

MEDIA RELEASE

Ongoing problems with NAPLAN see principals question its reliability

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) has been inundated by comments from principals across Australia questioning the validity and reliability of this year's NAPLAN testing. Following the first day connectivity issues, principals said their teachers had to adjust arrangements quickly while Year Three and Year Five primary students felt the pressure of delays and interruptions.

Malcolm Elliott, president of the Australian Primary Principals Association said there are many reports of students experiencing confusion and disappointment as the NAPLAN Online function failed, particularly in the Writing component. He quoted from one report,

"Yesterday our students were greatly affected with the drop outs on the NAPLAN platform. Some students were out for up to 12 minutes and some only a couple of minutes; however, the drop outs occurred several times. All students were affected in one way or the other. It was distressing for the students as they kept losing their train of thought, needing extra time to refocus once the platform came back online."

Mr Elliott said,

"Most principals see value in NAPLAN as a tool to support school-based assessment. However, when primary-aged children face the problems of the last few days in a testing regime that attracts national exposure, we might need to step back and reflect on aspects of the testing.

"We recognise that the issues are more to do with internet connectivity than the program itself and appreciate how hard the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and Education Services Australia (ESA) have been working to redress the situation. We welcome, too, the improvements for Day 2 of the program.

"While a large number of tests were completed successfully, any system that falls so far short seriously affects perceptions of reliability and purpose of a national test."

Mr Elliott believed the issues with connectivity have further undermined confidence in NAPLAN across Australia.

"Unfortunately, the concerns raised by principals have once again brought into question the reliability and validity of the NAPLAN regime.

"When the results come into schools and find their way onto the My School website, the validity of national data sets from this year's testing will see more questions asked."

APPA is the professional association representing over 7,200 school leaders across Australia.

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