

NAPLAN has an important role in the Australian education space

The value of NAPLAN has been identified by parents, principals, teachers, partners and stakeholders around the country. Below is a selection of reports containing research findings, statements of support for NAPLAN and practical examples of how NAPLAN data has been used to improve school performance. Additionally, ACARA collects testimonials about NAPLAN from print and broadcast media. These can be accessed on the ACARA website:

http://www.acara.edu.au/news_media/testimonials.html

Colmar Brunton: Perspectives on the My School website

Once a child is enrolled in a school, some parents use My School to follow the progress of that school's NAPLAN scores over time or to put their child's NAPLAN scores in context. One of the key aims here is to reconfirm the parents' decision making or, potentially, to take action if the school is interpreted to be underperforming. *Pg 31*

Parents use the My School website to compare NAPLAN scores across schools as an indication of school achievements in the literacy and numeracy areas. *Pg 45, 91*

Some principals look at the NAPLAN data make sure that their school is not performing below average or below expectations. *Page 49*

In schools for which NAPLAN results are particularly positive, the My School website can be used as a marketing tool. For example, NAPLAN data is shown to educate visiting parents about the school. *Page 49*

Some principals use NAPLAN data to monitor and review their own progress with a particular cohort. The facility to graph student gain is considered particularly useful here. NAPLAN data is also used by principals in discussion or information sessions with teachers. *Page 49*

http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/20150304_Perspectives_on_the_My_School_Website.pdf

NAPLAN: Time for a deep breath

The impact of an increased focus on student achievement data that is both driven and enabled by the NAPLAN tests will be to drive schools (or at least those schools interested in improving levels of student achievement) towards rather than away from a focus on the provision of a broad and engaging school curriculum. *Page 22*

http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/auscurric/articles/naplan_timeforadeepbreath.pdf

The Experience of Education: The impacts of high stakes testing on school students and their families

- 70 per cent of parents surveyed believed the information provided by NAPLAN to be useful. *Pg 10*
- More than 50 per cent of parents in favour of NAPLAN. *Pg 9*
- School principals found NAPLAN data to be useful in various ways, such as providing information that would enable teachers to develop more individualised approaches to teaching and learning and helping school staff identify students who appear not to be progressing or identify particular areas missing in teaching. *Pg 13*

http://www.whitlam.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/694199/The_experience_of_education_-_Qualitative_Study.pdf

Primary Principals: Perspectives on NAPLAN Testing & Assessment

“NAPLAN allows individual school data to be compared to a national 'average'. School performance data gives individual schools a snapshot of current year and allows comparison to previous years therefore trend data can be used for planning and staffing.” *Pg 32*

“NAPLAN... provides whole school information that allows us to make decisions about student progress. Teacher judgements... allow teachers to have a better understanding of the student.” *Pg 32*

According to primary principals, for around one third of parents there is a 'baseline' medium level of interest in their child's NAPLAN results, the school's results and teacher performance as it impacts on NAPLAN results. However the focus is really on their own child's results. Around half of all parents have high/very high levels of interest in their own child's NAPLAN results. This figure rises to 70 per cent of parents of children at Independent schools. Parents of children in very large schools also express higher than average interest. *Pg 8*

<http://www.appa.asn.au/reports/Primary-Principals-Perspectives-NAPLAN.pdf>

My School - NAPLAN Discussion Paper

We [APPA] regard NAPLAN as a useful tool for schools and school systems in tracking progress and identifying areas for improvement. We accept that national assessment is one of the tools to provide public information about and strengthen public confidence in schooling and improve accountability and public transparency. We believe it provides one component of the information parents need in making choices about schools for their children. *Pg 3*

<http://www.appa.asn.au/president/MySchool-NAPLAN-Discussion-Paper.pdf>

Effectiveness of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Final Report March 2014

