

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Agency - Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority

DEEWR Question No. EW0808_12

Senator Mason asked on 20 October 2011 , Hansard page 26

Question

last round of NAPLAN scores

Senator BACK: I wonder if it is possible to take on notice for us a number of things for the last round of NAPLAN scores, if in fact your data sets allow you to do this: firstly, the performance of students who are homeschooled vis-a-vis the entire population with regard to NAPLAN; secondly, School of the Air students; thirdly, if it is possible, an understanding of the difference in the performance of students in cities and major regional towns as opposed to smaller rural schools, schools in rural communities; finally—I refer to Steiner schools, but what term do you use for boutique or exotic schools? Senator Chris Evans: Be careful there, Senator. You are digging a very big hole. Senator BACK: I know. I have been at the AD and BC stuff. I just want to know: is there a term that is actually used for schools that are not in the mainstream? Dr Hill: Some of them fall under systems, and where they fall under systems they are fairly readily identified. Senator BACK: But the students must complete the NAPLAN test, mustn't they? Everybody must do that. Dr Hill: Yes, if they are in a registered school—and of course the home students are not. Senator BACK: They do not sit the NAPLAN test? Dr Hill: If they are not in a registered school we do not have their data. Senator BACK: But do they sit the NAPLAN test? Dr Hill: No. Senator BACK: Not compulsorily. Dr Hill: No. We had better take that on notice.

Answer

ACARA has provided the following response.

Home schooled students

Requirements for 'home schooling' vary between jurisdictions, but in many cases home-schooled students are registered with a school and would participate in the NAPLAN tests as a student of that school, with their results included as part of that school's data. It is not possible to analyse the data separately for students who are enrolled under such an arrangement as this is not currently an agreed category for reporting.

School of the Air students

ACARA is aware of 11 'School of the Air' schools in Australia. For each school up to 20 average NAPLAN scores are provided (for five domains across up to four year levels). These data are available on the *My School* website.

Geo-location

With respect to students in cities and large regional towns compared to students in smaller rural schools and rural communities, the annual NAPLAN National Reports provide comparison information for each of the five domains tested for each year level on the four Australian Bureau of Statistics areas of geo-location – metropolitan, provincial, remote, and very remote – and by state and territory.

Non-mainstream schools

Schools can be categorised as Government (approx. 71% in 2010), Catholic (18%), or Independent (11%). While many independent schools follow a mainstream curriculum, some provide a program based on a particular educational philosophy such as Steiner schools).

Schools are registered/accredited at the state/territory level. All schools are expected to participate in NAPLAN tests. At this point in time, ACARA does not have structured information on the nature of the education programs provided in individual schools. It is therefore not possible to provide an accurate list of all non-mainstream schools and their comparative performance.

In response to the example provided, ACARA is aware of 31 schools incorporating the word 'Steiner' in their official school name. Information about each school's comparative performance against the Australian average for 2010 is available on the *My School* website.