

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2012-2013**

Agency - Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority

DEEWR Question No. EW0093_13

Senator Boyce provided in writing.

Question

ACARA - assisting students complete test

School principals, teachers, contractors and test convenors going to these extremities - altering, allowing students to resit the test, relaying answers to students, narrowing the curriculum to accommodate the test - suggests to me that there is an implicit and forceful pressure to achieve a certain standard, and confusion as to how the test results will be used. I note in a previous submission ACARA admitted some breaches may be the result of a lack of understanding of test protocols and usage. Is ACARA now confident that education providers have been properly informed as to how NAPLAN and the test results will be employed? Can you elaborate on the improved communication strategy planned by ACARA's in its submission?

Answer

ACARA has provided the following response.

The NAPLAN test administration process is devolved to jurisdictions via the Test Administration Authorities. Jurisdictions are responsible for ensuring that information on test administration is made available to parents and school communities. It should be noted that each year there are very few instances of protocol breaches reported, many of which are a result of schools self-reporting and wanting to be open and transparent in their activities.

The NAPLAN 2012 Communications Strategy included a range of activities, to ensure key messages about the appropriate conduct of the tests were heard, such as:

- stakeholder briefings (for parent associations, jurisdictions and their Test Administration Authorities, Catholic and independent school sectors);
- media interviews;
- email to principals outlining what's coming up and possible content for potential inclusion in school newsletters for distribution to parents, and a reminder about the importance of test security and the *National Protocols for Test Administration* (NPTA); integrity of test administration and confidence in schools, and where to go for additional information.

In 2011, the *Handbook for Principals* was restructured to ensure that all principals received a copy of the relevant sections of the NPTA which outline permissible and

appropriate conduct and the need for all breaches to be investigated and reported.
All schools participating in the tests receive this official handbook