Governments and other system leaders rely on standardised testing to understand which schools are struggling or thriving, and what interventions work well and should be expanded.

We note that current NAPLAN reporting works reasonably well as a monitoring tool, but much less effectively for evaluating what works or as a tool to inform parents on their school choice.

We also highlight two things NAPLAN should not be used for. First, NAPLAN reporting should not aim to stimulate competition between schools; there is little evidence this approach will improve teaching in Australia.

Second, NAPLAN should not be expected to support teachers as a diagnostic tool in the classroom, even with the improvements to NAPLAN online. There are benefits in keeping separate the standardised assessments intended for monitoring and accountability from the classroom assessments that teachers use regularly to improve what they do.

We recommend the following changes to NAPLAN reporting:

- Raise the national minimum standard or stop reporting it.
- Report NAPLAN learning progress using a measure that is comparable across students from different starting points.
- Improve the presentation of results on My School, in particular making it easier for parents to access student gain results and school trends over time.
- Strengthen the Annual NAPLAN report by including more analysis on learning gain and by contextualising comparisons among states and across geolocations.
- Support third-party reporting that uses NAPLAN data by:
 - Simplifying access to the unit record data; and
 - Improving linkages to other data.

Finally, we suggest that the Education Council consider:

- Expanding NAPLAN data to cover general capabilities; and
- Expanding school-level data (especially on My School) to include information about educational practices.

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1. Putting this review in context

1.1. Context of current review

NAPLAN is a national asset. With 12 years of data, gathered four times during the course of every student's schooling, it provides vital insight into how schools and students are performing. Without NAPLAN, we would know much less about the outcomes and effectiveness of school education in Australia.¹

Yet there are legitimate questions about whether NAPLAN has delivered what it promised, and the negative impacts it can have on students and schools. These questions go beyond the inevitable limitation that the desirable outcomes from schooling are broader than any standardised test can cover.² On balance, we believe that NAPLAN and the way it is reported do more good than harm. But improvements are possible and desirable.

This review is therefore welcome. This is especially true because the review occurs in a context where some stakeholders are asking for bigger changes to NAPLAN than just reporting. Some are calling for NAPLAN to be scrapped, or reduced to sample testing. Before responding more directly to the context of the review, we put forward our views on these two broader issues.

¹ Goss (2018).

² However, Year 9 NAPLAN results help predict which students will leave school before Year 12, and employment outcomes for early school leavers. ABS (2014).

³ See, for example, <https://www.theeducatoronline.com/au/news/scrapped-naplan-expert-urges/246353>.

⁴ See Goss (2017), p. 26.

Don't scrap NAPLAN

Some stakeholders argue that NAPLAN should be scrapped in favour of other diagnostic assessments used regularly by teachers to improve their own teaching practice.³ The argument is that this would remove the perverse incentives created by the perceived 'high stakes' associated with NAPLAN.

On some level, this argument has merit: our education systems would be more adaptive if teachers and schools were better able to track the progress of their students in ways that directly inform their teaching in the classroom.⁴ NAPLAN is the wrong tool for this purpose. The assessment within NAPLAN is too narrow and too infrequent to enable targeted teaching in the classroom.⁵

But NAPLAN is a standardised test that is inherently linked with public and political accountability and monitoring – essential in a public education system. It helps governments monitor school performance and understand what works. If NAPLAN were removed, teacher-generated data would inevitably become used for government monitoring and accountability.⁶ This would harm the trust that is so vital in teacher-generated data.

⁵ See Goss et al. (2015), p. 13.

⁶ Without NAPLAN, our judgement is that the desire for top-down accountability would overwhelm the legitimate argument to keep teacher-generated data focused on improvement and collective professional responsibility.

Those who want NAPLAN scrapped should be careful what they wish for. There are benefits in keeping separate the standardised assessments governments want for monitoring and accountability, and the classroom assessments that teachers use to improve what they do. Dangers can arise when the two goals get blurred.

Australia is not ready to move to sample testing

Others have argued that we could keep the benefits and reduce the downsides of NAPLAN if it were a sample test.⁷ The problem is that teacher judgment is not sufficiently rigorous in all schools, nor linked to common standards.⁸ Without NAPLAN, the risk is that even more schools and students would fall through the cracks.

All educators (indeed, all professionals) need to verify their own judgments against independent and objective data. NAPLAN is not inherently necessary for such independent verification; but there isn't currently anything ready to replace it in Australia at scale.

⁷ Piccoli et al. (2019).

⁸ See Goss et al. (2015), pp. 11-12.

⁹ This is separate from the strengths and limitations of how NAPLAN is used.

¹⁰ See Goss et al. (2018).

¹¹ See Goss et al. (2016).

1.2. Strengths and limitations of NAPLAN as a test⁹

In our view, the key strengths of NAPLAN as a test are its:

- **National consistency**, which enables comparisons across schools, sectors, and states;¹⁰
- **Contextual information**, which enables like-for-like comparisons across schools and student groups;¹¹ and
- **Common scale** across year levels, which enables analysis of student learning growth.¹²

NAPLAN's key limitations as a test are that:

- **Measurement error** makes NAPLAN data much less useful for individual students or small schools;¹³
- The **NAPLAN curve** makes it hard to interpret student learning growth;¹⁴
- The **National Minimum Standard** is set too low;¹⁵ and
- **Variable participation rates** can make it hard to compare groups of students or schools.

¹² See Goss et al. (2016) and Goss et al. (2018).

¹³ See Wu (2010).

¹⁴ Goss et al. (2016) proposes an 'Equivalent Year Level' metric to account for the curve. This was updated in Goss et al. (2018).

¹⁵ See Goss et al. (2016), pp. 23-24.

1.3. NAPLAN reporting is working better for monitoring; but less so for evaluation and parent choice

This review is about NAPLAN *reporting*. While the issues paper focuses heavily on the My School website, NAPLAN reporting needs to be considered broadly,¹⁶ because each reporting channel raises specific considerations and has different goals.

NAPLAN reporting takes place through both public and private channels. Public reporting channels include the My School website; the NAPLAN annual report, and its online version; and third-party analysis of NAPLAN, such as media stories or reports by organisations such as Grattan Institute. Private reporting channels include the provision of NAPLAN data to education systems, schools, and parents.

There are also different goals for reporting: monitoring; evaluation; and parental choice (see Box 1). The current reporting model works much less effectively for evaluation and parental choice than for monitoring. The NAPLAN reporting issues associated with monitoring, evaluation and parental choice are discussed in more detail in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Box 1. Reporting on NAPLAN has three main purposes

Monitoring. School and system leaders use NAPLAN to monitor the achievement and progress of their students.

The key monitoring question is “what do the data tell us about a specific group of students or schools?”¹⁷

Evaluation. Policy makers and researchers also use NAPLAN to better understand interventions that lift student performance, inform system-wide policies, and target support to schools. The point is to use current data to improve future performance.

The key evaluation question is “what do the data imply about the effectiveness of schools (or systems, educational interventions, etc)?”

Parental choice. Parents use NAPLAN to inform their choice of school.

The key question in parental choice is “will this school educate my child effectively?”¹⁸

¹⁶ By contrast, the issues paper does not mention the NAPLAN annual report or its online version at <https://reports.acara.edu.au/Home/Results>.

¹⁷ The need to monitor all students and schools for accountability purposes is a key reason why NAPLAN should not become a sample test.

¹⁸ This applies both when parents are choosing a school for their child, and when they are deciding whether to keep their child at a school.

1.4. How NAPLAN should not be used

There are two purposes for which NAPLAN is not the best tool.

Competition

NAPLAN reporting should not aim to stimulate competition between schools.

The My School website gives families information on how schools perform in NAPLAN. In theory, this information could help stimulate competition between schools. In practice, this has not happened.

Relying on school markets is not the best way to improve student learning. In Australia, families generally don't move to high-performing schools nor leave low-performing ones.¹⁹

Targeted teaching

NAPLAN should not be expected to support teachers as a diagnostic tool for individual students in the classroom. Nor can it identify what each student knows so that the teacher can target their teaching to what the student needs to learn next.²⁰

NAPLAN assesses two years' worth of learning in each subject area through about 35-40 questions, most of which are multiple choice. It is not clear that all schools recognise the high level of measurement error in individual students' NAPLAN scores. By

chance, a student's score may be out by more than half a year's learning. The error in measuring student growth is higher still.

In addition, NAPLAN tests are designed to have broad coverage, not to diagnose in detail what individual students are ready to learn next or the underlying source of any difficulties they face. Yet that is what targeted teaching needs.

Moving NAPLAN to online adaptive testing will make it more accurate and return results sooner, but not address all the issues outlined above. While it has many benefits, NAPLAN is not sufficient to comprehensively assess individual students' learning or track their progress.

¹⁹ Jensen et al. (2013).

²⁰ Goss et al. (2015), p. 13-15.

2. NAPLAN is a critical link in the data ecosystem

School education in Australia has many bright spots, but we do not have a system of excellence or an *adaptive education system* that identifies excellence and systematically spreads it.²¹

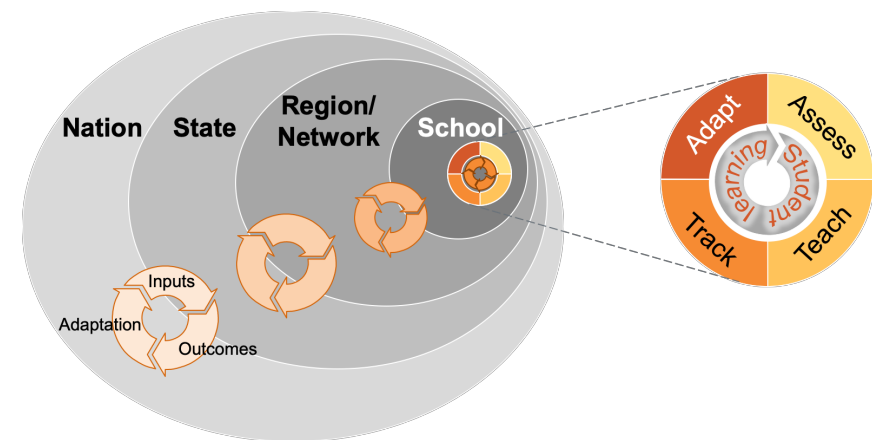
Data about student achievement and progress is an essential component of an adaptive education system. But no single assessment can possibly provide the data required to inform educational practice. 'Small data', classroom assessments done by teachers on a regular basis, are essential to guide the teaching and learning process at a local level. Done well, such data is more *relevant* than a standardised test (what we call 'big data') can ever be. But it is also less *rigorous* than the big data generated by standardised tests like NAPLAN, at least in enabling comparisons over time and across schools.

Data about student learning progress needs to be used at multiple 'levels' within education systems. Figure 1 shows adaptive improvement as a series of nested feedback loops. For feedback to work, educators must look at the practices they are currently using ('inputs'), the impact on student learning ('outcomes'), and have a systematic adaptation process for deciding what to keep doing and what to stop ('adaptation').

Different assessment tools are needed to complete the feedback loop at different levels of education systems. NAPLAN is the wrong tool for targeted teaching (the feedback loop within

schools).²² But it is highly valuable for the improvement loops that are required across schools, across regions, at a state government level and across states.

Figure 1: An adaptive education system needs feedback loops at multiple levels.



Source: Goss (2017).

²¹ (P Goss, 2017).

²² In our view, online NAPLAN will not change this. It will make the data more accurate (particularly for high- and low-achieving students), but the data will still

be too infrequent and too narrowly defined to be the main input into targeted teaching. Online NAPLAN data should, however, be welcomed as a way to independently verify internal school assessments of literacy and numeracy.

Australia's challenge is that, at times, NAPLAN can play too dominant a role, like a heavy weight that unbalances a set of kitchen scales. The best way to get to balance is not to throw out NAPLAN, but to strengthen the counter-balancing forms of assessment, particularly small data in the hands of teachers.

Australia's national data are also poorly balanced between inputs and outcomes. As the diagram shows, adaptive improvement needs data about what is actually being done in schools, as well as what students have learned. Schools and education systems can't benchmark themselves to better outcomes without linking the results to the actions that contributed to them.

Our main focus as a nation should not be on tinkering with NAPLAN but in trying to define a more rounded data ecosystem that incorporates NAPLAN but takes us beyond it, e.g. by incorporating measures of quality teaching. If it were part of a broader ecosystem of data, the current downsides of NAPLAN would be greatly reduced.

In the meantime, NAPLAN reporting should certainly be improved. But developing an effective data ecosystem to drive continuous improvement is more about the overall balance of data – especially improving the quality of data gathered through day-to-day teacher assessments, or gathering more systematic information about practice – than it is about tweaking NAPLAN.

3. How to improve NAPLAN as a monitoring tool

3.1. Monitoring literacy and numeracy at a system level

Australia spends about \$30 billion each year on primary school education. Yet nearly 3 in 10 Year 7 students lack the core reading skills they need to succeed in secondary school.²³ If nothing else, the need for political accountability makes it essential to monitor student outcomes using data that can be compared across schools and jurisdictions.

The key monitoring question is “what do the data tell us about the performance of a group of students or schools?” Performance means achievement (what do students know) and progress (how has this changed during the course of students’ schooling).

State governments and system leaders should use the answers to this question to set directions and inform policies. They should also monitor student performance in individual schools or groups of schools (e.g. a region) to identify where performance is strong and where extra support is needed.

Standardised tests are not the only way to ensure that the data used for monitoring are comparable. But the main alternative – carefully moderated teacher-assessments against common learning standards – could be even more onerous.²⁴ And there is little reason to invest in an alternative when NAPLAN is ideally positioned to continue to provide raw data for monitoring.

Four changes would make reporting more effective for monitoring:

- Raise the **national minimum standard** or remove it entirely.²⁵
- Report **learning progress** using a measure – such as our proposed Years of Learning Progress metric – that is comparable across students from different starting points;²⁶
- Strengthen the **Annual NAPLAN report** by including a wider range of analysis on learning gain;²⁷ and
- **Contextualise state-by-state comparisons** in the Annual NAPLAN report, as well as comparisons across geolocation.

²³ Lamb et al. (2015).

²⁴ Without moderation, teachers tend to grade in highly variable ways. See Connolly et al. (2012); Harlen (2005a); and Harlen (2005b).

²⁵ See Goss et al. (2016), Recommendation 2b, based on analysis that shows that a Year 9 student reading at the NMS is below the typical Year 5 student.

²⁶ NAPLAN gain scores are not directly comparable across students from different backgrounds because “students who start with lower NAPLAN scores tend to make greater gains over time than those who start with higher NAPLAN scores.” ACARA (2015), p. 5. Goss et al. (2016), Figure 2 shows how a face-

value interpretation of gain scores can suggest students are catching up when they are actually falling further behind.

²⁷ Student learning progress is the best measure of the effectiveness of schools and systems (see, e.g. Jensen (2010; Goss et al. (2015; and Goss et al. (2016)). Yet only about 10 per cent of the 2017 NAPLAN annual report (ACARA (2017)) was devoted to analysis of student gain (40 pages out of 365). The ACARA website reports.acara.edu.au has the same limitation because it presents the same data.

This last point is a subtle one and requires explanation.

The Issues paper says that “reporting on the outcomes of schooling should use data that is valid, reliable, and *contextualised*” (emphasis added). This is done carefully on the My School website, using ICSEA (the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage) as the basis for identifying comparable schools.

But the Annual NAPLAN report fails to acknowledge the socio-economic differences among states and territories.²⁸ Thus, for example, the ACT is routinely shown as having high levels of achievement, even though its performance on a like-for-like (i.e. contextualised) basis is relatively weak.²⁹ Meanwhile, the Northern Territory is shown as having low levels of achievement, without contextualising its much lower levels of socio-economic status.

