

From:
Mr. Peter Posetti

I support the Naplan initiative of the Federal government. The regrettable outcome is the excessive importance given to it by the media and selective interest groups including teachers' unions. The generated data provides a snapshot only and is probably not intended to be interpreted with the importance our media gives it. Schools are complex entities which attempt to provide the best possible outcomes for its students. You can't characterise the full scope of what schools do or don't do using data set generated by Naplan. If this is an attempt to gather data to help schools and communities, then surely there are better ways of identifying known disadvantage. I would like to see jurisdictions move away from comparing outcomes and focus on improving possibilities for seriously disadvantaged students. Life has no level playing field, but where disadvantage exists, we have a moral obligation to rectify it. This should involve a much closer look at the Queensland curriculum; policy development and implementation; a close look at teacher accreditation; and, realistic funding to enable the needed changes. May I say that should the curriculum be right, the outcomes will be right. However, research seems to suggest that there is something seriously wrong with the design and delivery of curriculum in Queensland and particularly so in my teaching area of Mathematics. Current research informs us that this problem is endemic across the country and across the education sectors. Far too many Queensland schools are underachieving if the Naplan results are to be believed: Of the top 100 schools across the country, Queensland has three representatives. This is odd when approximately 25% of schools across the country are found in Queensland. So we are under-represented at the top and over-represented at the other end of the scale. If we can do anything at all, let's prioritise educational outcomes by improving curriculum delivery and design, supporting the national curriculum initiatives and supporting the re-invigoration initiatives across the teaching and learning sectors. My last rant concerns the relevance of testing children so young as is the practice in Grades 3 and 5. These children are too young and when age is a factor it will be significant at these earlier stages. The argument that age is significant in the secondary sector is a well-oiled furphy.