The [Senate Standing References Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations] accepts that data obtained from NAPLAN is of significant value to stakeholders including students, schools, parents, education authorities, the wider community, and state and national governments and the provision of this data through MySchool has enabled greater understanding about the performance of schools. *Pg 25*

ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations stressed the value of the data provided through NAPLAN, and the usefulness of it to authorities. *Pg 28*

Another comparison that can be made between PISA and NAPLAN is the quality of the data it produces about schools, and how useful it is in considering the needs of students and schools as a whole. Much of the debate around NAPLAN has centred on the way information it collects is used as a diagnostic tool, and the corresponding way in which it may affect student stress levels. The quality of data produced by testing and the degree to which it can be interrogated to produce meaningful information that will assist parents, schools and governments to improve individual students' as well as overall school performance is considered critical to the success of standardised testing. *Pg 36*

http://www.aph.gov.au/~media/Committees/Senate/committee/eet_ctte/naplan_2013/report/report.pdf

Examples of NAPLAN data being used to improve school performance:

Measuring What Matters: Student Progress – Grattan Institute

NAPLAN should be strongly supported given the evidence from both Australia and other countries that high-performing education systems have more regular student assessments; efforts to turn around under-performing schools are enhanced with standardised testing like NAPLAN; and student learning improves when individualised instruction builds on assessments of student progress (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007; Woessmann et al., 2009). *Pg 6*

The NAPLAN numeracy scores [at Lakeside Park Secondary School] showed that decline occurred between Year 7 and 8 and 8 and 9. Mathematics teachers in the lower secondary school were asked to evaluate their program and any significant teaching practices that may have caused the reduction in student progress. Further investigation showed that the recently introduced practice of dividing mathematics classes according to aptitude was having negative results. Value-added analysis showed that this had led to a marked deterioration in attainment, particularly amongst less able students, who were no longer able to benefit from the higher performing students in their classroom. Mrs Cleveland has therefore abandoned the policy. Simultaneously, she has launched a development program for less able students, with the hope of correcting the deterioration in attainment amongst these students. *Pg 24*

http://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/016_education_performance_measures_report.pdf

Turning around schools: it can be done – Grattan Institute

In 2010, [Dr MacNeill's] students were substantially behind some eastern states in mathematics (as measured by NAPLAN). He compared the textbooks from their provider with what the company provided in NSW and found Year 3 textbooks he had been given were equivalent to Year 2 textbooks being provided in NSW. By 2012 Australian standards were in place and this problem was gradually overcome. With an improved curriculum and new teaching techniques, [Ellenbrook Primary School's] maths students are now learning at a faster rate than the rest of the country. *Pg 9*

Ravenswood Heights relies on the use of data to achieve its strategic vision for learning. Teachers use a mix of assessments, including NAPLAN, Prose Reading Observation, Behaviour and Evaluation (PROBE) and The Single Word Spelling Test. Teachers are developing explicit assessment guides to help benchmark and analyse student behaviour. They work in groups to collect evidence on what is working well, and how to improve teaching practice. *Pg 12*

The high number of recent immigrant students at Holroyd High School means it is difficult to compare growth in NAPLAN results over time. Many students (44 per cent in 2012) have been in the country for less than three years, so their progress at the school cannot easily be tracked. However, for those whose results are comparable over time, the school is adding significant value. These students improve at a faster rate than the average state student between Year 7 to Year 9 in both literacy and numeracy. *Pg 16*

Teachers continually work on ways to improve student learning. Assessments, including NAPLAN results, are used to diagnose student progress and areas for improvement in [Holroyd High School]. *Pg 17*

<http://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/805-turning-around-schools.pdf>

Colmar Brunton research 2009-2013 **[these reports are not available online]**

http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/resources/Positive_findings_by_Colmar_Brunton.pdf

- Parents felt My School was a useful tool for some who wished to become better informed about a school.
- Parents felt the My School website was of most use to those who were in the decision making process regarding schooling and education for their children.
- Parents and teachers had positive views of NAPLAN and benefits to both schools and students were recognised.