The Grattan Institute report “Measuring Student Progress” was written in part to address this lack of contextualisation across regions, states, and sectors.³⁰ ACARA should routinely report contextualised comparisons, to enable politicians and the public to compare literacy and numeracy levels in a way that acknowledges important differences.³¹

²⁸ The Annual NAPLAN report also fails to acknowledge socio-economic differences between students in different geolocations.

²⁹ See, for example, Goss et al. (2018).

³⁰ Goss et al. (2018).

3.2. Informing school leaders

NAPLAN provides a range of valuable information to school leaders as they monitor academic performance in their schools and decide where to focus their scarce time and resources. But NAPLAN is only one source of information among many, and there are risks in focusing too strongly on any one indicator.

NAPLAN’s unique value for school leaders is that the data are comparable across year levels and across schools – and that the data about other schools is available.³² While teacher-generated assessment data are more *relevant* to day-to-day teaching and learning, NAPLAN data are more *rigorous* – at least when the sample size is large enough.

This rigor brings real value. Comparing average NAPLAN achievement to similar schools gives an indication of where students are performing above expectations and where they might be expected to do better. Comparing progress against similar schools (or similar students) is a more direct way of identifying where the school is adding the most value, and where it might lift its game. Identifying trends over time shows where improvement efforts are working, or where they are not.

This comparability can come with a cost. If schools focus on improving NAPLAN scores as an end in themselves, they may

³¹ The unadjusted results should continue to be published alongside contextualised results, because absolute levels of literacy and numeracy matter as well as the ‘value-add’ results.

³² Other standardised tests (e.g., the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) offered by the Australian Council of Educational Research) generate comparable data, but data about other schools’ performance is generally not available.

focus less on other elements of schooling that are equally important but less visibly measured.

Viewing NAPLAN as a 'high stakes' test may cause unnecessary stress for teachers and students. A different way to use NAPLAN that should cause less stress is as one element of an ongoing discussion about achievement and progress levels within the school.

For example, a secondary school might analyse its data to identify that a substantial minority of its Year 7 students routinely score at NAPLAN band 4 in reading – the average performance of a Year 3 student. NAPLAN is not an accurate diagnostic test for each student. But the leaders of this hypothetical school should take the overall pattern of the data very seriously. First, they should introduce mechanisms to quickly diagnose the reading abilities of all incoming students. Second, they should think about how the timetable needs to be arranged to accommodate so many students who are still learning to read, at the same time as providing adequate challenges for those students whose reading is at or above level.³³

NAPLAN reporting should make it as easy as possible for school leaders to see trends over time, both in their school and others;³⁴ and to make it easier for them to identify patterns within the data.

³³ Thanks to Ingrid Sealey, previously of Fogarty EDvance, for suggesting this way of thinking about the use of NAPLAN data by a school.

³⁴ Trends over time are more reliable than data from a single year. This is particularly true for data about growth, which fluctuate greatly from year to year.

4. How better access to NAPLAN data would improve evaluation

Better evidence about what has (and hasn't) worked in the past will enable better decisions about what to do in the future. The key question is, "what do the data imply about the effectiveness of schools (or systems, educational interventions, etc)?"

NAPLAN is an important data source, but My School and the NAPLAN Annual report provide only a glimpse of the richness of the NAPLAN data sets. More detailed evaluation needs access to unit-record data (as we used in our 2016 report *Widening Gaps*) or the longitudinal school-level data set that underpins My School (which we used in our 2018 report *Measuring Student Progress*). Others have used similar datasets for their analyses.³⁵ We note three main areas where better access to NAPLAN data would strengthen the evidence base. In turn, this would strengthen third-party reporting about NAPLAN.

Simplify access to unit-record data and school-level data

It is hard to get access to the detailed NAPLAN data. This dramatically limits the ability of third-party researchers to use the potential power of NAPLAN data.³⁶ Access to unit-record data is particularly important for researchers such as Grattan Institute who wish to transform the data before analysis.³⁷

³⁵ See, for example, Bonnor and Shepherd (2016); and Joseph (2019).

³⁶ For example, is variation higher within or among schools? PISA data suggests that variation in student achievement is higher within schools (OECD (2016), p. 226). But what about variation in student progress?

³⁷ For example, calculating the Equivalent Year Level of a state's average NAPLAN score gives a different answer than reversing the order and averaging the Equivalent Year Level data of every student in the state.

Privacy considerations mean that detailed NAPLAN data must be managed carefully. But this challenge has been solved for other sensitive government data, whether through anonymised sample data³⁸ or 'locked rooms' where analysis uses a comprehensive data set but only aggregated data can be retained.³⁹

Improve linkages to other data

A national student identifier would make it easier to link NAPLAN data to other datasets.⁴⁰ This could help researchers better understand the links between early childhood education and schooling, or between school attendance and student progress.

Expand school-level data to look at educational practices

As Chapter 2 describes, continuous improvement relies on comparing educational outcomes with educational practice. Australia has much more data about the former than the latter. This makes it hard for researchers to identify what practices might actually be causing over- or under-performance among schools, regions or states.

³⁸ For example, the ABS Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) dataset.

³⁹ The ABS DataLab provides a virtual 'locked room', where the analysis is done on ABS computers and an ABS employee approves any output.

⁴⁰ As an example of the power of data linkage, the National Schools Resourcing Board used the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) dataset as part of its review of the SES score methodology.

5. How better reporting would support school choice

Australia's parents expect to have the right to choose the best school for their child. Various structures – notably the My School website – are designed to help parents make these choices.

But while school choice can benefit individual students, it can also reduce equity and school quality. The 'non-choosers' often end up in schools with higher concentrations of student disadvantage and lower levels of student achievement. The OECD advises that school choice should be carefully managed to avoid some of the detrimental impacts on equity.⁴¹

School choice can also have unintended impacts on school quality. If parents choose schools using a very narrow set of indicators, it can push the system toward 'lowest-common-denominator' approaches, such as teaching to the NAPLAN test and narrowing the curriculum to focus more on the areas within NAPLAN.

Parents need better information on school performance

The My School website should be improved in three key ways to provide parents with better information when choosing schools.

First, it should provide broader information on the quality of teaching at the school, rather than focusing narrowly on outcomes data, i.e. NAPLAN test results. Effective teaching is a key

influence on student learning, yet little data is collected on it in Australia. By contrast, the UK system provides parents with public quality assured judgments on teaching quality, and school leadership, as well as student results.⁴²

Second, My School should give parents better information on school performance in developing students 'general capabilities', such as resilience, collaboration, communication skills and so on. This would need to be a long-term goal, because we don't yet know enough about how to measure or even teach these capabilities.

Third, the presentation of NAPLAN results on My School should be improved. For example, the student gain results should be easier to find and interpret.⁴³ And it should be easier for parents to observe school trends over 3-to-5 years, rather than just a given year, because NAPLAN results can fluctuate a lot from year to year.

⁴¹ OECD (2012).

⁴² The UK body responsible for inspecting schools, Ofsted, provides expert judgments to parents on a broader range of school effectiveness metrics. See Roberts et al. (2019).

⁴³ In particular, student gain relative to students with the same starting scores should be better highlighted to parents.

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NAPLAN REPORTING REVIEW

SUBMISSION

This submission addresses term of reference 3 which reads:

Perceptions of NAPLAN and My School data and the extent to which they meet public accountability and transparency expectations, including considering any misinterpretation and misuse of information and subsequent consequences.

The submission refers in particular to one subset of principle 7 in the following issue identified in the Issues Paper p.3

Issue

Perceptions of NAPLAN reporting and My School data.

Subset

The My School website currently provides a range of school-level analysis of achievement. These include

Similar schools: average scores for each assessment domain and each calendar year in schools with a similar Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value to the selected school.

The inclusion of the ICSEA index in My School data for purposes of statistical similarity of schools is noted.

Submission

This submission considers the ICSEA index as a means for parents to understand the student population of their school from the perspective of looking at socio-economic advantage in relation to academic achievement.

While comparison between similar schools is important for both schools and parents, the ICSEA also serves another interpretive service. It is not a fixed measure. It can and does change over time. This change can occur with the index itself and with the school distribution of students, which is represented in four quartiles, bottom quarter, middle quarter (x2) and top quarter.

Thus, for example, school A shows the following information about the socio-economic status of the students between 2014 and 2017.

	ICSEA	Bottom quarter	Middle quarter		Top quarter
2014	1151	1%	6%	26%	67%
2017	1115	2%	11%	35%	52%

This information is significant. The school in question is an independent K-12 girls' secondary school where parents choose to send their daughters. It competes for students against two other K-12 independent girls' schools, school B and school C, in the same geographic location. What this information enables parents to do is compare the changing makeup of the student population. By way of example, if we take the figures for 2014 and 2017 in tabular form for all three schools the following information emerges.

	ICSEA	Year	Bottom quarter	Middle quarter		Top quarter
School A	1151	2014	1%	6%	26%	67%
	1115	2017	2%	11%	35%	52%
School B	1201	2014	1%	3%	12%	84%
	1172	2017	1%	6%	20%	73%
School C	1173	2014	2%	8%	18%	74%
	1158	2017	2%	8%	23%	67%

For all three schools the socio-economic educational advantage index has dropped between 2014 and 2017.

And for all three schools the percentage of students in the top quartile has dropped.

How do parents use this data from the NAPLAN data reported on the MY School website?

Many factors affect choice in the independent sector. One obvious factor is that parents looking for good academic achievement and good university entry scores enrol their daughters in schools which have demonstrably achieved these goals.

The interesting point about this selection of data presented above is that school A which had the biggest fall of 15 per cent in the top quarter of students between 2014 and 2017 also dropped well down the league ladder in the university entry scores during the same period whereas the other two schools retained their positions.

So this information for parents who choose to examine the NAPLAN website and check the changing composition of the student populations may well help to influence their choice of preferred school for their daughter.

This situation it can be said helps with ensuring that high fee schools such as schools A, B and C are being held accountable and transparent to both the subsidising government and the fee paying parents.

The link suggested here between student socio-economic distribution and academic results is based on one school only so the sample is not sufficient to warrant further conclusion.

But the ICSEA index data can be used by parents for school information apart from its prescribed purpose of determining statistical similarity of schools.

My strong recommendation is for this level of reporting to continue on the My School website.

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9 March, 2019 Tel: 08 9384 0982



A response from the Independent Education Union of
Australia to the Education Council of the Council of
Australian Governments:

***National Assessment Program – Literacy and
Numeracy (NAPLAN) Reporting Review
2019***

Thursday 14 March 2019

INTRODUCTION

1. The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU) is the federally registered union that represents teachers and support staff in non-government education institutions including early childhood centres, schools and post secondary training institutions, across all the states and territories of Australia. The union currently has a membership of over 75,000.
2. The IEU has always taken an active role in the various debates and government funded projects and forums concerned with issues of assessment and reporting, in particular development of mechanisms to support improved teaching and learning strategies for school classrooms based on sound student assessment measures.
3. The Independent Education Union of Australia believes that assessment and reporting policies and practices must be developed by education authorities in collaboration with the teaching profession to ensure that such practices are valid, reliable, fair, equitable, and motivate students to further develop their learning.
4. The current environment in which national assessment and reporting changes are occurring is characterised by a number of major aspects that require acknowledgement, dialogue and improvement.
5. Through its State Branches, the Union has been actively involved in the professional dialogue and development of curriculum assessment and reporting provisions in the respective jurisdictions, including participation on jurisdictional 'curriculum and assessment authorities' and member engagement on curriculum committees.
6. The Union notes a history of reviews and inquiries conducted into the conduct of the National Assessment Program (NAP) since its inception and would refer the current inquiry to the commentary and recommendations made by the Union in each of those previous reviews and inquiries.

NAPLAN

7. The IEU notes that the ACARA NAPLAN website (<http://www.naplan.edu.au/faqs/faq.html>) states that the purposes ('uses') of the tests are:
 - Students and parents may use individual results to discuss achievements and progress with teachers.
 - Teachers use results to help them better identify students who require greater challenges or additional support.
 - Schools use results to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching programs and to set goals in literacy and numeracy.
 - School systems use results to review programs and support offered to schools.
8. The IEU supports the principle that parents should have access to timely, meaningful information about their children's progress and are entitled to comprehensive and accessible reports.
9. The IEU believes that the primary purpose of assessment and reporting is to provide meaningful information so as to improve student learning. The reporting process must be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The reporting process should enhance students' own capacities to reflect on their learning, their successes and areas for further learning.
10. Consequently, schools and systems (including governments) must allocate sufficient resources for professional development to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge as part of the review of student results.
11. The IEU therefore supports 'in principle' the stated purposes for the NAPLAN testing regime as outlined in point 6 of this submission, and the Union's response to the Inquiry reflects its desire to see these purposes appropriately fulfilled. The Union's responses raises and seeks to have mitigated or removed, the unintended

negative impacts on curriculum, pedagogy, learning, student well-being and school enrolment behaviours.

12. The IEU believes that the NAP is not 'fit for purpose' and that there has been an increasing detachment not only from the stated objectives of the program, but departure from the role of the assessments and the reporting on the MySchool website and from the nature of the assessments and the utility for classroom teachers.
13. To the extent that there was utility and value in the current NAP arrangements, the IEU believes that the current arrangements have outlived their usefulness and that there is a clear call from classroom practitioners and principals for an assessment program that is more closely linked to what teachers do in their classrooms and what would assist in diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses.
14. The IEU notes that there is a continuing movement internationally away from mass standardised testing in schools and where mass testing continues it is significantly differentiated from the Australian experience by features such as: firewalls between testing of how the system is going and diagnostic/formative consequences; significant reductions in content; absence of testing until students reach 'high school' ages; used to inform teacher judgement; has no publication that allows for comparing/contrasting/ranking; used only at end points eg matriculation.
15. Valuable NAP data should inform daily classroom practice and assist teachers in making professional judgements.
16. The IEU has repeatedly asserted that the purposes espoused for NAPLAN have become confused and arguably counter to each other.
17. The IEU believes that any consideration of the 'Reporting of NAPLAN' can only be meaningful if there is a fundamental review of the **purpose** of NAPLAN and a consequent re-design of NAP to meet the purpose.
18. For instance, if the program is intended to be diagnostic there has been an ongoing and systemic failure of the program to deliver data to teachers in any useful

timeframe for the teacher to be able to utilize the data in the classroom. The delay between the undertaking of the assessment, the completion of the marking of the assessment and the final delivery of results is unconscionable.

19. If the program is intended to provide an accountability/responsibility measure, the IEU would again argue, as it has in previous reviews, that there is an unreconcilable tension between such a purpose and data that is of use to the classroom teacher.
20. The IEU believes that the reporting of the accountability/responsibility data on MySchool continues to be damaging and later in this submission the seminal study undertake on the implications of the NAPLAN regimen on schools undertaken twice by the IEU, highlights some of those damaging outcomes.
21. Accordingly, the IEU believes that individual school results should no longer be reported on the MySchool website.
22. Additionally there is evidence of ongoing issues around student anxiety in both the lead up to the assessment dates and during the delivery of the assessments; including extraordinarily detailed and overwhelming exam 'instructions' of at least 5 minutes to young children prior to exam commencement.
23. Internationally, there are increasing determinations to remove standardized testing regimens from the early years of schooling and primary schooling. It is clear that there is already a staggering volume of data being collected on these students in classrooms without the intrusion and anxiety of the national assessment arrangements, as this submission will further outline.
24. Further, there is concern that by Year 9 students have become quite disengaged from the testing arrangements, only highlighted by a significant increase in the results in one jurisdiction where the Year 9 testing was then suddenly required as part of the Year 10 matriculation process and the 'heightened' stakes saw an uptick in those students' results.

