

NAPLAN Senate Enquiry

Aitken College
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I would like to make the following comments:

Numeracy Test (Calculator permitted)

- (a) Many schools including ours are going to 1:1 programs. Our students in Years 7 and 9 are not required to purchase a calculator but instead use a calculator app on their iPad. We were under the assumption that for Numeracy Calculator test this year students would be able to use the iPad calculator app as long as students did not have access to wireless. On attempting to confirm this with VCAA and ACARA an interesting saga developed. We were informed that students were not permitted to use their iPad (when they were in 2012) and must use a calculator. It was explained to me that at the protocols meeting held after last year's NAPLAN, **"that iPads were not permitted"**, was agreed to by all the states. Nowhere could I find communication of this to schools. Also there were no clarifying statements evident in the 2013 handbook regarding the use of iPads. Interestingly, both the 2012 and 2013 handbooks on this matter were identical.
- (b) Our students were required to bring in a calculator and the College also went to the effort of purchasing a significant number of calculators) to ensure that students had access. We were not able to train students in the use of their calculators and I believe they would have been disadvantaged as the calculator was not the device with which they were most familiar. In addition, nowhere in the NAPLAN handbook were definitions given for multifunction devices or the minimum specifications that a calculator must have in order for it to be satisfactory for use.

Administration

- (c) Inordinate amount of staff time is utilised to administer the tests and no funding is provided to cover the cost of the staffing required for the administration.
- (d) NAPLAN tests have merit but the long time between the testing and receiving results do not make them useful for teaching and learning support, for either teachers or students.

Aitken College
30 May 2013