Australian Education Union opposes NAPLAN online as teachers and principals raise concerns

The Australian Education Union has called on all state and territory education ministers to abandon the rollout of NAPLAN online and engage in urgent discussions about issues raised by teachers and principals.

Correna Haythorpe, Federal President of the Australian Education Union said the shift online would put many students and schools across the country at a severe disadvantage, with unequal access to computer technology and serious issues regarding the technical capacity and resources of schools.

“Students are being asked to complete this test online while many of our schools simply will not have the capacity, technical support or resources from education departments to make this achievable," said Ms Haythorpe.

“This only serves to reinforce inequality in our classrooms. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds will be disadvantaged. These results will not show us learning outcomes, they will show us whether or not a child has had access to technology and how proficient they are at using that technology.

“If states go ahead with the implementation of NAPLAN online thousands of students in our schools will be put at a severe disadvantage. Every state and territory education minister must act to protect students by stopping the implementation of the online test and engage in consultation with the profession about the issues.

“Many schools in regional and rural areas do not have reliable internet connections, and students from low socio-economic areas often don’t have the same level of access to technology as others. Putting these students in a situation where they must sit the test online is unfair and will simply serve to measure the different levels of technology-proficiency.

“We have called on each relevant minister to demand they take immediate action. It is vital that all education ministers undertake comprehensive consultation with principals and teachers in order to get the full picture from those who work in our schools and understand the enormous barriers that students face.

“Our students do not need to be put through the pressure of sitting a test online, particularly when principals and teachers across the country are sounding the warning bells.

“There is also the question around the legitimacy of assessment online. Our students deserve to have their written work reviewed and assessed by human markers – not by computers. Computer-based marking of students’ extended prose is educationally unsound.

“NAPLAN online is fundamentally flawed and must not be implemented. We call on every state and territory education minister to put the needs of every student first by scrapping the move to computer-based testing,” said Ms Haythorpe.

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