25. The IEU believes that the re-evaluation of the purpose is critical given the issues raised above and also because of the significant cost of implementing the current assessment and reporting arrangements.
26. The IEU believes that schools, students and classroom teachers will be much better served by an assessment arrangement that allows for continual assessment with tools provided that will support teacher professional judgement and allow for teachers to reflect and check their own judgements.
27. Unfortunately, the current arrangements are seen by many teachers as an external check on their professional capacity because of an erosion of trust, invariably inflamed by ideological positions adopted by some education ‘commentators’.
28. Increasingly, education researchers and commentators are reflecting on the value and desire to re-design student assessments that are authentic and of value and utility to the student, the parents (carers) and the classroom teacher, by integrating the continual assessment in the classroom with a ‘student voice’. This approach, requiring time for the teacher to sit with the student and discuss what has been learned, and what they perceive and recognize as needs, provides significantly greater value in the data that is available for reporting.
29. There is already a significant amount of data being collected on students. Teachers are currently overwhelmed by the data collection required of them and if the assessment program is not meaningful and valuable it is just a further impost that potentially interferes with the teaching-learning opportunities in the classroom.
30. The following represents a snapshot of Standardised In –School Testing/ Assessment Processes in Primary Schools. It is worth noting that none of the tests/assessments below are generated by teachers within the school. They are either endorsed by the system of schools, or selected by the school following professional development or direction from Leaders of Learning. There are also, of course, teacher-generated tests such as end-of-unit assessments or weekly spelling tests in addition to these.

Type of Assessment	Administered	Administered	Frequency	Feedback to teach
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	by...	to...		
Best Start Kindergarten Assessment	Class teacher	Kindergarten students	Usually at the beginning of the year.	Immediate
Reading/ Comprehension - Running Records	Broadly to years K-2 by Class teacher/Reading Recovery teacher	All students, individually	Many schools require reading levels verified by the running record at least once per term	Immediate
Literacy - Observational survey	Class teacher	Varies – either whole cohort (usually K - 1) or at risk students	Usually at the beginning of the year.	Immediate
Sight Word Recognition - Oxford Word List	Class teacher/LSO	All students individually K-2 initially	Ongoing	Immediate
Reading/ Comprehension - Fountas and Pinnell	Broadly to years 3 -6 by Class teacher	All students, individually	Many schools require reading levels verified by the running record at least once per term	Immediate
Mathematics - Clinical Interviews	Class teacher	Varies – either whole cohort (usually K - 1) or at risk students	Usually at the beginning of the year.	Immediate
Vocabulary/Reading The BURT Word test	Class teacher/LSO	At risk students	Once per year	Immediate
Spelling - The South Australian Spelling Test	Class teacher	All students K-2	Once per year	Immediate
Literacy – PAT Comprehension/ Reading Tests	Class teacher - online	1-6	Usually once per year. Students scoring above or below target stanines are re-tested at level/s above or below	Immediate – generated by online program
Literacy – PAT Mathematics Tests	Class teacher - online	1-6	Usually once per year. Students scoring above or below target stanines are re-tested at level/s above or below	Immediate – generated by online program

31. In addition, the following tests/assessments are part of teaching or remedial programs i.e the assessment is carried out to establish a level where students begin to work in individualised programs. As with the stand-alone tests,

results from the assessment within these programs can be used to inform parents of their child's abilities, strengths and areas for development. The results can also be used to track student improvement and growth.

32. Examples of these assessments 'within programs':

Type of Assessment	Administered by...	Administered to...	Frequency	Feedback to teacher
Literacy - MultiLit – assessment /remedial program	Class teacher/LSO	At risk students individually, usually K-2	As required	Ongoing, as program progresses
Mathematics - Quick Smart Program	Class teacher/LSO	At risk students usually 3-6	As required, usually weekly	Ongoing, as program progresses
Literacy (Spelling/Phonics) SoundWaves or Ants In The Apple	Class Teacher	Whole class K-6	Regular weekly exercises	Ongoing, as program progresses
CARS and STARS (Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies / Strategies To Achieve Reading Success)	Class Teacher	Whole class K-6	Regular weekly exercises	Ongoing, as program progresses
Reading Boxes (include initial placement tests that assign levels to students)	Class Teacher	Whole class K-6	Regular weekly exercises	Ongoing, as program progresses

33. Examples of these assessments undertaken as 'external assessments':

Type of Assessment	Administered by...	Administered to...	Frequency	Feedback to teacher
ICAS (formerly the University of New South Wales Competitions	Class teacher	Usually students working above their stage, Students identified as gifted or nominated by their parents to participate	Once per year	Usually 3 -4 months after the test takes place.

34. Another IEU member reflected on the assessment program in their primary school and listed the types of activities across the different year cohorts as follows:

KINDER:

- Best Start
- Observation Surveys (reading)
- running records
- high frequency word checks
- progressive implementation of national phonics testing regimen

YEAR 1/2

- ACER PAT-R reading comprehension tests (online)
- ACER Maths tests (online)
- running records
- MAI testing - 30-40 min one-to-one interview for each student to test on Mathematics (conducted twice a year)
- teachers are also encouraged to give NAPLAN-style practice questions and activities in the second semester of Year 2
- Oxford Spelling Lists
- Running Records (reading)
- Soundwaves (spelling program)

YEAR 3/4

- ACER PAT-R test (comprehension)
- ACER Maths test (online)
- Oxford Spelling Lists
- Soundwaves (spelling program)
- MAI testing - 30-40 min one-to-one interview for each student to test on Mathematics (conducted twice a year)

YEAR 5/6

- MAI testing - 30-40 min one-to-one interview for each student to test on Mathematics (conducted twice a year)
- ACER PAT-R comprehension test (online)
- ACER Maths test (online)
- Year 6 Sydney Religious Education Standardised Test

In addition, for all KLA's, every Year level also has a CAT to go with it, and there are four major assessment tasks for each KLA each year. All of the tests take hours to assess and analyse, and there is a growing trend to input all this into spreadsheets.

IEU Surveys of Teachers and Principals

35. The IEU conducted surveys of teachers and principals on NAPLAN in 2010, 2013 and 2019.

2019 IEU Member Survey

36. In 2019 the IEU conducted a survey of members in the context of the current Reporting Review. A copy of the questions is attached.
37. The 2019 survey was completed by over 2800 members between March 1 and March 13, 2019.
38. Whilst a number of IEU members completing the survey see value and utility in the current NAP arrangements, it is evident that an overwhelming number have major concerns about the value and accuracy (in describing their individual students' abilities) of the tests and have little support for the utility in presentation on the MySchool website.
39. Overwhelming IEU members support a formative assessment program that is created by and for teachers, that could be utilized when and where needed (as determined by the classroom teacher)
40. The IEU survey utilized a sliding scale ranking system for most of the questions. The scale used 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' as the end point parameters. The results were scored and then averaged. A score close to zero would indicate almost all responses were 'strongly disagree' while a score close to 100 would indicate overwhelmingly 'strongly agree'.
41. On the question of: "do you believe the results of NAPLAN tests provide an accurate evaluation of your individual students' abilities in numeracy and literacy" an average rank of 35 was scored, meaning that IEU members generally disagreed with the statement.
42. When asked "are the NAPLAN results useful for your planning for student learning" members indicated that overall they disagreed.
43. IEU members believe strongly that the NAPLAN data and results currently arrive too late in the year to be of high value.
44. IEU members supported with roughly the same strength of opinion that "a national assessment tool, either in its current form or continuously available,

should be available from early in the year for teachers to use according to their professional judgement”.

45. Similarly, IEU members supported the notion that the “timeliness of the assessment and data should be determined by the classroom teacher”.
46. Over 70% of respondents indicated that their school spent time in the classroom ‘preparing’ for NAPLAN, with members indicating that this preparation somewhat impacted negatively on time available for teaching the curriculum (range: not much – significantly)
47. Less than 30% of respondents indicated that their school had collaborated with other schools in the last 2-3 years on how to improve literacy and/or numeracy as a consequence of the NAPLAN results/data.
48. Two thirds of respondents agreed with the statement that they would “support the notion of a sampling process(in lieu of mass standardized testing in 3,5,7 and 9 annually) to provide ongoing confidence in a needs-based funding model (ie accountability) and to confirm benchmarks for the use by classroom teachers” .
49. Overwhelmingly, 88% of respondents, supported the proposition that “the development of formative assessment tasks, created by and for teachers, that would be available online for use in classrooms when and where needed (as determined by the classroom teacher) would enable valid teacher’s assessment of student outcomes against national benchmarks”.
50. Finally, respondents were asked to rank the utility (from not at all useful to very useful) of the presentation of NAPLAN results on the MySchool website in terms of influencing teaching and learning.
51. Overall, IEU member respondents found limited use in for the data in each of the five presentation types (average achievement in numbers; displayed in bands; displayed in graph form; change in results over consecutive tests; compared to other statistically similar backgrounds)

2010 IEU study on NAPLAN

52. In 2010 the IEU commissioned research conducted by the University of Technology Sydney, conducted by adjunct Professor James A Athanasou & Associate Professor of Education Geoffrey Riordan in relation to the NAPLAN testing in 2010 and the MySchool website.
53. The project involved a survey of the opinions of a number of respondents of independent (that is, non-government) school principals and teachers on the NAPLAN and the use of the data from that assessment in the Federal Government's MySchool website. The survey was conducted across all non-government schools in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria.
54. In the on-line survey IEU member school principals and teachers provided input on:
- the amount of ordinary class time that was used in preparation for the NAPLAN;
 - the extent to which the work completed (syllabus or teaching program) in classes is close to what teachers would have expected to complete or whether it has been affected by NAPLAN;
 - whether NAPLAN test results have been a useful diagnostic tool for teachers;
 - the nature of the improvement that should be made to NAPLAN;
 - whether the publication of NAPLAN data on the website placed additional pressure on teachers, the students and the school;
 - whether the current use of NAPLAN data is misleading as a school result representation for their school;
 - whether there other factors or measurements that should be added to improve the usefulness, value or validity of the MySchool site; and
 - a description of the impact (positive and negative) of MySchool on (a) the school and (b) parents at the school.

55. Given the terms of reference of this Inquiry commentary on the results will be confined to questions that specifically related to the NAPLAN testing rather than the reporting on the MySchool website.

2010 SURVEY RESULTS

Ordinary class time used in preparation for NAPLAN

56. There was considerable variation across schools in the time allocated in preparation for the national testing. The equivalent of 2-3 days were allocated in primary school with up to 1 day in high school.

Mean hours of ordinary class time used in preparation for NAPLAN tests

	Principals	Teachers
Year 3	10	15
Year 5	10	15
Year 7	3	5.5
Year 9	2	6

57. The range of hours of class time according to principals (by and large less than the hours reported by teachers) varied from 1 up to 100 hours in primary schools and in high schools from as little as 0.1 hours but up to as much as 75 hours. These substantial variations require further investigation and consideration.

The extent to which the work completed (syllabus or teaching program) is in line with expectations

58. Respondents were asked to reflect on the amount of ‘programmed’ work that had be completed by the date of the NAPLAN tests to assess the degree to which ‘preparation’ for the tests had interrupted classwork.
59. Around half of all principals considered that the extent to which the syllabus or teaching program had been completed at this stage of the school year was in line with expectations in primary school and this is more than the proportion of teachers.
60. For high schools some two-thirds to three-quarters of all principals said that the work completed was in line with expectations but teachers reported substantially lower proportions.

The work completed is in line with expectations

Class	Principals	Teachers
Year 3	50%	31%
Year 5	52%	26%
Year 7	64%	33%
Year 9	76%	40%

Note: Percentages rounded

Whether NAPLAN test results have been a useful diagnostic tool for teachers

61. The responses of teachers showed that they did not yet consider the NAPLAN test results to be a useful diagnostic tool. Only around half of all teachers said that the test results had been useful.

NAPLAN test results as a useful diagnostic tool for teachers

Class	Teachers
Year 3	47%
Year 5	49%
Year 7	55%
Year 9	58%

Improvements to NAPLAN

62. Both principals and teachers provided a wide range of reactions to the NAPLAN program. For instance there were concerns about the reading standard required for the numeracy tests. The comments also encompassed the timing of the NAPLAN assessment program in the school year and the delay in feedback. Both teachers and principals referred to issues of administration and security.

The impact of the publication of NAPLAN data on the website

63. The overwhelming conclusion was that every aspect of teaching and learning had felt the negative impact of the publication of the NAPLAN data

Agreement that there has been additional pressure from the publication of
NAPLAN data

Impact	Principals	Teachers
Pressure on teachers	87%	89%
Pressure on students	66%	74%

Pressure on the school	86%	91%
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Note: Percentages rounded

64. Both principals (86%) and teachers (90%) agreed that use of NAPLAN data is misleading as a 'school result representation' for this school. The extent to which this is a valid interpretation is not at issue. The fact is that most of the professional staff in schools had a perception that the NAPLAN results are not representative.

The current use of NAPLAN data as a representation of the school

65. Respondents raised the issue that the overemphasis placed on the NAPLAN data does not describe accurately all that is done within a school curriculum and program. The results also simply reflect the nature of the cohort which can vary in ability from year to year. There was some indication that the results were an accurate indicator of the students' literacy and numeracy achievement but this appeared to relate mainly to schools with high NAPLAN scores.

2013 IEU SURVEY on NAPLAN

66. In light of the terms of reference of the 2013 Inquiry the IEU determined to repeat the survey using identical questions and format but omitting the questions relating to the MySchool website and reporting matters.
67. The repeated survey was conducted between 20 May 2013 and 6 June 2013 and was completed by 2,545 IEU members from all States and Territories. Respondents included both Catholic systemic school teachers and Independent school teachers and covered primary, secondary and K-12 (P-12) schools across Australia. A breakdown of school sector and school type can be seen at Appendix A.
68. The survey results revealed a number of key observations including an increase in time used for test preparation, presumably at the expense of other classroom activity and very high levels of concern remaining evident about the pressure of

the testing regime on the school community despite the Program being ‘well bedded’ into the Australian school system and calendar.

Ordinary class time used in preparation for NAPLAN

69. There remains considerable variation across schools in the time allocated in preparation for the national testing. However, there has been a significant increase in time provided for preparation in both primary and secondary schools since the first study in 2010.

70. The 2013 survey found that time spent in preparation had more than doubled to around 5-6 days (equivalent) allocated in primary school with over 3 days in high school

Mean hours of ordinary class time used in preparation for NAPLAN tests

	2010 Hours	2013 Hours
Year 3	15	31
Year 5	15	26
Year 7	5.5	17
Year 9	6	15

The extent to which the work completed (syllabus or teaching program) is in line with expectations

71. The 2013 survey reveals that fewer respondents believe that the amount of ‘programmed’ work that had been completed by the time of the NAPLAN tests was close to what was expected by that time of the year.

72. In other words there appears to be an increasing incursion into programmed work consistent with the increase in preparation time reported in the earlier question.

73. Only 20% of respondents in relation to primary school class work and less than 30% of secondary respondents believed that programmed work was ‘on track’.

The work completed is in line with expectations

Class	Teachers	2013 Respondents
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Year 3	31%	19%
Year 5	26%	20%
Year 7	33%	27%
Year 9	40%	29%

Note: Percentages rounded

Whether NAPLAN test results have been a useful diagnostic tool for teachers

74. Of considerable concern, IEU member responses in 2013 showed that fewer believe that the NAPLAN test results are a useful diagnostic tool compared to 2010. Only around one third of all said that the test results had been useful compared to almost one half three years earlier.

NAPLAN test results as a useful diagnostic tool for teachers

Class	2010	2013
Year 3	47%	30%
Year 5	49%	29%
Year 7	55%	31%
Year 9	58%	29%

Improvements to NAPLAN

75. Respondents provided a wide range of reactions to the NAPLAN program. A selection of representative comments is provided in Appendix B. A number of common themes can be found among the respondents' comments.

