

From:
Mr Stephen Dunne

I would like to raise a number of concerns around the use of NAPLAN data and NAPLAN in general.

I have 5 children in the state schooling system in Australia. I believe NAPLAN data will be sensationalised by the media looking for a juicy story, with absolutely no concern for the social fallout and professional degrading of Teachers.

I am a recent immigrant from the UK who has witnessed the fallout and anguish by performance league tables: widespread migration of students 'to the best schools' away 'from the worst schools' leaving areas socially decimated and communities reeling from a cycle of exile and subsequent underfunding and under-performance on the one hand, to a flocking to 'better schools' where house price both in both the rental and purchasing sectors have gone through the roof, mainly to the detriment of ordinary families' children who cannot afford to stay in their own area due to inaccessibility of housing.

Compounding these issues are the ridiculous 'like-for-like' comparisons that the My School website throws up.

NAPLAN has become the central focus of both primary and secondary schools in Australia. It is an absolute shambolic situation where you judge a school and community on a snapshot of a day in the life of a student and look no further in that students schooling experience, thus labelling them on arbitrary and threadbare evidence.

Whole school-terms in English departments are now being allocated to NAPLAN preparation. Why? Is a singular and narrow test so important to Australia? Schools are coaching students on NAPLAN tricks and tips at the expense of real learning.

The stress on students is overwhelming and the stigma that they attach to themselves when they are coloured 'red' (bad) on their school performance is a shocking indictment on a system that is so insulted from the lessons of their global counterparts that is beggars belief.

I urge the leaders in our country and in the education departments to assess children on a basis of fairness.

I want my children to be seen in a context that looks at all of their schooling experience. I am concerned that without my consent, the results of an unfair test are being harvested and exploited by the Education departments and the media. I am concerned that that my children are becoming NAPLAN clones. I am concerned that Australia is not learning the lessons that other equitable nations have learnt.

My submission to you is to keep NAPLAN data private. That is ethical and responsible. I urge you to reconsider the whole NAPLAN testing system: because we have it in place, doesn't mean that it is right or working!

Regards

Stephen Dunne