

From:
Mr Darren Sinclair

NAPLAN CONCERNS

As a parent of Prep, Primary, Secondary and University students, there are many concerns about testing regimes such as NAPLAN and the associated publishing of the so called data.

My primary concern is the fundamental consideration of why the information should be published, or even collected. The implicit message from the government is that there is an expectation that parents be encouraged to shop around for schooling.

Firstly, Public school parents are not ensured of a place at their school of choice, depending on capacity and local populations.

Secondly, there is an implied agenda that the academic achievement of a student is more important than social connection to the local community. If every Australian parent reacted to NAPLAN results by moving schools, we would have mega-institutions, with students disconnected from their own locales. Given what we know about depression and contributing factors for suicide, this demeaning of the importance of local community is a dangerous development.

Naturally, there are environmental issues with this scenario as well, as local bus routes could no longer service local schools and parents would be under taking even longer commutes on more congested roads.

Furthermore, as the results of such testing is normative, it is a futile exercise in any case, as cohort results would simply reflect the changes caused by the churn of student movement.

Those least empowered to be able to respond to such a trend would be left behind in shirking, residualised schools. Far better to use classroom time to meet the needs of students than to teach to the test content. This often features problem solving that is based on closed questions, rather than extended, creative thinking that can respond to student interests, as is dictated by the format of these tests.

Sincerely,
D. Sinclair