76. There remains a large number teachers who believe that the NAPLAN regime should simply be abolished as, in their view, it serves no educational purpose and worse causes difficulties for learners and/or the classroom.

77. A large number of respondents commented on the delay between the taking of the test (in May) and the delivery of student results much later in the year, providing very little time or capacity for that classroom teacher to work on areas of learning requiring attention. Respondents requested that the tests, if they are diagnostic, be taken earlier and the results returned much more efficiently.

78. Respondents also reflected, in significant numbers, on the lack of linkage often between the tests and what is happening in the classroom; that the tests were inappropriate for Year 3 students given their level of maturation; insufficient time allocation in some tests/test items for students to be able to adequately respond; and ongoing concerns about publication of the results on MySchool and the media's preparation of 'league tables'.

79. Respondents also reflected that there are concerns that the tests do not validly measure the intended benchmarks and that other classroom assessments provide a different and more accurate measure the student's actual literacy and numeracy level.

The impact of the publication of NAPLAN data on the website

80. The overwhelming conclusion remains that every aspect of teaching and learning has felt the impact of the publication of the NAPLAN data

Agreement that there has been additional pressure from the publication of
NAPLAN data

Impact	2013
Pressure on teachers	89%
Pressure on students	75%
Pressure on the school	92%

Note: Percentages rounded

81. A selection of representative comments is provided in Appendix C. Respondents commented on both what they saw as elements causing the pressure felt in schools as well as commenting on the consequences of that pressure.

82. One of the predominant themes expressed by respondents about a source of unnecessary pressure was the lack of community understanding about the purpose (and limitations) of the NAPLAN data. This included unrealistic expectations from parents about the purpose and their own expectations for their child's performance.

83. Teachers also highlighted the ‘administrative nightmare’ that accompanies the preparation for the taking of the tests in the school setting as adding significantly to the pressure.
84. Teachers also believed that the publication of the school results on the MySchool website added pressure which is unnecessary if the results are predominantly meant to assist with diagnosis and classroom remediation.
85. Among the consequential pressures arising from the NAPLAN regime teachers commented on matters such as the ‘need’, often imposed by school administrations, to teach-to-the-test; parents choosing schools based on published NAPLAN results; disadvantaged areas being put under inappropriate pressure; any benefit of the program being overshadowed by the pressure and often manifest in interfering in quality teaching and learning; and the development of a competitive environment in and between schools rather than engendering a learning community.

The current use of NAPLAN data as a representation of the school

86. An extraordinarily high number of respondents (88%) still agree that use of NAPLAN data is misleading as a 'school result representation' for this school. As with the 2010 survey, the extent to which this is a valid interpretation is not at issue. The fact is that most of the professional staff in schools have a perception that results are not representative.

The impact (positive or negative) of NAPLAN on (a) the school and (b) parents at the school

87. A selection of representative comments is provided in Appendix D. It is clear from the comments that many respondents made considerable effort to provide professional responses in looking at both the positive and negative aspects of the program.
88. Many of the negative comments have been canvassed in earlier sections of this submission and it is worth noting that the overall feeling of respondents is that the impact on the school community is perceived as negative by teachers.

89. However, a number of respondents note that the program in conjunction with initiatives such as the National Partnership arrangements and other programs provided at a system or school level have provided additional resources and capacity to meet the learning needs identified in the tests.
90. Some respondents note that where their school has been ‘successful’ in NAPLAN and the consequent reporting on the MySchool website, schools have benefited from the good publicity that they have generated or has been generated for them.

COMPARISON OF 2010 & 2013 SURVEYS

91. Comparison of the data between the two surveys reveals that there is an increasing amount of time being spent in preparation and correspondingly a decrease in the completion of ‘programmed’ work by the time of testing.
92. Pressure on schools, teachers and students remains at high levels despite 5 years of testing experience and an increasing number of teachers finding that the tests are providing less diagnostic capacity than three years ago!

RECOMMENDATIONS

Clarification of purpose

93. The NAPLAN tests were originally promulgated as ‘diagnostic tools’ (see ACARA FAQ ‘purposes’) however commentary by ACARA senior personnel, including statements before a Senate inquiry, suggest that the tests are a summative assessment of the learning for the year level cohort.
94. Further, it is proposed that the tests will, at some point, line up with the Australian Curriculum. Given the gestation of this curriculum and emerging considerable timeframe for implementation, it is unclear what the underpinning basis of the NAPLAN testing regime currently is or is intended to be. This has implications

for the ‘timing’ of the exams in respect of the learning time that the particular cohort has had with respect to the level.

95. After consultation with the education community in relation to needs with respect to the tests, the explicit purpose of the tests must be made clear and the tests constructed accordingly.

Timing

96. If the NAPLAN tests are intended to be used by teacher to “help them better identify students who require greater challenges or additional support” it is clear that the current timing of both ‘taking’ the tests in May of the school year and then receipt of results quite late in the school year means that too little time is available for that classroom teacher to respond to the diagnostic results.
97. Consequently it would seem sensible to conduct a ‘diagnostic test’ as early as possible in the school year and improve the turn-around of results so that more time is available to respond in the classroom.
98. If it is acknowledged or determined that the tests are diagnostic tools these tools should be available for teachers to utilise at the appropriate time to suit the needs of their students as determined by the teacher’s professional judgement.
99. If on the other hand the tests are intended to be a summative assessment of the literacy and numeracy levels against a benchmark it makes little sense to assess students in May of the school on the basis of intended capacity for that year’s benchmark expectations. Such a test would be better administered at the end of the school year. However, it is the view of the IEU that such benchmarking for the purpose of accountability/responsibility can and should be conducted on a sample basis not a census basis.

Appropriate representation of data on MySchool

100. Principals and teachers were concerned about the representation of ‘school results’ by a single ‘mean’ score for each NAPLAN test. The mean hides as much detail as it discloses. Further, a number of respondents reflected that the ‘breadth’ of outcomes of the school would provide a better representation of school achievement.
101. Too much emphasis is placed on the results of this one-off test as the predominant and supposedly infallibly accurate assessment of student literacy and numeracy levels of attainment, and by extension, students’ general educational achievement. This is continuing to provide a distorted and inaccurate picture and must be addressed.
102. It is necessary that the development of alternative models for the representation of NAPLAN data on the MySchool be undertaken by ACARA including graphical representation of the range of the individual school’s scores for each NAPLAN tests, overlaid with data in relation to other schools.

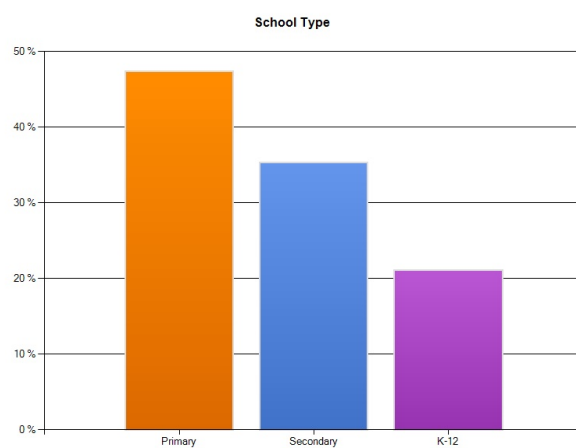
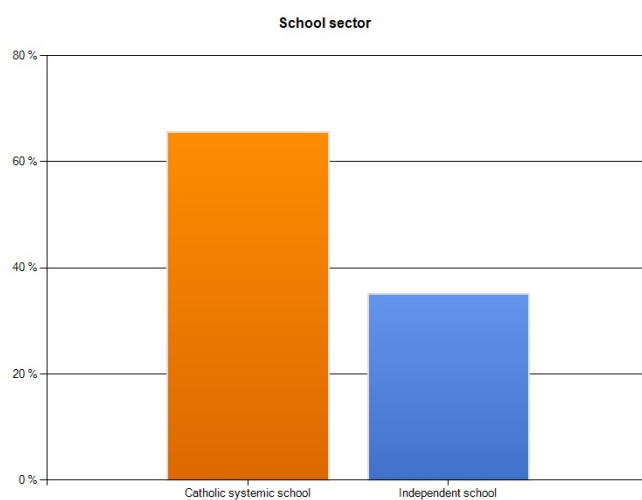
Provision for special needs students

103. Principals and teachers generally agreed that the current tests do not provide for students with special needs and the ad hoc approach in some schools to encourage some students to ‘not attend’ on the test days is not an appropriate response.
104. The establishment of a working party with classroom teacher, with expertise in supporting students with special needs, be established to provide advice in relation to the current and future NAPLAN test items.
105. In particular, the expertise of classroom teachers needs to be accessed to establish the evidence and benchmarks for measures of ‘one year’s growth, for one year’s schooling’ for students across the entire cohort.

APPENDIX A

2019 survey questions

APPENDIX B



APPENDIX B

What if anything should be improved with NAPLAN?

1. Not a 'one-day' assessment to lower the substantial measurement error, and make it a more useful tool for schools and teachers.
2. The concepts that are given that ARE NOT in line with the children's learning mean that they are a stand alone test that have no usefulness educationally and they do not in anyway support the concepts of an 'individualised' learner.
3. Teachers to receive the results back earlier so they can be used in a diagnostic manner; have more relaxed testing conditions, as our teaching philosophy at the school is Personalised learning and silent, individual testing goes against this philosophy.
4. The time of year that the tests are held would be better in Term 3. This is especially the case with year 3 students who do require a lot of preparation time in terms of test conditions and their own confidence in handling examination . Many of the children in year three were more focused on trying to finish the test first instead of reading the questions and answering them properly. I believe this is due to the maturing levels of many of the students in year 3. I also believe that a test later in the year would lessen the effect of this lack of maturity. It would show accurate results of the students learning. I have found that when students commence term 3 in their schooling year, they have grown in maturity and more settled into their year level.
5. Make it closer to what the children are actually covering in the school, so that teachers aren't having to devote precious school and homework time to practising something completely different to what the students are used to.
6. results out earlier so that we can use them results only for school use, not on MySchool website
7. Quicker Provision of results to schools and parents would help + some further more "fine grained" assessment for students who perform poorly to confirm their deficits and assess where remediation is needed
8. Year 3 is too young. The maths test doesn't allow children to show thinking and doesn't reflect trends in maths.
9. The way the government uses the Naplan data and the gap between when the children do the test to when the results are available.
10. Results should be by return, not six months later, this is useless.
11. We shouldn't even have it. We are never going to be on par with NSW as they begin school a year older when the children are ready to learn!
12. No school results, give parents/students their results only, and maybe the State/areas results but move away from comparing schools. NAPLAN results shouldn't be the indicator of a good school.
13. At the school where I work Naplan results are not available to the ordinary classroom teacher, so have no value for the teacher
14. A lot of the content included in the tests, especially the 'persuasive' stuff.
15. The time given for the Writing literacy test at year 9 is impossible. The students need at lest 10 more minutes to complete what is being asked of them!
16. Timing is poor since it ran two weeks before Year 9 Semester Examinations placing undue strain on student in the flu season. If Naplan is a diagnostic tool why can it not be implemented in week two of Term 1 in the academic year?
17. Students should not be given marks
18. Not to know the text-type in the written because there has been too much emphasis placed on expository and there will be a generation of students not being able to write in any other text form.
19. The hype around it. Its just a normal test and we shouldn't be really prepping our students for it when they should already know the content knowledge tested
20. The publication of results and comparisons made in the media should not occur
21. It's only one test needs to be emphasised. Too much literacy in the maths test. Marking, why marks an answer wrong jus because it gives units?
22. The writing task genre should not be provided before the task to prevent coaching.
23. Get rid of it for Years 3 and 5

24. Have results back earlier so they can be used as a diagnostic tool with the class you are teaching
25. Designated topics to be tested in May. Often tested of topics not yet covered in curriculum.
26. Not in Year 3, used by schools for upgrading what is taught ,
27. SCRAP THE TEST
28. Results have to come in much earlier. Schools all over the country are keying their responses into spreadsheets so that they can have results immediately to begin to drive their teaching. It is madness to have to wait until the last week of third term for government produced results.
29. timing - not early May huge delay in receiving results
30. Focus on areas missed in Literacy and Mathematics that need covering in Years 3 and 5 only.
31. get rid of it - serves no purpose
32. Use it as one of a range of diagnostic tools, but get rid of the MySchool concept all together, it serves no real purpose.
33. Not use persuasive text as the text form focus.
34. The tests could be completed online so that moderation is completed and banding is completed more efficiently so that teachers may use the data more effectively not five months after the children have sat the tests.
35. The way the questions are written and set out, the test is to see if the students can understand the question not the content that it is suppose to be assessing. When NAPLAN is actually conducted, it is too early in the year to cover everything effectively before hand. If I had a choice I would vote to stop spending money altogether. Instead give the schools that money in teacher aide time - what it must cost just to print the booklets, delivery to every school and then pay someone to collate and mark etc. Imagine how many fewer behaviour problems there would be if class, particularly in the junior school could have an aide for say 2 hours per day. Classes could actually do so much more work and help the students that are struggling catch up. These children are the students that as they get older become behaviour problems in the class, but by then it is too late and the gap has widen even further.
36. Data shouldn't be published as the vast majority of the public have no idea what they are looking at and make incorrect assumptions, both positively and negatively about schools. It has led to the value of a school coming down to the narrow range of items assessed in a couple of standardised tests.
37. Discontinue. It is a waste of time and does not reflect good teaching/assessment practise.
38. abolish them, they are a waste of resource
39. Year 5 earliest if necessary
40. As NAPLAN takes place in May the work included in the tests should be aimed at the level achieved at the end of the previous year rather than what they expected to achieve at the end of the current year.
41. Less focus on the poor performance of teachers/schools that don't perform well. It leads to teacher-bashing every year, with no consideration of the individual students, their demographics and the resources available.
42. Open ended questions Shorter tests - the language conventions test in particular is too long Reading test should not all be multiple choice
43. across Australia it should be based on age and number of years of schooling completed NOT what grade they are in as Queensland children are a year younger and have one year less schooling than those they are compared with in results.
44. Further transparency of what is being tested, and what is not being tested as well as the limitations of the data that is produced. It would be a more useful test if it tested more than just minimum standards because that is how it is already perceived.
45. Do it at the end of year 3 when we have had a chance to teach the curriculum. Otherwise it's a lottery as far as what you chose to teach beforehand in maths
46. The time allocation per test places a lot of pressure on students. Some questions are worded ridiculously. Some students struggle with reading generally so having NAPLAN papers that require lots of reading are unfair and are of no benefit to those children. Teachers waste TOO much time preparing children for NAPLAN due to the pressure from schools and the government.
47. Naplan is not good teaching practise. The children in a class setting are given so much more input to achieve good results that are positive reinforcement for the children. Naplan should be abolished and the money given to support schools and classroom teachers.

