Dear parents,

Years 7 & 9 NAPLAN Testing

The AEU (Australian Education Union) is implementing a moratorium on the NAPLAN testing until they receive assurances from the Federal Government that the information gained from the tests will be accurate and reliable, and that it will not continue to be misused on the My School website.

The NSW Teachers Federation, the union representing the staff at this school has agreed that teaching staff will not implement or supervise the NAPLAN tests at this time.

There may be external supervision of these tests and if so, I expect you will be informed directly about this by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

On the day of the test parents should send their children to school as usual. The union moratorium only applies to supervising the NAPLAN tests. Normal classes are expected to run. If your child doesn’t do the test the school will continue to make sure that all parents and students receive open, transparent and rigorous reporting on their progress in all subjects.

The staff of this school, the AEU and the public school teachers they represent are not opposed to information or transparency. What they want is to make sure that the information provided to parents, students and the public is accurate, reliable and complete, and will enhance educational opportunities for students rather than damage them.

Non-government schools are more immediately dependent on the Federal Government for funding than are public schools. This makes them more vulnerable to pressure from the Federal Government, particularly as public schools are primarily funded by State Governments. However, private school teachers, principals and the union that represents them (the IEU or Independent Education Union) have also expressed their opposition to the misuse of NAPLAN data on the My School website.

This has been a difficult decision for educators to undermine the decision of a democratically elected government but, in the end, they have put their concerns about the negative impact of the My School website on their student’s educational opportunities above their reluctance to oppose a democratically elected government.

Educators remain fundamentally concerned that the Federal Government continues to ignore the widespread and expert criticism and objections to the use of NAPLAN data on the My School website. Criticism and objections have come from across the pedagogical spectrum – from classroom teachers to Professors of Education – and from across all sectors.

At first sight My School has everything going for it: information about schools in one place, all the appearance and language of openness, authority, clear data and useful information. But critics have identified many problems, especially the use of narrow tests - designed to improve student learning - to sum up the worth of a whole school. Our parents know that schools are about much more than this.

The website claims to allow you to fairly compare schools – but many researchers have shown that the measures are not sufficiently reliable or valid. The result is that comparisons and league tables encouraged by My School data are misleading and damaging in ways that can and should be avoided. Governments seem
to think that this doesn’t matter. But it can seriously and unfairly impact on our schools, our children and our communities. As school principals it matters to us.

There has been considerable media attention to *My School* and NAPLAN. Better information in depth is obtainable from a number of sites and articles.

4. The website for the NSW Department of Education and Training is [https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/)
7. Other recent articles which challenge claims made by *My School* can be found at:
8. Many of these links will take you to news and articles about similar developments overseas.

I discussed the contents of this letter with the Coffs Harbour High P & C last night and was pleased to receive their overwhelming support. I am available this afternoon at the Year 8 and Year 9 Parent Teacher meeting or at the Barbecue and Cyber Bullying forum on Wednesday evening if you would like to discuss the moratorium or the *My School* website. As always I can also be reached by phone or email.

Yours sincerely,

Patti Kearns
Principal