

From:
Mrs Lynley Eadie

I am very concerned that the NAPLAN data is the only assessment information available on the MY SCHOOL website. This data is then used to compare schools on the basis of that one test. The 'like school' comparisons is not a fair comparison - with many factors being overlooked - the level of resourcing being one of the main factors!

Over the last few years, schools and teachers have become very experienced in using different data sources to inform and reflect on teaching practice. The NAPLAN data is just one of many sources of data available to schools. It was never designed to provide an accurate overall picture of any student's progress, it only provides a snapshot of their progress.

It is essential that teachers and schools use data from further sources to triangulate in order to accurately pinpoint a student's level. Our school is constantly reflecting on individual student results and class/subject profiles from several different sources - class assignments, running records of group reading texts, on-demand tests in reading and numeracy, online literacy and numeracy interview, moderation between teachers of student writing tasks, teacher judgements in relation to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, student self-assessment against Rubrics etc

Schools in our area were named and shamed in league tables published by the Herald Sun earlier this year. They named the 5 best and worst performing schools in each area. Their information was lifted straight from the 'My School' website. These schools and their students did not benefit in any way from this publication. Several of these schools are currently part of the National Schools Partnership to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes within the schools. The additional pressure of biased reporting caused more harm than good - staff working extremely hard to improve outcomes felt they were being targeted and told they weren't doing a good job.

I value the NAPLAN test for what it is - a snapshot we can use to inform our teaching and learning at our school. It gives us a snapshot of individual students and provide us with trends to see improvement within a cohort of students overtime.

It cannot be used as a sole indicator of what is going on in a school. It cannot be used to compare a school's performance from year to year.

One of our local schools who rated highly on the 'My School' website had a particularly talented cohort of Year 5 students last year. The comparison with this year will indicate a downward trend - they will not perform as well. This is not a reflection on the school, teachers or the programs - it simply indicates the difference between two cohorts of students.

Similarly, in smaller schools where class sizes are much smaller, one or two students in a given year level will impact considerably on a schools overall performance. It would be extremely unfair to make comparisons from year to year.

The most valuable data from NAPLAN is the growth of students across the Year 3 and Year 5 results. The three or five year trend is valuable for an indication

of improvement. Unfortunately this data isn't available because of the change from AIM testing in Victoria to NAPLAN across Australia.