48. The test is inappropriate for young children. The results should not be made public and should not reflect upon the school. Funding needs to be given to students who are below minimum standards and/or program's introduced for these students.
49. Pointless exercise. School either devotes large amount of time for preparation, or goes with the results the students get. Seems completely unreliable as a tool for parents.
50. Feedback in the form of individual student report that goes to parents/school detailing strengths and weaknesses.
51. No more persuasive writing. It is too challenging for Year 3.
52. It could be made more challenging for the more capable students. Quite simple compared to tests done in other countries that I have taught in.
53. It is far too dependent upon literacy. Some students become extraordinarily anxious prior to NAPLAN, so much so that they are uncomfortable even putting a mark on the paper - that is not good for their education, maturity or self-esteem.
54. When I see tables of school performance data published in newspapers, I can see as a mathematics teacher that only using an average score (as a mathematical quantity) is not the best measure to choose. Averages should not be published in isolation. Many independent schools have selective procedures when enrolling students. Consequently high NAPLAN average scores reinforce this culture/practice because these schools publicly look better while other schools, without this type of discriminatory practice, look worse. There is a better approach to the type of data that can be calculated and published. Instead of only average scores, average change in NAPLAN scores per year on students should be published. In this way there is still transparency, but the accountability then shifts to the magnitude of the effect the school/teachers have had on students (or particular student) regardless of their average scores and consequently reducing bias created by socio economic background or selective student enrolment procedures that some of the elite schools practice. (It may not be these particular school's policy, but it is a practice). On a personal note and as a teacher I realise that because of publicity, NAPLAN is high stakes data for schools. I also enjoy the data that schools can take from NAPLAN and can use locally to improve their quality of education. I am however appalled that the type of data published is used to propagate elitism in our society at the expense of schools that may be in lower socio economically or who have more inclusive, non discriminatory practices in taking in students. It is more of the "at the expense of" that I have issue with. There is place in our society for elite and quality private schooling. Their task would be to value add to their student's education (as it would be the responsibility of any school), not simply to boast, an all but already existing, high average NAPLAN score in the public domain.
55. Publication of results - should not be allowed for public viewing.
56. Results should not be advertised publicly and the build-up should be low-key. Having two separate tests in one booklet is poor assessment technique. Can some tests be done online where possible?
57. It should be written by people who have a current knowledge of grade 3/5 students abilities and capabilities....not by academics!!!!
58. Numeracy and Literacy, but a lot of the students do not take it seriously - hence lower results are achieved than should be.
59. Should be held later in year so that students are actually at that level. May is too early.
60. Later in the year so regular curriculum can be covered
61. getting the results back quicker
62. removal of results from MySchool website
63. Timing should be either initial or summative, not a test held at an inconvenient time of year.
64. The testing processes can have particularly negative impact upon students who have learning or processing disabilities, as well as those who have difficulty with concentration. First, these students often tire quickly, leaving them unable to concentrate for these extended periods of time. Consequently, the test results will not show a true representation of the students' abilities. Secondly, over the last few years I have observed the Naplan tests having a profound negative impact upon these students' self efficacy. This is largely because these tests often ask students to attempt exercises that are beyond their abilities. As a teacher of children with processing difficulties one of my greatest priorities is to help build these children's levels of confidence. The Naplan testing process has regularly undermined this work, and left many of my students feeling very negative about themselves as learners. By offering these specific students an alternate, less demanding test, would reduce the negative impact of the current testing system whilst providing a more comprehensive picture of the students' abilities.

65. More time to have the exact running of the tests explained.
66. We need to receive results before the end of first semester so that we have a whole semester to work on any areas that children find difficult.
67. type of questions are not related to how children learn in class
68. Quality of the questions
69. Schools should receive the results earlier than what they do.
70. Results sooner. Not publishing results on my school website!!
71. Having been in the position for the last 3 years of supervising students with special considerations, most with severe learning delays/difficulties, putting these children through naplan is debilitating to their already fragile self esteem
72. NAPLAN is not a particularly useful way of rating student performance and achievement. The lack of flexibility in language use often means a perfectly plain idea can be misunderstood simply due to a lack of understanding of a particular word or idea described differently by a classroom teacher.
73. Get rid of it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
74. NAPLAN only accommodates student who are visual & auditory learners. It does not make any allowances for kinaesthetic learners! Not all people like reading or writing & if you can't both very well you can't do the NAPLAN test very effectively. It does not take in to consideration a students verbal or intellectual ability & to lowers student self esteem to think they can't or aren't able to do the test like their peers!!!!
75. Abolish it.
76. Relevance and cultural assumptions within the writing topics - e.g. "parents spend too much money on toys and games" is not a good topic for kids who live in poverty even "city vs country" can be hard for kids who have never been to the city before
77. Stop airing dirty laundry. NAPLAN statistics are useful for ed departments, but what's the point in publicising results, when they are based on one test, from one day, that could be affected by any number of external factors? Why would you tell a school that they're crap at spelling, or awful at maths, without telling them what specific questions/areas they need to improve? Why would you show parents these results, when they struggle to understand the true reasons for the tests or the true meaning of the results? Do Australian politicians even care that the publication of NAPLAN test results mean that teachers spend the entirety of mid-year PT interviews trying (often unsuccessfully) to help confused/stressed parents understand those results? Do the politicians care that parents are so misguidedly obsessed with NAPLAN, that a lucrative industry of DIY test-preparation (with virtually no educational value) has sprung up overnight?
78. Less focus on testing and less pressure on students. A rich curriculum is more rewarding for students.
79. Topics for the writing task are too simple for Year 9 students and do not allow them to demonstrate sophisticated thinking and reasoning. Length of time allowed for writing is ridiculous.
80. It should be scrapped.
81. Less pressure on the students because results should not be published.
82. It should be done in 1 day. The English tests should be combined and so should the maths.
83. Should be banned
84. NAPLAN should be removed - taken away
85. It shouldn't be part of MySchool website.
86. It should be shelved. If a teacher was to expect students in years 3 or 5 to sit for and concentrate for the amount of time expected in NAPLAN we would lose our job! Goes against our teaching practises.
87. Change years to year 4,6,8
88. Get rid of it altogether. Just puts excess pressure on teachers and students to perform for results nothing to do with what learning every day and yearly academic results.
89. maths : more specific details of content knowledge. a test on year 9 in term 2 is crazy. less 'wordy' type questions. maths is numeracy - treat it as such.
90. Not doing it.
91. Not be connected to funding
92. Language other than english component should be included in the test
93. It should be conducted towards the end of the year so that the syllabus is covered. the results should not be posted up for comparison of schools

94. If it is to be more useful perhaps results could come back earlier for us to use as part of our ongoing assessment. It is far too late to be using the data as a diagnostic tool 6 months later.
95. Get rid of 'League' tables
96. Not have all exams in the one week. Spread them over 4 weeks.
97. Scrap it . It is a waste of time and money
98. The time of the year it is implemented, would be better later in the year.
99. Get rid of it
100. The time of the year it is implemented, would be better later in the year.
101. Get rid of it
102. results could be given to the teachers at an earlier stage to further inform planning and intervention or extension.
103. Earlier access to data, less media emphasis
104. One test a week over five weeks.
105. Get results earlier to use a tool.
106. Less teaching to the test and less pressure that comes from the My School website. The danger of 'slipping into the pink/red' adds serious pressure to an already effective and crowded curriculum.
107. Why are we only testing numeracy and literacy. What about the other KLA, student personalities etc. There is so much emphasis placed on NAPLAN but nothing on other student non academic knowledge. This money could be invested in more face to face teachers to reduce class numbers, or more equipment for schools, more specialists especially primary schools, more resources for the gifted and the low achievers.
108. Pressure placed on students, parents, teachers and schools is disgraceful.
109. scrap it
110. No NAPLAN. Use a combination of work samples. Do not grade students.
111. Be able to help chn. Understand the questions.
112. I think NAPLAN is a waste of time and money.
113. timing -needs to be later in the year. Feedback needs to be given much sooner
114. Have a look at how much impact it actually has on student learning and see if it is worth administering at all.
115. Have at the end of the year when children are older and had more experience with different maths concepts as you are trying to teach many concepts before Naplan.
116. we don't need it at all, but if that is not going to change, we have had enough of persuasive text; maths tasks can't all be addressed so early in the year.
117. Must be connected to the Australian curriculum based on the content that is taught at the child's year level, not above it.
118. Naplan should be used as a tool to guide teaching and learning in schools and to receive feedback on individual children- strengths and weaknesses to assist students learning further only
119. Students whose parents exempt them from Naplan, their zero results should not be included in school averages. Students with reading difficulties eg dyslexia, need further support - reading of all questions, text and someone to scribe their responses. Consideration of the students with anxiety - as these are the students who will grow up and have mental health issues later in life; and if affects their self-esteem. Do not tell the schools the genre - schools are all teaching to the test. What support is available for students who do not meet benchmarks - re-instate previous government funded support programs.
120. Only to be tested on what has been learnt in a full school year-not cramming a year's worth of learning into a short period just to complete NAPLAN.
121. The amount of importance placed on the test by society and the government.
122. Scrap it
123. If we want to analyse the data and use this to inform our teaching and practice, NAPLAN results to not help with this as we receive it 3 months after the test and is not current and valid - Timing or accessibility to the data promptly may help
124. Scrap it - waste of education \$
125. allow some students to work in 15 minute blocks instead of 45!!
126. Turn around time for results should be much quicker. Access to diagnostic material should be better.
127. Results back faster to teachers would be beneficial
128. Get rid of it

129. Differentiation. How can grade 3s have the same topic as grade 5s? They are not at all at the same stage of cognitive thinking so how can they be expected to come up with ideas to support an exposition. At least give grade 3s an easier topic to argue. One of my colleagues stressed that a capable child in her grade 3 class could not come with any ideas because the topic was not relevant to his life experiences.
130. Scrap it as it is today and introduce a data entry system where we can all enter our students' scores from tests that should be the same in each state given the National Curriculum. This needs to be user friendly so we don't spend more time at our laptops than we really need to. We already have an overcrowded curriculum and Naplan takes away far too much time and gives too much stress. We all end up teaching to the test anyway. When will Governments realise this.
131. Letting teachers teach to already, ever-increasingly high standards and expectations, giving more faith to our professionalism and innovation and ability to adapt to the times, to technology and to the AusVELS and other key knowledge, skills and values needed for the times.

APPENDIX C

In your opinion, has the publication of NAPLAN data on the MySchool website placed additional pressure on teachers? students? school?

1. If the community understood quite clearly that NAPLAN is one piece of the assessment and reporting toolkit it would be far less stressful. It does not adequately measure the capabilities of many gifted children or those who have alternative ways of problem solving. For example the recent choice of 'My Hero' for the writing can be problematic for children on the Autism Spectrum as they may spend 10 minutes literally thinking about who their hero is as they need to be truthful in what they write. That gives this child 10 minutes less to complete the task.
2. It does when there are more than one school available in an area and parents are using data to compare these schools.
3. Parents are placing undue pressure on their children and the schools.
4. Publishing of result on MySchool results in teachers teaching 'to the test'. This takes the focus of the student (greatly effecting pedagogical practice) as well as the many negative impacts on curriculum.
5. The additional pressure that this has placed on schools the follow through is all the way down to the students whom in most cases feel pressured as do parents to have their child get a good mark. This extra pressure is not needed and is particularly by our younger students let alone the teachers.
6. It has placed a large amount of stress on the students, especially when parents are buying the resources and making the students study even more at home.
7. There is pressure on teachers that if their class does not 'perform well' on the tests, that they will not be offered a job the following year, that parents will consider them to be a 'bad' or incompetent teacher. There is pressure on students that if they do not do well in the tests, they will not be offered a position in their preferred high school. Many of the parents in my class were very stressed about this. The stress from the parents passed onto the children, many of who were very concerned about their 'results' and what the results can do to a child's schooling. I believe the results of the test are being misused by high schools in terms of students gaining entry. I also believe that the results are causing loss of confidence and self esteem of many children. If the intention of the tests are to access where extra support is needed in schools, why do the results need to be published and why do students need to know how they performed.
8. Parents seem to take so much notice of it, and will even select a school based on its NAPLAN results. This is CRAZY. This creates pressure on everyone.
9. Data on the My School website adds an extraordinary amount of pressure on schools and puts pressure on schools, teachers and students. It causes teaching to the tests and unfair representation of children's results so that the 'school doesn't look bad'. Results should only be used for school analysis so that it can improve teaching and learning of all individual children, no matter what their ability is.
10. Much of the "Naplan Nonsense" (extreme parental/ student / teacher anxiety is because of the publication and consequent misinterpretation of the data. Take this element away and much of this nonsense would dissipate. The true purpose and value of NAPLAN would endure in the absence of publication of results. I don't believe that the data fairly represents school or teacher performance. Parents should have access to the profile of their students only.
11. Our school results are good but we are in an area with no ESL children. I think disadvantaged schools are put under undue pressure
12. Student achievement needs to be assessed on more than one series of tests. Many students can correctly answer comprehension questions if they were not in a multiple choice format.
13. Parents often use results to choose schools for their children which I feel is wrong as it is only a snippet of what the children can do. Reports are a much better and accurate assessment of what the children are capable of.
14. Real Estate Agents use the data in their "selling pitch" so it actually influences land values around a school with good results
15. The results are just the snapshot of one point in time, and are not a fair judge of the student's ability.

16. My year 9 students are incredibly stressed because they know their parents use this data to compare them to their family and friends of the same age. We tell them that the test is only to see where they are and shouldn't be used to compare but they know their parents will use it this way and it stresses them out!
17. The MySchool website places pressure on Schools (Principals) by creating a competitive educational setting. This is across the egalitarian purposes of what we do and are as Australians, and especially when school funding is a hotly debated issue. This will in turn erode the good will teachers have across systemic and government schools... and will be detrimental to communal and schooling environment for Australian children. Each community needs to work together not agin one another to provide for each individual child's needs within the context of family and community .. rather than towards increasing market share based upon % and statistical analysis. Leave the diagnostic educational analysis up to teachers not the general public. Teachers need to partner with parents and work for their students ...this is where the real accountability lies. Not with the Big Brother MySchool website.
18. All the fun has been erdicated from learning. Engagement of learning and curiosity to explore the world beyond is disappearing. It is all day, every day embedded in all topic tasks but not taught specifically as NAPLAN eg. Tactical Teaching Reading and Writning with Naplan type questions in reading, tests and assessments.
19. Schools seem to be more concerned with results than other sectors including Teachers.
20. We fail to realise these kids are kids. Testing is fine but it is in overdrive as is the collection of data.
21. The administration of preparing for NAPLAN is a nightmare and it is ridiculous that staff are expected to take the boxes to the Post office to send, given they courier boxes to schools and pick up the writing tasks via courier.
22. As catholic schools in the Capital cities are often quite close it is used for comparison and benchmarking and ultimately for enrolment
23. There are too many other factors that contribute to results that those viewing are not privy to. It is scandalous that schools are judged by their Naplan results alone. There are schools spending the whole year drilling test techniques, how can you be expected to produce well rounded students when that is going on over your back fence!!! We have prospective Prep parents coming in and quoting our Naplan results to us when they barely know what Naplan is. We have local papers producing the results of the twenty schools in the area etc. etc.
24. NAPAN results have impacted on enrolments
25. parents don't inderstand that it's only one TINY bit of information (and wholly inaccurate seeing many questions have a 1 in 4 chance of being correct as they are multiple choice - no understanding required
26. Does the MySchool web site really give a true indication of the the quality of the teaching and learning occurring at each individual school, I don't think it does.
27. Very unfair for schools with high indigenous / low socio-economic / high immigrant populations.
28. I use the results as a guide to compare it with how the students are going in my class. Most of the time the results match up, several times over the last few years the results have been quite different, both increased and decreased depending on the student.
29. unnecessary beauracratic nonesense;it creates tension and has little impact on the trailing of student and final outcome of a students' progress.
30. Schools are spending a ludicrous amount of time preparing for tests on the behest of administrators that don't want to look bad. This is not the true purpose of the test, however schools do not follow instructions to treat NAPLAN like a normal school day due to the immense amount of pressure put on them. This pressure and feeling of inadequacy is passed to teachers. A majority of class time is spent preparing students for NAPLAN tests, rather than teaching the actual curriculum. Merely saying teachers shouldn't be doing this doesn't solve the problem of them being made to by principals and curriculum advisors.
31. Parents are expecting teachers to sit practise tests to prepare them Parents have mentioned purchasing naplan practise textbooks for their children to practise more at home.
32. It causes un necessary anxiety on young children inappropriately.
33. The only pressure placed on students has been through unwarranted passing on of stress by teachers and parents. The raising of expectations for teachers has been very helpful in encouraging teachers to consider carefully what they are teaching, but has also been a point of frustration as misconceptions and fallacies about the NAPLAN have added unreasonable stresses on teachers.

