



Australian Education Union

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11 July 2013

Mr Tim Watling
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email : eewr.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Watling

Re: 21 June Committee Hearing regarding ‘The Effectiveness of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy’

I write in response to your request to provide information regarding two questions on notice from the Acting Committee Chair, Senator McKenzie.

At the 21 June Inquiry hearing the AEU was asked about the extent of professional development provided for teachers in the interpretation and use of NAPLAN data and the application of that data in informing teaching and learning.

The AEU informed the Committee of our understanding that this varied from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. We suggested that the Committee might seek to ask state departments and jurisdictions themselves to provide this information, however we were directed to supply further detail regarding the provision of professional development by jurisdictions.

To this end we have written to the heads of state/territory departments requesting that they provide us with the relevant information at their earliest convenience. We will forward information received as it becomes available.

The second issue raised by Senator McKenzie regards the provision of pre-service teacher education in the interpretation and use of NAPLAN data, and whether teacher graduates are adequately prepared in this area.

It is clear from the report of the recently completed Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations References Committee Inquiry ‘Teaching and Learning – Maximising Our Investment in Australian Schools’ (May 2013) that this requires more attention. The report notes that “testing results provide useful data on student performance, however teachers need to be given training to understand and interpret evaluative data.” (Inquiry Report 3.15, p.19)

It makes particular reference to evidence provided to the inquiry by Professor Field Rickards from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education concerning the need for teachers “to be trained how to use and interpret NAPLAN data in order to improve education outcomes”. (Inquiry Report 3.2, p.18)

This is the background to the Committee’s very first recommendation:

Recommendation 1

3.17 The committee recommends that the COAG Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood, and the Commonwealth Government, provide teachers with training on how to use and interpret evaluative data. (Inquiry Report, p.19)

We trust that this provides the Committee with the information it requires, and look forward to providing further details regarding jurisdictional issues as they become available.

Yours sincerely

Angelo Gavrielatos
Federal President