

Senate Inquiry into NAPLAN

Submission by NSW Teachers Federation members of Wyrallah Road Primary School, Nielson Street, Lismore, N.S.W., 2480.

teachers recognise the importance of assessment and reporting to our work.

We support the rights of parents/caregivers to get accurate information on their child's progress.

We remember the introduction of standardised testing in NSW, known as the Basic Skills Test. This test was designed to measure a 'snapshot' of student performance. We used the data from this test to inform our teaching. Teachers were instructed by our employer, the Department of Education and Training, not to prepare students for the test and colleagues in some NSW schools were disciplined for doing so. With the introduction of NAPLAN testing we have seen our employer instruct teachers to prepare children for the test and provide resources to help us do this. We see some schools place significant emphasis on coaching students for the test. We are concerned that the emphasis of the testing program has shifted. Some schools "teach to the test" at the expense of a balanced teaching and learning program.

We believe a test that was intended to help students is, instead, being used in damaging ways. A test designed to measure individual student performance is being used to create average scores to rank and compare schools on the My Schools website. The tests are not accurate enough to do this. My School website information published in January was both inaccurate and incomplete. Misleading comparisons of schools were created. The media misused this information by creating league tables of school results.

Misuse of this data is misleading, inaccurate, damaging, demoralising and unnecessary. We urge the Government to introduce measures to protect students, schools and school communities from the damaging effects of league tables and the incomplete, inaccurate and invalid representation of student data on the My School website.

Wyrallah Road Primary School NSW Teachers Federation Members