34. The omission of the like schools section puts heaps of pressure on low socio economic areas
35. In reference to question 3- NAPLAN result can be useful for teachers and after all the time and effort put in to preparing students of course we use the results to aid teaching. If NAPLAN didn't exist teachers would design more relevant testing/assessment to gather data. So, although we use it and it can be useful at times, it's only like that because it's there so we may as well look at it.
36. League tables are a nightmare. It doesn't take into consideration social demographic, special status etc
37. Teachers are under enormous pressure for their class to do well that young teachers teach to the test not good sound teaching practise!!!!
38. What is the purpose for publishing this data?
39. Unfortunately any benefit from the NAPLAN data is overshadowed by the excessive pressure on teachers to produce marketable results under severe time constraints. Also my school denied publicly in the school newsletter that we would be conducting any specific NAPLAN preparation. The suggestion was that we would simply make sure we covered everything as part of our normal curriculum. However behind the scenes I was required to provide my "NAPLAN plan" to my head of Junior School. These mixed messages were very confusing and stressful. The rhetoric did not acknowledge the hard work we were doing on top of the many sporting events, open days, assemblies, music lessons and fundraising events. It was demanding for the students and teachers.
40. I think that we would feel some degree of stress whatever the form external assessments took.
41. Often this pressure is unwarranted.
42. I have noticed a change in student culture over the last couple of years. There is much more accountability and pressure teachers to perform (This is not necessarily a negative). I have also noticed an increase in the demands of parents and the decline of student ownership/responsibility in their performance. This may or may not be a related issue. I have no evidence to support either way. It may even be only changes our local school culture is experiencing. It is however worth mentioning because the NAPLAN publicised data is something that gave impetus to a national culture that places performance pressure on the educators and institutions only, and indirectly on students.
43. Teaching to the test has become mandatory due to the external pressure placed on schools. This method of teaching is extremely poor pedagogy and disengages students.
44. Ranking of schools based on results of a 1 hour test is ridiculous and provides very little insight into the quality of the school
45. Such public comparison ultimately leads to teaching to the test and a narrowing of curriculum priorities.
46. The purpose of Naplan is changing due to many competing interests within schools and outside of schools.
47. I hate NAPLAN. I have seen children fall apart. This government should be ashamed of what they are doing to our youth. For heavens sake, look at FINLAND!!!!
48. NAPLAN SHOULD NOT be used as a tool to show how 'good' a school is. The data should be used for student PROGRESS and curriculum development!!!
49. Testing causes stress. Students worry that the testing will be the beginning or end of something for them -such as entry to secondary school. It doesn't seem to matter how many times the message is repeated that it is for government purposes, the message heard by students and misinterpreted by parents is that it is personal.
50. Schools no longer teach the curriculum, just NAPLAN content. Students have given up doing their best. Teachers no longer have opportunities to be creative.
51. most people within the school want to keep NAPLAN in perspective.
52. NAPLAN is a an effective teaching tool for teachers ONLY & it would be better used as ONE area of gaining assessment on their students ability in Literacy & Numeracy. It has made education too competitive & judgemental between school, students & parents...Keep politics out of education & give the love of learning back to the students & teacher/ parents.
53. Diagnostic testing is completed at the school level and NAPLAN expectations are unrealistic, add extra pressure to teachers and students.
54. Naplan has placed a lot of pressure of staff and students and gets in the way of quality teaching and learning.
55. Many of the students don't care re the NAPLAN. They have bragged about doing a pattern and finishing early. One boy said that because Coshy on AM TV said don't take the tests seriously, then he wasn't going to be serious about the tests.

56. Teachers and schools now have the added pressure dealing with parents who don't understand the results or how to compare the data, blaming teachers for results from a test that shows little of what we do in the classroom
57. Finland doesn't have Naplan - or anything like it. Probably why they do so well
58. There is definitely pressure on students to perform, pressure on teachers to teach to NAPLAN.
59. Each school has a unique ethos and approach to education. Myschool foregrounds the idea that results, raw data, is the most important thing parents should consider when choosing schools.
60. The media and parents put pressure on the students despite teachers trying to play the test down. How can schools in low socio- economic and country areas compete with elite schools!
61. There is a lot of pressure all round due to the publication of results
62. Not true representation of what taught at school in class just what is on NAPLAN test. Waste of time
63. immense pressure to produce results. Teachers are almost threatened with loss of their jobs if they underperform
64. It is unfair to be judged solely on one test. Perhaps they could also include report results, and Literacy testing results before a final ranking is given.

APPENDIX D

What has been the impact (positive or negative) of NAPLAN (and its reporting on MySchool) on (a) your school and (b) parents at the school?

1. Positive - overall results indicate areas of need. Negative - time involved administering test, time taken away from focus teaching and working with students with special needs.
2. We credit ourselves with developing the whole child yet so much emphasis is placed on one test on one day. It doesn't give the whole picture and certainly doesn't help the child's self esteem. Parents think all sorts of untrue things and the media doesn't help.
3. It has helped drive 'improvement' in our school. It means that we look at what we are not doing addressing with year levels and we are trying to address that.
 - A) staff not keen on it and tend to downplay its importance
 - B) parents use it to make enrolment decisions
4. school gets to brag about the value added from yr 7 to yr 9
5. Recognising that our school supports with the weaker students (comparison over 2years)- positive Receiving the results 5-6 months later in the year, when the year is almost over
6. Our data is good however it causes great stress to parents of low achievers. Undue emphasis is put on the results because of publication of data. It is simply a snapshot on one day and as we don't get results for months it is fairly useless
7. Teaches children how to answer different style of questions eg. multichoice, etc.
8. No impact. We never refer to it.
9. Negative: people think its the be all and end all. Its only good for large scale statistical purposes over several years. Individual scores are more of a problem than a help. Its a terrible impression of a school for people who have never been inside it.
10. NAPLAN data is carefully analysed and compared between our campuses, further pressure is then placed on teachers to improve in particular areas. No further support is provided, all pressure is on the classroom teacher.
11. More meetings, more work, basing planning on results of one form of assessment on one day.
12. unnecessary pressure on staff and students. students must undertake three mornings of testing without much rest.
13. I'm not sure of this no parent has ever asked me about it .
14. Parents really hone in on results and treat it as a representation of what students are capable of
15. Some parents do not understand that NAPLAN data does not translate exactly to school achievement. For example, students can score highly on the literacy elements of NAPLAN but be unable to write an accomplished essay. It tests a very limited range of skills.
16. For our school it has meant time out of normal curriculum to prepare and an unwillingness of some teachers to teach yrs 3 and 5. Parents now have a skewed perception of what is valuable in infants/primary education.
17. Anxious students and parents
18. Very little positive-in a low socio-economic area with many unemployed/menial job sector. Reinforces that they are behind in many areas.
19. Parents would query why our results were lower/higher than other local schools and some would base their decisions on enrolments on the school's results.
20. So competitive with similar schools in our area. Parents compare.
21. Increased anxiety in both students and parents. Higher expectations on teaching staff to be explicitly teaching NAPLAN skills.
22. The time is significant, the whole week is impacted as students wind up and wind down. Parents find the process stressful and more are falling prey to schemes to benefit financially from NAPLAN preparation (marketed this way).
23. Myschool must be withdrawn as it is far too damaging to a schools reputation. Parents use the information on the myschool site to consider enrolments . Schools have their own data collection processes and while naplan may be used as another form of data it is often inaccurate.
24. It raises a lot of questions at information nights and enrolment times because it takes such a strong stance in the public eye. People judge the school on this data and don't for a second consider what amazing things the school is actually doing!
25. Intervention programs are a positive

26. Negative. Teachers feel pressured to 'Teach to the test' instead of facilitating rich learning experiences where deep thinking and a variety of learning styles are catered for. NAPLAN only tests one learning style and is not a true indication of a student's ability. Writing within a time short time frame limits students who find it difficult to express their knowledge and understandings in this unnatural and unrealistic environment and whose preferred learning style is not matched to this method.
27. More anxiety about NAPLAN. Students preparing at home. Generally positive for our school as results are good.
28. Ridiculous pressure on all stakeholders.
29. In a school with 97% ESL students, the students are unfairly judged.
30. In some ways it is good for the parents to see where their child is at, but only if they are prepared to do something with the information they receive. I think is a lot of unnecessary pressure on teach and students alike.
31. school judged as not academic, parents disappointed in results
32. minimal impact
33. Good for seeing individual student growth, initiatives too focused on Naplan rather than good teaching and learning.
34. Negative
35. Negatives: As mentioned above plus fee payers (not always parents) have considered removing happy students (not always their child) from the school to 'better achieving' schools. Positives: National Partnerships funding; CTLM funding
36. I have only seen a positive impact. Our school takes the Naplan results seriously. Consequently as a diagnostic tool, the results are used to show the teachers where we need to concentrate our efforts in literacy and numeracy.
 - a) More pressure on teachers to ensure their children do well on the narrow skill set of NAPLAN. Stifles creativity, innovative pedagogy and restricts/narrows curriculum delivery through the 'preparation' period. b) Few parents have commented, positively or negatively; our school is represented quite favourably on Myschool.
37. Negative
38. Positive for many of my friends b/c they get a real indication if their child is struggling
39. The parent body is not particularly affected by NAPLAN at our school. They are interested in results but the majority are not swayed by the data...they prefer to look at a range of strategies and feedback to examine their child's achievements.
40. Parents and teachers do not like the pressure students are feeling. Parents do not like time being taken for preparation.
41. For me, it has interrupted what I am supposed to be teaching at this time. Other teachers I work with have got so far behind that they are now teaching to the test for that unit rather than enjoying it.
42. parents are stressed if kids don't do well
43. Students and their families are under unnecessary pressure to perform, and so are teachers. Achievement is individual, dependent on personal learning needs. Some schools are teaching 100% ESL students, and are measured against the same standards, even though their job is clearly more difficult.
44. Parents are more anxious in relation to results, placing undue pressure on teaching staff
45. The school now works to ensure good Naplan results at the consequence of other more meaningful priorities.
46. As a result we have received SSNP (previously NPA) funding which has been used to buy resources, build on teacher capacity and to assist the students.
47. Without naplan results there would be no way to compare a students academic successes to an established standard.
48. Resulted in some conversations in which teachers have had to justify results and differences.
49. Greater pressure on achieving higher results
50. some years we have kids that really struggle academically, our welfare is not counted,
51. Year 5 is our intake year so the students have only been at the school for a few months before the year 5 NAPLAN testing. I feel considerable pressure to get 28 students from 13 different feeder school up to standard in a few months.
52. only a small percentage of parents have come to collect the results. Over the years only a small percentage of parents have been aggressive about the results.
53. Parents tend to be stressed

54. A) teachers reflecting on results and areas where students need help B) parents thinking NAPLAN results reflect school
55. Negative for all other subject areas as focus is constantly on improving Literacy and Numeracy to the deficit of other curriculum areas.
56. We all of a sudden got extra teaching time through funding to target the kids who were seen as being at risk or who did not improve enough for the statistic gurus, which was interesting seeing there was no extras available before then. We have to Teach to The test to give the kids a fair chance of completing the writing section properly - especially such a difficult text as persuasive writing. Way too hard for year 3 and pretty difficult for year 5 students to master as well.
57. No impact what so ever. Results take too long to come in so the students have progressed from May to the end of September so the data is considered OLD!
58. Very anxious parents and children; Stressed teachers; diverting from the normal curriculum in preparation
59. Parents use NAPLAN results as guide to determining whether the school is the 'right' one for their child. My school doesn't factor in other elements that make schools effective places for children to learn.
60. Stressed out students and parents (and teachers) practising for tests which do not enhance student outcomes. Parents place unrealistic demands on their children to perform. Children so upset that they will not perform to these levels. Teachers teaching to the test not to the curriculum.
61. Fundamentally, because NAPLAN results have become status symbols, NAPLAN is destructive of genuine teaching and academic progress.
62. People think you can fatten a pig by weighing it, whereas we need to feed the pig.
63. We try not to make a big deal about NAPLAN. We explain to parents and students that it is one test on one day and that the assessments we do are ongoing and far more detailed. We analyse results of our assessments promptly and act on them immediately.
64. If funding for needs is going to be linked to test results and they do not truly represent the school how will the standard of the school be known
65. Parents often interpret NAPLAN data for their child as an indication of how their school or class teacher is performing.
66. Our school now has targets and if not reached this can be an issue. Also I believe it is cohort driven so how Year 3 this year performs should not be used to compare last year's or next year's. it should be a diagnostic tool for individual children and a particular class to plan programs and to assess growth from one naplan to the next for that particular cohort.
67. Lot of pressure from parents. Decreased enrolments. More pressure on teachers.
68. It's peaceful during testing time!
69. To much extra pressure, for what gain?
70. Very little impact on either except that the management of the school would obviously like our Naplan results to be as high as possible. If results were not good for a particular year then I'm sure that they would have a much greater impact.
71. So much more focus on prep for the tests but not as much as other schools. Parents have been influenced by the myschool website.
72. Constant pressure to improve results
73. We have analysed information and targeted children who have not done well at specific levels of NAPLAN. Teachers are then required to develop plans to help them learn in what topic or topics that was struggling. However, we don't tell children to stay home and often these children are those with learning needs or language difficulties.
74. Our parents and teachers place emphasis on quality learning and well adjusted students. I don't get involved in NAPLAN discussions.
75. Pressure. Talk gossip. Teacher bagging and comparison
76. Positive for our parents as it shows where they are at compared to the state average. For students it gives us a guidance as to where they are when we are transitioning our students into the mainstream settings. AND where we should look at placing our students in their next school setting.
77. Parents don't analyse the whole data. They just see a number and make judgements
78. Higher stress on kids. Higher demands from parents. Less time to actually teach.
79. Our school claimed they did not care about the results (we had not been doing well) however when we did very well they did decide that it was important.

80. Some parents are blasé while others place so much pressure on students and themselves that they become extraordinarily stressed about their child's results. It has made an impact on the school in that it distracts from syllabus work as students need to know about and be comfortable with layout, etc before going in.
81. Has had a negative impact on schools as it adds pressure to staff and students to succeed in a one off hour test. NAPLAN doesn't accurately represent the abilities of the students or the staff but some parents use this to judge schools, staff and their own children.
82. The school is compared to other local schools which are all very different in terms of population. It is good for parents to know how their child is going compared to outside schools however the NAPLAN shouldn't be taken as the only measure
83. Parents very anxious about their child's ability to complete testing.
84. The school uses the data to inform the teaching of Maths and to affirm what we already know about student's abilities. The parents' reactions vary.
85. Negative
 - A) The school practices NAPLAN until students and teachers are thoroughly sick of it. It impairs student/teacher relationships. (b) parents are stressed because their kids are stressed. They also put pressure on the school to 'teach' their kid to 'pass'. I am yet to be convinced that this is effective use of class time.
86. Parents are worrying themselves sick about choosing the right school, it can set up unrealistic expectations. Parents shopping for schools based on NAPLAN. Pressure on kids and teachers to perform. Anxiety and stress for all. Accountability of schools is huge, soon no one will teach, too stressful.
87. Parents have changed schools based on results.
88. Stress and anxiety by students and parents. Disappointment with results particularly additional needs and those low achievers. Seems to kill their desire to be at school because they will fail
89. Does not match our pedagogy of inquiry and does not promote a culture of thinking. Enormous pressure on teachers and students; time is wasted on preparation that could be better used on student centred/ driven learning.
90. Don't understand that many factors influence the outcome.
91. Negative impact - those teachers in Year 3 and Year 5 have been told they will be held accountable for the results that come out.
92. I teach at a very high ESL school, naturally our results are not comparable to other schools with students with English as their native language. I have found parents do not understand these additional implications when their children are taking the test or when looking at results in relation to the test.
93. A higher result means better school profile.
94. Analysis of results has driven literacy strategies across the school to focus on spelling and grammar. This has been a good thing.
95. Parents are thinking that it is a test that their children should perform highly at. Many parents are asking for help on how they can prepare their kids to perform well.
96. A puts pressure on teachers B some parents put too much into the results of one test on one day
97. The undue pressure coming through the CEO to perform well.
98. Parents looking at results and making generalisations about schools. Shopping around for a school with the best results.
99. My school has been pressuring staff, student and parents to 'do well' on NAPLAN and has had a tiresome effect on all stakeholders.
100. Increased pressure.
101. Some parents begin coaching their children 6 months (at least) in advance and many children make comments which lead me to believe that they do not enjoy the pressure from home.
102. Unrealistic expectations on students and teachers from year to year. Each cohort is different, this is not reflected in NAPLAN...parents do not understand how to use NAPLAN results. Rather than see it as an indicator of where their child is at, they rank the school instead. Poor public education about how NAPLAN can actually be used is to blame for this. The media misrepresenting the usefulness of the data compounds the confusion.
103. Limited
104. Taking away from teaching time.
105. ILPs and inclusive education is in opposition to national standardised testing. They both have completely different goals and focus.

