

## NAPLAN 2014

'The value of the detailed NAPLAN data at the national, state, system and individual school level has been largely overlooked in the sometimes superficial coverage of NAPLAN, including the persistent claim about stress on young students (despite over many years no objective evidence having been brought forward to support such a claim).

'However, the writing results should not be used as a reason to abandon NAPLAN. Rather, the focus should be on addressing the issues with the writing task and then get on with the job of using the overall NAPLAN outcomes as a rich piece of evidence to drive improved student outcomes.

'Queensland is a good example of where NAPLAN outcomes have helped improve state results. The Queensland performance in national testing when NAPLAN was first introduced in 2008 was a shock to the then Queensland Government. Queensland students lagged well behind the performance of students in the major states.

'There is no doubt that the 2008 NAPLAN results provided a wake-up call for Queensland, and since that time there has been a focused effort on improvement. Seven years on, the Queensland performance on NAPLAN is recognised as considerably improved.

'Since the inception of NAPLAN, Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) has been encouraging schools to look at NAPLAN performance in the upper bands at each year level. (NAPLAN results at each year level are reported in 10 bands. For Year 3, Band 2 represents the national minimum standard. Year 3 students in Band 6 are performing at very high levels, well above the national minimum standard.)

'In 2008, just 9.8 per cent of Queensland Year 3 students achieved Band 6 in reading compared to 20.9 per cent in NSW. In 2014, 20.9 per cent of Queensland Year 3 students achieved Band 6. This is a significant improvement, validating the policy initiatives and focus on improved student outcomes over the past seven years.

'Despite the significant improvement in Queensland NAPLAN results, there is still more work to be done.

'State improvements have been driven by not only big ticket policy initiatives (for example, introduction of the Prep Year, kindergarten participation rates, Australian Curriculum) but by a school-level focus on teaching and learning. ISQ's own Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy has helped gain improvements, and this would not have been possible without the information about school performance available through NAPLAN.

'Yes, we do need to remember that NAPLAN results show a snapshot in time and are not the sole measure of students' abilities. However, we should embrace NAPLAN as the mechanism to monitor student outcomes at the national, State and school levels and to drive policy initiatives for improved student outcomes.'

*David Robertson*

*Executive Director of Independent Schools Queensland*

[Online opinion, Australian e-journal of social and political debate](#)

*28 August 2014*

## THE ARTS

‘According to academics, the use of music in classrooms makes learning easier. Australian research shows students who play a musical instrument improve their NAPLAN literacy results by a year.’

*Prime Wagga Wagga*

*28 August 2014*

## ONLINE ASSESSMENT TRIALS

‘A border primary school has become one of the first in Australia to trial NAPLAN testing online instead of on paper. ... The online test means students will get feedback much sooner and educators can adapt their teaching. Adrian Piccoli, NSW Minister for Education, says the test is an important diagnostic tool....’

*WIN News Bendigo*

*28 August 2014*

‘Holy Spirit School Lavington has become one of the first to trial NAPLAN testing online, rather than on paper. Adrian Piccoli, NSW Minister for Education, says teachers can use the results to see where the strengths and weaknesses of students lay.’

*WIN Gippsland*

*28 August 2014*

‘The Holy Spirit School, Lavington, is the first school in Australia to trial NAPLAN testing online instead of on paper. Mark McLean, Principal, says our students are 21st century learners. The school is one of 300 in the country to trial the online test. Online results are available within a week. Adrian Piccoli, NSW Minister for Education, says that it is a diagnostic tool for teachers to use the information to see where their strengths and weaknesses are.’

*WIN Mildura*

*28 August 2014*

‘Holy Spirit School in Lavington is one of 300 schools in the country to trial a new online test, which has been initiated by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.’

Principal Mark McLean welcomed the online testing and said it would make NAPLAN more relevant for students and their teachers.

‘Research shows students learn from immediate feedback,’ he said.

‘At the moment we do the test in May and don’t get the results until about term four; by then it is too late in the year for teachers to adapt their teaching.

‘We’ll be able to do the test and have the results early the next week.’

Students in Years 3 and 5 yesterday trialled the online test, with Mr Mac-Lean noticing the students were more engaged.

‘This is their world,’ he said.

‘The test is immediate, colourful and interactive and that’s the beauty of it.’

The Authority’s Communications Director Robyn Ziino said the online system focused on tailored testing.

‘NAPLAN online is about what a child can answer, which leads to greater engagement,’ she said.

‘Everyone starts on the same level but students who are progressing easily through the test will get harder questions and those who are having difficulty go to a lower level.’

Mrs Ziino said a key part of the online system was addressing some of the concerns people had about NAPLAN.

‘The results will be given back to schools in a shorter timeframe and greater use of them can be made within the school,’ she said.

Mrs Ziino said research showed children from all backgrounds – including Indigenous and disadvantaged students – were more engaged online.

Mrs Ziino said she expected the online system would come into full effect by 2016–17.

*Albury Border Mail*  
*26 August 2014*

‘Year 7 and 9 students from Echuca College took part in targeted testing studies on Thursday and Friday as NAPLAN prepares to go online.

The college is one of 300 schools taking part this August and September in the third study to finalise online targeted test design and its branching mechanism.

This will mean students will be directed to certain sets of questions based on demonstrated abilities.

Principal Chris Eeles said 25 students from Years 7 and 9 respectively took part in the tests on a variety of devices.

‘They worked hard and completed the tests on a variety of devices. We tried to make it as realistic as possible using desktops, laptops and iPads, which the children favoured because they could enlarge the questions,’ he said.

Trial testing in schools will highlight potential issues with the new model such as access to online resources, time constraints, sore eyes and flat batteries.

Mr Eeles said Echuca College was lucky its students all have their own personal devices but can see bigger schools finding it more difficult.

'We only had a small group take part, we will have to look at how we will manage when we have the whole year seven and nine cohorts logging on at the same time.

'These trials are only in early days, like anything we should be able to overcome these issues once identified. We don't want batteries going flat on iPads half way through a test, or children getting sore eyes from staring at a screen,' he said.

Mr Eeles said he is interested to see how the online model evolves and looks forward to feedback on student results.

'The facilitators seemed very impressed by our children, which is a good thing,' he said.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has been developing a plan to move the NAPLAN tests online since 2012.

It's hoped the move will allow students to be tested on their individual ability as well as providing faster turn-around of results.

The online model has no set date and 2015 NAPLAN test will be conducted on paper.'

*The Riverine Herald*  
26 August 2014

## NAPLAN 2014

'We are happy with the results our students achieved in the initial release of the 2014 NAPLAN data.

'As a school, we have focused on our priorities of engagement and commitment and believe this focus has really paid off.

'We have worked hard at developing and presenting engaging and focused educational programs.

'Our NAPLAN results are another set of data indicating our students are having success.'

*Andrew Whitney*  
Principal,  
Fairview Primary School  
Collie Mail  
26 August 2014

'Qld and the ACT were the first states to go to the National Curriculum because Qld was lagging behind. NAPLAN results show Qld has vastly improved but there is much more still to be done to improve results.'

*Jean Paul Langbroek*  
Education Minister QLD  
ABC Brisbane  
26 August 2014

## ENGLISH CURRICULUM

'...The new national English curriculum, with an emphasis on grammar, segues nicely into language learning.'

*Dr Jo Carr  
Adjunct Professor, QUT  
ABC North Queensland  
26 August 2014*