Avoid simplistic conclusions from 2021 NAPLAN results: AEU

Political leaders should avoid drawing simplistic conclusions from the 2021 NAPLAN results, according to the Australian Education Union (AEU).

“NAPLAN is a deeply flawed test, and its deficiencies need to be considered in any reading of the 2021 results,” AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said.

“The test results must not be used by politicians to avoid their responsibility to ensure that public schools are funded properly, and that educational disadvantage is addressed with additional resources.

“NAPLAN does not effectively measure a student’s learning outcomes or give an accurate assessment of their educational achievements.

“The narrow focus of the test reduces students to a number on a spreadsheet and does not take into account teachers’ informed judgement, the daily learning that occurs in the classroom and issues relating to student health and well-being which are deeply important during this pandemic.”

Recent work by the University of New South Wales’ Gonski Institute demonstrates that NAPLAN’s census-based approach is detrimental to students, teachers and parents and not fit-for-purpose.

Three quarters of teachers say NAPLAN is ineffective and increases pressure on teachers and students, according to data from the AEU’s 2020 State of our Schools survey.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the existing disadvantages and inequities in education. The best way to address this is by investing in public schools,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“In considering the 2021 results, it’s important to remember that states like NSW and Victoria have provided additional funding to offer extra support to students.

“This highlights the need for the federal government to address the shocking inequity in public school funding.

“If any conclusion at all can be drawn from the 2021 NAPLAN results, it’s that the federal government must ensure public schools are funded to a minimum of 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard so that every child, no matter their circumstances, can have access to a high-quality education.”

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Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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