106. My school does very well from NAPLAN results in terms of increased enrolments. Parents are obsessed with NAPLAN preparation - if we don't provide what they see as sufficient 'NAPLAN homework', a number of parents are supplying their children with commercial workbooks and additional homework tasks!
107. It puts too much pressure on Year 3 students, I feel it is unnecessary at this age.
108. We had a class with a high proportion of kids who were challenged in some ways, they did not do well and the school got poor publicity in the community
109. Pressure to "perform" well, parents have stated they look at the NAPLAN results before choosing to send their child to the school.
110. Negative. It has taken away valuable teaching from actually important learning.
 - a) school judged on these results alone
111. Takes time away from 'real' teaching time
112. We are a disadvantaged school with poor results so parents expect better results
113. Shows the school's academic record in a negative light. Parents are concerned with academic results but happy with the community of the school.
114. not up to date with this
115. Negligible
116. More pressure on the children to do well. Many of our parents bought practice tests and had their children spend many hours doing them on top of their homework.
117. Parents get very concerned about the preparation for Naplan. Some I think put pressure on their child and at times the teacher. I had a parent wanting to know the structure of Persuasive Writing. At the time I had a draft on my board to model for the children and she took a photo of it as reference for use at home! school always looks at Naplan data results as a staff in a staff meeting and compares like school and our own previous results. variations occur due to many factors including the cohort of children each year.
118. parents compare chn's results - not helpful for chn who find reading and/or maths difficult
119. Parents are highly emotional about this type of data, but inherently don't understand it or it's implication for them or their child's educational future. Teachers make the difference - Teachers need supportive environments, with opportunity for ongoing professional development in order to enable them to perform at their best.
120. Parents perceive that we do a good job because our naplan results are good.
121. We now teach to naplan...
122. The pressure is huge as every school wants the best results possible. It is negative as it works on a deficit model what students can't do - the lacks in the school. NAPLAN is a flawed assessment process as it assesses core knowledge and application in one modality - it does not assess the whole child and their critical thinking skills. NAPLAN should be brought in line to the general capabilities that the government wishes each child to have.
123. Parent inability to correctly interpret data and the school using to determine how well the school is doing - incorrect use of testing as it is extremely limited in the curriculum areas that are tested
124. Pos: greater focus on Maths 'problem solving' Neg: lesser focus on prediction and estimation (as key Maths skills).
125. We know where the students are with their learning and the parents know that we are working together with them. Unfortunately the myschools page means that someone looking at our school as a possible school to enrol their child bases it solely on how a particular group of students did in a 45 min test on 1 day of the year- what a joke!
126. negative - too much pressure and importance of one test placed on students by parents
127. The impact has been substantial. We have been under huge pressure from CEO for the past few years and we are working harder than what I have ever worked before. I believe in the NAPLAN style test but I don't believe in the way the CEO is playing the political game with the data. At present the 'Catholic Ethos' our system promotes, is diminishing whilst those in charge continue to play politics with these tests.
128. Has encouraged teachers to use data more effectively (but the quality of data is questionable).
129. Parents have little understanding of what a school truly has to offer and think that flawed literacy and numeracy tests accurately reflect what a student can do or what a school can offer.
130. It causes the parents to have less trust in the teachers by giving weight to external assessment.
131. We have gone down this year, some parents take students out due to problems like this. Parents sometimes place a lot of pressure on their children to improve, and this solidifies the student's feeling of low self worth, especially for the lower range student.
132. Stress for teachers and children - all totally unnecessary

133. Our school has had pleasing results and on occasions when this hasn't occurred we have been very transparent at our strategies implemented to lift results.
134. Parents treat NAPLAN data as a league table.
135. Small town means that parents are making comparison between only 4 schools and moving students from school to school.
136. Many of our students are low achievers and the NAPLAN tests are irrelevant to them and they have no interest in achieving high results. Not many parents have commented about the results - but again many of our parents' literacy skills are poor. With so many students achieving low results it is difficult for the data to provide information that assists the teachers as there are so many gaps for so many students - and is it really a gap or have they guessed the answers (multiple choice gives a 1 out of 4 chance of being correct even if they have no idea of the answer) or just not tried!
137. No impact, small community with limited school choices.
138. Negative. Many students stressed. Parents stressed. Teachers spending unnecessarily long amounts of time on teaching to the test.
139. Mostly negative
140. Our school doesn't come up well, lots of ESL, special needs kids etc.
141. Some parents go way over the top stressing about it and in the scheme of things who remembers their NAPLAN when you've graduated from Uni or are working in business. We also know the pressure for growth from yr 3 to 5 per student is something we are hounded about as a system
142. Negative: even to the point where parents are quite dismissive of a professional teacher's assessment. Parents run schools down for poorer performance without realising the economic and social situations of schools that come into play, even to the point where individual students in those lower performing schools may have actually experienced significant growth.
143. It has been quite affirming.
144. Stress and anxiety at times. Relief too.
145. Pressure on teachers as our school wants to achieve. Some parents buy books and test their children endlessly.
 - a) Seeing where the school needs to focus.
146. misleading- my children's school does well on the NAPLAN but children with learning difficulties are not well supported.
147. No extra impact. Parents have always been interested and I have asked questions...
148. Parents make judgements based on results whether or not to enrol children in a school rather than referring to other value added effective programmes.
149. I feel that NAPLAN has positive implication as it tracks student progress over many years and allows comparison and benchmarking between students all over the nation. However we must remember that it is one test on one day. It simply measures how well the students have been prepared to answer the test rather than what they truly know. The media plays a huge role in the over exaggeration of NAPLAN and this places pressure on parents, students, teachers and schools. It is a constant battle to reassure parents and students of their child's learning and to reassure them that their child is viewed not by this one test but by all their learning which occurs inside and outside the classroom. I believe that NAPLAN is designed and encouraged by the government and media to push the agenda of government schools and to promote them as superior to non-government schools. After the NAPLAN results are released (much like the HSC results) the media pushes how much better the government school students achieved on their scores to non-government schools. This is manipulative as obviously there are more student in government schools so of course they would achieve higher results across the board.
150. As an executive a very large school, there is a tendency for comparison and competition between schools that could be working more closely together in partnership, particularly parent-controlled schools. Also, parents judge staff competence according to NAPLAN results.
151. Only positive is as a school we can see if there are any gaps which need to be addressed. However this can be done with other forms of testing such as PAT Maths & Comp within the school. There are so many more negatives- stress, pressure, results too late, cheating, tutoring schools making money from NAPLAN prep etc As a special needs teacher I hate that my 8 years olds go from loving school and thinking that they are doing well and always do their best, to hating it and realising they are failing all because of NAPLAN.
152. STRESS

153. Parents are pressuring students by forcing them to practise for the test
154. Teaching to a test Stress Competiveness
155. Very little - parents occasionally view the myschool website when enrolling
 - A) pressure on teachers to ensure students achieve a high score
 - B) giving high expectations of students ability.
156. Parents ask questions at enrolment about results
157. Parents use it as a tool to compare schools and teachers negatively
158. The need to interrupt normal curriculum with intensive
159. It is a distractor from teaching the students...
160. I don't teach English or Maths so don't know details of impact. Students don't like it though, especially the less able ones; they don't like being shown up or seen to be less able than others
161. (b) parents are placing too much emphasis on the preparation and students are in turn becoming anxious. The intended 'snapshot' is not a reality.
162. Many of my students got unnecessarily stressed about NAPLAN, despite my best efforts to make them feel as comfortable and confident with the entire process as possible. Some parents take the results very seriously, despite all the contributing factors while other parents see little point to it or worry that their child's results could bring down the school results.
163. Negative
164. Being able to identify areas where improvement is needed.
165. School has had some negative feedback from concerned parents. Parents have hassled their kids to "study" for NAPLAN.
166. School- more pressure on staff and students to "achieve"
167. It has made all parties feel as though they must achieve beyond the 'average' student mark for that year level.
168. it does not show what students are capable of. testing is only one form of assessment.
169. Extra pressure for improved results has led to extra practise sessions. Many students have totally lost interest by the time they actually do the tests. Practise time takes away from real teaching and learning experiences
170. I think some people are apathetic towards it now. As teachers I have been downplaying its importance to keep the children un-stressed. I don't really want to push the children on test based drilling because I have no faith in the system.
171. Students become oblivious to NAPLAN by the time they get to year 9. It does not give a true indication of their potential.
172. Hasn't had a huge impact, we are a special school and so parents make a choice to come to our school based on the child's needs
173. All positive.
174. Results only provide a slice of the school's picture and when used in comparison to other schools is not useful. The data is useful within the individual school context.
175. Teachers only focus on the outcomes of NAPLAN results in future planning. It is not the be all and end all of life in school.
176. Our results have been well regarded in the local community so this aspect does not really apply. Parents usually are encouraged by the school's level achievement and I guess would see that as a positive result. However, for parents of students whose talents lie outside the tested areas, they tend to disregard the results, so neither positive or negative. Parents of students with learning difficulties are negatively impacted by the assessment. They are usually very aware of their child's skill level in both literacy and numeracy, and do not really need to see that their child is below a certain level or benchmark.
177. There is possibly more accountability for student achievement; however, teachers normally know in advance, which students will go well, and which students will struggle with the test.
178. Little impact as our results have been above average of recent times.
179. Better whole school diagnostic information
180. a lot of class time spent on it; but it is a useful gauge of basic skills and would be good if not so much pressure, time and resources went into prepping for it
181. Schools are being unfairly labelled due to the myschool website. Schools are disadvantaged due to socioeconomic status
182. Impact at school - targeting shortcomings which emerge in the current year group. These vary with the year group so Naplan is useful in identifying or confirming what we have observed. Impact on parents - not great. Very few react after the results unless there is a noticeable discrepancy between what they anticipated their child's literacy would be and the

measurements falling below that anticipation. Assertive parents then check that remedial action is being taken. Sensible.

183.Enrolments

184.Parents are keen to see their child do well. It is another tool in their kit of possible complaints if their child performs badly. It stops me, as a teacher, from teaching content I love. Instead, I sit there and run students through test structure, test taking strategies etc. These skills are important. However, to constantly harp on about them daily is enough to make me bored, yet along the kids.

A) Some kids and families stress while we at school are trying to downplay it. Most of our boys don't worry too much.

185.Negative

186.As a teacher it is good to look at NAPLAN data to inform you of needs of students. Students tend to become very anxious

187.Enrolments are heavily affected. Schools are now being pushed to get enrolments, money is spent on advertisement rather than investing in the students.

188.Parents within school communities see it as being one of the most important assessments performed within the calendar year and as such put a huge emphasis on the successful completion of the task. * Too many judgements of the teaching/learning environment are made from the one snapshot in the child's schooling. This can cause unnecessary pressures on students. * In rural communities enrolments are often adversely impacted upon because of the NAPLAN snapshot

189.our school is always above average however you often hear parents asking about results and comparing to other schools. Some children buckle under the pressure and it is not a true measure of their ability.

190.Unnecessarily having to re-write English units of work to cover specific prescriptions in Naplan eg. persuasive texts

191.Pressure; time constraints; enrolment issues; stigma about quality of the school.

192.Quite positive as results have been good.

193.Sometimes parents misunderstand the data therefore false conclusions can be drawn

194.It depends on the cohort. If there are many students with learning difficulties in a cohort, the results will not reflect the standard of teaching and effort that has taken place.

195.The staff feel unrealistic pressure of achieving high results (due to the publication of this data) when low socio economic and small schools do not have the facilities/resources/finances to meet the extreme needs of individual students.

196.external data about student performance

197.None. If they decide to go somewhere else on the basis of NAPLAN, I say "Bye!"

198.NAPLAN data can be useful as a diagnostic tool and has helped to identify weaknesses in our teaching and learning. On the other hand, parents are often misled by the data and place too much store on the NAPLAN results.

199.Students feel pressured to do well in a test that they have not completed the stage of learning for. Years 3 & 5 should be about learning for their education NOT learning how to sit a NAPLAN test. Many schools begin training for NAPLAN in the year prior to the test - THAT'S ridiculous. When I was teaching infants (year 1) parents were THEN concerned about... 'How will my child go in NAPLAN' For heavens sake!!!

200.way too much curriculum time...stress on students...without any indication that it helps!!!

201.Makes schools accountable for student growth - parents only like the results if they are good. Data analysis is brilliant.

202.The overall purpose of education from a holistic approach to a damaging emphasis on 'core' subjects.

203.We do use the results and have come a long way in literacy, numeracy needs attention. We have a high number of refugee children and low income families in our school in western Sydney

204.Very little.

205.lots of time spent explaining things to parents.

206.We basically use the NAP test as the be all and end all for school success. Meaning we teach to a test and stigmatise our most vulnerable students.

207.In my role as Year Advisor of Year 9 I have had a range of complaints from parents saying that this has a negative effect on both students and the school and is an unfair representation of both.

208.some parents push lazy students more!

