

Submission to Naplan Inquiry from Staff of Eastern Creek Public School

We are a small school in the Sydney West Region.

We wish it to be known that whilst we do not disagree with the administering of NAPLAN tests, we do disagree with the publishing of any data that can be used to compare student against student, school against school and state against state.

The only use of data should be as a diagnostic tool to be used for the future benefit of the group of children concerned within that school; and to give the school some direction as to where to focus attention in the coming school year.

No data should be used to compare; to ascertain where special needs funding should go; to rank schools – this has created “teaching to the test” mentality; has the potential for schools to “doctor” results as appears to have happened with this years tests by thankfully only a small number of schools (but who is to say this will not occur more profusely in the future); students being asked not to attend so as their results won't affect the overall school mark; schools electing to have more students exempt from the test so as not to affect their overall performance (this is against the right of all children to be given equal opportunities). It is not right to use a one-off diagnostic tool to rank schools, to give parents a small snippet of information about that school on which to base their enrolment intention. Schools offer a lot more than top marks in a 45minute test.

All students have a right to sit these tests and have their papers assessed but it is common knowledge that some schools exempt those students with perceived or diagnosed learning difficulties to keep their rank high. How is this fair, right or even an honest assessment of schools?

If so much emphasis is put on these three tests, maybe schools should stop spending so much time twice a year writing individual reports for all students on all the six key learning areas. Schools aren't judged on how well they have achieved in HSIE, Science etc so why teach these and why report on them?? What a waste of time the government has spent implementing the mandatory reporting template etc if the importance of all areas of learning are undermined by the NAPLAN tests. It is common knowledge that many schools, if not all, spend at least three weeks prior to the administering of these tests teaching to them. I know our school has done narratives ‘to death’ first term of the last two years because it has been documented that that is what the NAPLAN text type will be.

Isn't this teaching to the test?

Another point is that NAPLAN is testing year 3 and year 5 – how can this be when they are administered to less then three months into the students year 3 and year 5 school life.

Our school most definitely opposes the use of NAPLAN data to rank schools; to compare schools, states etc , to discriminate against students with learning difficulties, to undermine the great work done in our public schools.

As a diagnostic tool yes, as a tool that is detrimental to the rights and fair go for all students and against the Section 18A of the Education Act 1990 states " a person must not, in a newspaper or other document that is publicly available in this State: (a) publish any ranking or other comparison of particular schools according to school results, except with the permission of the principals of the school involved." we say **NO WAY**.