



# Victorian Principals Association

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## VPA Position Paper

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### NAPLAN

The Victorian Principals Association (VPA) is concerned that Federal Government funding based on the number of highly performing students in NAPLAN tests is creating an unhealthy competitive environment between schools that is not benefiting students or the system.

#### **Purpose**

The VPA seeks to eliminate the current practice of using NAPLAN results to rank schools on the basis that extensive international research indicates there is no conclusive evidence national testing raises student performance.

#### **Background to the VPA Position**

The VPA position has been determined in the following context:

- NAPLAN provides a narrow measurement of student performance and subsequently school performance
- Measurement cohorts over a two year period are not valid as cohorts change frequently
- NAPLAN is only one snapshot of school performance undertaken at two year levels in most schools
- There is an undue focus on 'teaching to the test'
- Exclusions from the testing program are too narrow
- Tests have resulted in distressed students, especially in the younger years
- NAPLAN used by the DEECD to cover too many bases in the school accountability process
- One size does not fit all in any testing program. The needs of individual students versus whole school requires careful balancing

#### **VPA Position**

The VPA advocates for:

- A broader measurement of student and school success with a triangulation of assessment tasks to ascertain and substantiate student performance
- The Michael Fullan approach with sample testing rather than whole cohort testing should be utilised as evidence has demonstrated this testing to be most effective
- Sample tests such as the New Zealand model would be more relevant to schools, consequently providing choice and flexibility for schools
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 ESL students should be exempted from NAPLAN testing e.g. for the first 2 years after arrival in Australia
- Reduction in the system pressure on individual student performance and competitive school performance

## References

Fullan, Professor Michael, *Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform*' Centre for Strategic Education, 2011, [http://www.vpa.org.au/image/ba3j/Fullans\\_Education\\_Reform\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.vpa.org.au/image/ba3j/Fullans_Education_Reform_Paper.pdf)  
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