- 209.If its a year group who aren't as bright as previous it puts pressure on everyone. If parents say their kids go to a certain school they are branded as Are the school and this can be a negative representation of students and the school
- 210.More pressure and time taken away from quality learning and teaching opportunities. Advent of companies making money out of the whole NAPLAN process
- 211.NEGATIVE
- A) lost class time in an already crowded curriculum (Maths focus) mounds of photocopying etc in preparation for NAPLAN
- 212.Naplan not entirely owned by all grades. 3 and 5 still feeling most pressure
- 213.Parents of the school are not really concerned. They know what is happening in the school because we have open communication and reporting system in place
- 214.Parents seems quite obsessive about it and are unrealistic about the interpretation of the results
- 215.There is much celebration of "positives" but little realistic analysis of whta has gone on in the classroom during the "preparation" time - and it is done in such isolation that its relevance is often lost on students
- 216.Emphasis on examinations by parents, school leaders etc due to MySchool comparisons. NAPLAN is not being used as a diagnostic test - it is pitting school against school in a damaging, political football way.
- 217.NAPLAN has a positive effect because it reminds us of the student's true capabilities. The negative impact is that it has set unhealthy and unnecessary competition between schools
- 218.We have avhieved good results although the presure to maintain these results year after year is difficult with class abilities changing each year. The parents and government with the NPP expectations on the school yo improve results is crazy.
- A) we do our best, we don't make it the focus until as close as possible. We have changed programming to take this into consideration. (b) parents ask why, why can't 'you' do it this way, why can't 'you' do it that way. We are taken to task over what parents see as wrong with the current testing, yet we have no say.
- 219.not much difference
- 220.'MySchool' is certainly scrutinised thoroughly by the Head of School for a myriad of reasons. Some parents are extremely interested in the website, others are not. However, many parents are extremely keen for their child to do well.
- 221.Naplan has put the 'teaching' numeracy and literacy to the side while teachers teach to the tests so that the results have a more positive reflection on the school.
- 222.Parents blame the teacher for their child's results. And the ranking of the school. Not taking into consideration the cohort of children and varying needs and levels of academic achievement of students in the class.
- 223.The results can be used to indicate problem areas. The preparation is different in all schools. Its not really a fair test in that some get more prep and others less.
- 224.The tests themselves are very valuable in the amount and quality of data they provide on the strengths and weaknesses of our students, and the strategies suggested to target these areas are very helpful,
- 225.The school is much more concerned with NAPLAN preparation, teaching to the test, and the overall results. Parents see it as a rank and not as a diagnostic tool for their children.
- 226.My teaching has become exam driven. Lost spontaneity to pursue inetrests of the class.
- 227.Extra pressure on teachers to perform and lift student results .
- 228.Extremely misleading. Too much emphasis on results and not processes.
- A) Increased pressure on Maths and ENglish teachers to improve Lliteracy and Numeracy results (b) Increase in stress as parents try to get their children to take Naplan style tests at home
- 229.Significant NESB clientele at the school which has a negative impact on the results. Parent meetings are arranged in various community languages to assist in understanding how NAPLAN is only one of many ways that students are assessed.
- 230.It leads parents and students to feeling quite anxious as it is unknown
- 231.Results and school reports often don't marry up so parents can be confused on their child's ability Parents pressure children for a good grade without understanding the reason behind NAPLAN Parents compare grades not ability
- 232.It is only negative as it has taken time away from students who are learning to think creatively and imaginatively. Minimal enquiry learning can take place.

233. For some it is a good indication, but if a child has a bad day it can reflect a poorer performance than would otherwise be expected. Many parents see this as a reflection on the teaching
234. Significant increase in stress-related illnesses among students.
235. Negative for both
236. increased pressure to perform at least as well as previous year
237. All negative Too much time focused on Naplan preparation Results used as gospel what students need to focus on Different grade cohorts compared
238. The art of teaching and the love of learning has been lost
239. It's extremely disruptive for little return
240. Principal emphasizes a potential student's NAPLAN results when considering enrolment.
 - A) School - totally negative (b) Parents - this group really are being 'misinformed' when the objective of NAPLAN aims (albeit politically) to inform!
241. it can be useful to look at cohorts and open up discussion with parents. What we are looking for is the targeted mentoring, professional development and funding required to lift results for all students. It is at its most negative when schools are seen as 'failing' due to their NAPLAN results. Where is the government putting in the right supports following consultation with individual and/or like schools about what is needed?
242. Parents are putting a lot of pressure on staff and students to get great results as they feel these tests are used by boarding schools to offer scholarships and accept students.
 - A) resistance from teachers to implement NAPLAN effectively as they become wary of 'performance based pay initiatives' that rely on NAPLAN results. (b) unfair comparisons between individual student results which for parents with low scoring children creates disharmony and discontent.
243. The impact on specialist subject areas which are the real lifeblood of a school, specifically the Performing Arts (music, Drama, etc)
244. Focus on tested areas at the expense of other skills and knowledge. Impacts the ability to develop lifelong learning skills.
245. As the NAPLAN is pushed along with the prac. testing etc. As a school it is viewed as important as teachers we spend too much time on setting the children up granted to give them the best opportunity however at the cost of their learning. As parents it puts far too much pressure on the children and families that is not needed.
246. It causes higher levels of stress on staff and parents, for an outcome that is determined not only on the amount of time studied in class, but outside factors such as whether a student has eaten breakfast, had a good night's sleep, or felt safe at home.
247. Many of the parents, especially those who are new to the tests, are very anxious and stressed. Many of the parents want their child to be listed high on the ranking scale as they do not understand the true purpose of the tests. If a child is already struggling, what is the purpose behind letting me know that they are below on the results scale. It merely confirms for that child that they are 'stupid' and 'dumb'. These are the words that I hear coming from both parents and students' mouths because of the results being published and distributed.
248. Huge pressure on children and teachers. Most teachers hate it and try not to stress kids out, but many parents place HUGE pressure on their children. Schools use it in a competitive way. I know of 2 state schools in my area who withdraw all Teacher aid time from classes for the whole year to devote the aid time to NAPLAN practices. They then plaster their outdoor announcement board with their results so that the whole suburb can see it. So much for the learning support kids in those schools for the first half of the year!
249. Naplan is very time consuming but is not all bad. I think National testing is necessary but not the publication of results on My School.
250. Anxiety around the testing (in huge degrees). Parents seem to see the results "competitively", directly and indirectly placing pressure on their children to perform. That some parents have their children externally tutored for this test speaks volumes about the anxiety it engenders and the "competitive" angle it has come to assume.
251. Very little impact because the principal downplays it and makes reference to the important things that happen in the school on a regular basis
252. Parents of students who do well are quite supportive of it. Parents of students who are struggling feel that it is just another piece of paper that tells them that their child is not performing to the same level as not only others in their class, but others in the state.
253. It is a huge imposition on our curriculum for results that will appear six months later and parents place so much importance on one test, rather than the big picture.

254. Only new to this school so not sure of how it is perceived in this school.
- A) so much time spent preparing students for tests that have no bearing on their school grade. Analysis of short comings from previous year and subsequent focus for the following year flawed as it is a different cohort of students. b) parents get confused, misled by the results. Education being politicised causes parents to form false ideas of NAPLAN
255. A high ranking in the mathematics rating - top 5 - parents now expect ALL the students to be top 5, no matter what!
256. Takes valuable classroom teaching time, and the parents stress about their children.
- A) unnecessary stress on teachers and students. Teaching to the test rather than teaching syllabus in general. b) parents openly compare their children using NAPLAN results as it takes out the usual variables of teacher, school, private vs. public etc. Is this pressure we really want to place on our young. Is there a direct correlation between this and increased anxiety, stress and suicide in our young?
257. Positive is that it gives the school a tool to identify educational goals for the students as a group as well as identify specific needs for individual students and shape teaching programs around these needs.
258. We have received more enrolments.
259. Positive impact as we have used the data to improve our students learning capabilities which makes parents happier in the long run
260. School is concerned about perceived performance. Parents appear largely indifferent so long as results appear to be satisfactory.
261. Pressure to achieve. Comparing students unnecessarily to others. Creates a competition amongst parents.
262. Increased focused on core literacy skills.
263. Stress amongst staff is at breaking point. Parents have commented that they dismiss it because of the pressure on their kids.
264. parents are concerned that their child will not get into certain High Schools as these schools rely on the NAPLAN Test Results
265. It has shown up some areas of 'regular need' in our students' learning. No real impact on parents.
266. Positive for our school is we are tracking students so we can ensure that they are improving within testing and identifying problems for individual students.
267. Too much focus on one test.
268. Children leave at the end of year 4
269. NONE. THE SCHOOL'S POPULATION ARE STUDENTS FROM MAINLY LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC HOMES AND NAPLAN MEANS LITTLE TO PARENTS OR SCHOOL
270. Everybody talks about Naplan. Kids are scared witless of the test. Parents telling kids they will not get into secondary of choice if their Grade 3 Naplan is not satisfactory. It is a system gone mad.
271. few enrolment parents comment that they've visited the site and question the results Some schools have big numbers who do not sit the exam!!!!
272. Neither. Some parents think it's a good indication of their students in years 3 and 5, others think like the media and many teachers, that it's a superficial indication of student achievements.
273. upsets many chn and parents because they believe it is far more important than it is (in real life that is, not unfortunately according to our politicians who have no educational sense at all)
274. I feel the whole MySchool concept has been negative for both the school and parents. It should be scrapped. Use it as a diagnostic tool for school and parents but not to be published s occurs with MySchool.
275. Negative - parents forget that it is one test conducted under strict conditions where children do not get the same assistance as is given in the classroom, the results do not go towards the report and they aren't available until several months after the event in which time the child has usually progressed beyond the NAPLAN results. Teachers in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 feel very pressured but often forget that the previous year's teaching will have a heavy influence on the results. Parents often do not realise this either.
276. that we still have lots of work to do in maths and comprehension but we are always working on improving this every day not just based on one test on one day. We assess childrens' learning across the curriculum across the year.
277. Stressed teachers, parents and students.

278. Parents don't take other things into consideration when comparing schools. It stresses the parents out. As a teacher and a parent of 2 students who have sat the tests in the same year my heart and head are torn between being a teacher and a parent in regards to how well they do on the NAPLAN. It turns into a 'teach to the test' because if the school doesn't perform well questions are asked by both admin and parents, but then we are told not to do this but it is impossible to cover everything in the curriculum from February to early May before NAPLAN and then things that you aren't expected to teach are on there anyway.
279. Positive in that we get to see how the students are performing and can review teaching strategies. This positive is far outweighed by the negatives associated with the 'competitiveness' of the published data. Schools are taking time out of other teaching areas and students are feeling more anxious about a test that doesn't affect anything relating to their future.
280. Negative - misunderstood by many parents
281. Pressure on teachers to achieve good NAPLAN results from all involved.
282. It labels students at both end of the scales and can have a damaging impact on students at the lower end.
283. Parents who are experienced in NAPLAN regard it as a result of a test on one day rather than an overall result of a Semester's work. Parents of Year 3 children are more concerned that their children do well (often because of all the hype in the media).
284. A ridiculous amount of pressure on teachers to achieve high results and added expectations from parents, regardless of what students are actually able to achieve. Many parents are also preparing their children for NAPLAN at home, adding to the pressure for both the child and their teacher.
285. It wastes precious curriculum time that is more appropriate to the local context and age of the children.
286. The negative impact has been a focus on particulars about NAPLAN for which it is not designed. The positive impact has been a raising of teaching standards and whole school approach to ensure minimum standards are met. Parents meanwhile range from being totally mystified by NAPLAN to totally misled by the media's reporting of NAPLAN results. The MySchool website is one source of information for parents yet it has been promoted as a comprehensive indicator of the value of schools. Inaccuracies in the method of calculating contributing factors such as demographics has also led to some angst with both teachers and parents.
287. NAPLAN has been the major focus for teaching in term one and two. The kids are stressed because they think that they are letting people down if they don't perform. The teachers are stressed because we know that we will cop it in October when our kids are below the state average. Many of the parents are illiterate and we get told to stop making excuses
288. The impact is NEGATIVE.
289. Negative.
290. Placed extra pressure upon teachers, too much importance placed upon the results, and caused anxiety within the parent body.
291. Incredible pressure to perform. Increased and unrealistic competition between schools. Parents not privy to all factors...just data results.
292. Neither. We try to keep it pretty low key.
293. Too much time spent directed at practice for NAPLAN and not on actual assessment work for class.
294. Good for kids to experience different types of assessment
295. Negative impact a time waster. It has been a money making machine for publishers.
296. Parents not sure what NAPLAN is and how it works. Have unrealistic expectations (some positive and some negative) for their kids.
297. School gloats in good results. It tries to blame away any poor results, which always seem to be the fault of the current teacher. Despite weak students being promoted.
298. We are more focused on improving our delivery of curriculum in respect to the problematic NAPLAN questioning, our students need more teaching focused in this area, hopefully time will show that we have more students doing higher levels of maths in senior due to this focus.
299. Such a narrow view of Education when we aim to educate the whole child
300. Negative parent reaction
301. The information is manipulated as a marketing tool. I suspect the impact on parents in our regional area is less than those from city schools where there is more competition and they may use the results as a deciding factor when choosing one school over another.

302. More parents and students see the value and importance of it, but too many parents do not and thus their children absent themselves on the days of the test.
303. Greater competition amongst private schools in the area. Much greater stress on teachers to justify the results achieved by their classes.
304. The students are made to feel "dumb" when it is factors beyond their control that are responsible. Remoteness for Primary Education at Community Schools on Cape York and in the Torres Straits.
305. It has been positive on the whole. I think the spotlight on our schools performance has been a trigger for our school to seek better quality education and results for our students. This transformation has been collaborative and holistic in its approach. I believe education quality has improved and in the near future I expect the data to validate this.
306. Administration time involved with administering tests and filling out student registrations is a lot to ask of teachers and executive staff. A lot of time is consumed with these duties.
307. Negative - we have tried to make NAPLAN preparation low-key however we have had to teach our students to be NAPLAN-wise which requires poor pedagogy disengaging our students. Some students have had heightened stress levels. The preparation has taken time out from our normal lessons. Positive - the data has been able to be used to identify holes in our programs and be able to identify some students who require extra assistance
308. Only the principal gets upset
309. So much pressure on staff especially when reviews are based on the results
310. NAPLAN provides us with support data on our students to reinforce or contrast with educational skills testing. Most importantly it provides diagnostic testing which illustrates strengths and weaknesses on individual test items.
311. Significant pressure on school to outperform other schools in area. Expectations on school performance is unreasonably high
312. Positive- informing parents of student's progress Negative- placing unnecessary pressure on students just when they are settling into the routine of the year
313. I have not observed any positive impact of Naplan testing In any school I have taught in. The test results often do not provide an accurate indication of students' abilities or skills as they are subject to the student's ability to cope with test conditions, as well as how carefully the student has been primed for the very narrow range of assessed skills. Furthermore, the testing process can exacerbate anxiety issues in children who lack resilience and undermine the confidence of students who are challenged by learning or behavioural disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD or those who lie within the ASD spectrum. One issue that holds great concern to me is that there are some students in year three who are not yet developmentally ready for the rigors and level of Naplan tests. These children more often than not are the youngest boys in the grade. Trying to engage students in learning experiences that they are not yet ready for risks the child developing negative feelings about school or themselves as learners and in the worst case can lead the child on a trajectory of disengagement with school.
314. b) students not turning up on the day.
315. It has had an extremely negative impact, both on the school and parents.
316. Parents pressure children to perform for the test.
317. No impact
318. Teaching to the test Gives parents a benchmark - but is it a true representation??
319. Despite extensive teacher professional development, teachers are compelled to teach to the test in preparing children for Naplan. Aust Curric content is put aside to meet the demands of the tests
320. Parents are misinformed about the way in which this data is useful for them individually and how the data can seem to present a particularly positive or negative picture at school level.
321. A total waste of time from the first moment it was ill-conceived Teachers hate it, principals hate it, kids hate it, parents don't understand it (and hate it).
322. The amount of time spent preparing for the tests
323. Negative
324. NAPLAN results focus too much attention on one test as a means of determining everything about the school. It has narrowed the discussion about education and introduced a competitive element into a field that should be collaborative.
325. It has a negative impact of the school I have worked at for the very reason(s) I have started above.
326. We have scored quite high over the past years and one cohort of children brought our results down one year....parents were not too happy about this.

327. Increased pressure on teachers and the schools to prepare students and improve this data.
328. NAPLAN is only useful to educators not parents.
329. Largely negative. Increased pressure and narrowed the curriculum.
330. We are in a low socio economic environment and we also have a high ESL enrolment. We are in the same myschool as elite schools that have different enrolments. The school has many learning needs children and as we are also a Christian school we do not ask any of our students to stay home.
331. It is starting to be a concern for staff as many parents opt out of the state system because our school has support programs in place. Parents want their children to do well.
332. Negative-parents drill their kids beforehand and kids show physical stress before, after and when results come out. Parents "reward" perceived high results. The whole process is disruptive to actual real, valuable and measurable learning.
333. In English programs, we have placed greater emphasis on literacy skills, which is not such a bad thing, but we have had to leave out some of the literature focus, which is disappointing.
334. About as divisive as could be. What a waste of time.
335. increased workload and administration for the school and staff, but parents aren't concerned because the school deliberately downplays NAPLAN as just 1 of many measure or indicators of achievement.