

***To keep teachers informed, please post this newsletter on staff noticeboards.***

## 2012 Marking operation

Congratulations on a job well done to all the markers (approximately 400) who worked so conscientiously to complete the writing test marking.

The scanning and data entry of the other test papers in readiness for marking by officers of the QSA is now complete.

## Data processing

As part of the normal data cleansing processes, schools may receive an email from the QSA requesting clarification of information provided on, or omitted from, the front covers of testbooks. This information is necessary for matching students across the years. Please assist us by responding as soon as possible.

## 2012 School surveys

Although the 2012 school surveys were due for return on Friday 22 June, late returns will be processed — we would like to receive as much feedback as possible to review and evaluate our processes.

## 2012 Test reports

In readiness for the Minister for Education's announcement, student reports will be sent to schools in September in the week preceding the school holidays. Schools will receive one printed report for each student for distribution to parents/carers. Schools will be asked to distribute the reports following the Minister's public release of the 2012 NAPLAN data.

School and class reports will be available to schools in electronic format on the secure section of the QSA website.

## Accessing school and class reports from the QSA website

For security purposes, principals will need to access the NAPLAN portal on the QSA website, select "NAPLAN Results login" and use their school Brief Identification Code (BIC) and password to access school and class reports. Personal BICs and passwords will **not** provide access to this site.

Alternatively, reports may be accessed through the "School administration and reports" link under the "Services online" heading on the QSA homepage.

Before the release of the test reports, principals should familiarise themselves with the procedures needed to gain access to this area of the QSA website.

Where there has been a change of principal, it may be necessary to reset the school password. This can be done via the "General login & accounts" page of the website:

[www.qsa.qld.edu.au/qsa\\_secure/QSAlogin.do](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/qsa_secure/QSAlogin.do).

The school BIC will remain the same, and may be checked at:

[www.qsa.qld.edu.au/qsa\\_secure/jsp/schoollist.jsp](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/qsa_secure/jsp/schoollist.jsp).

## 2012 NAPLAN — some myths

Reports to the QSA and discussions with teachers have raised some misconceptions about some aspects of the tests.

**Myth 1:** Students must colour in the bubble completely or, alternatively, not colour outside the bubble.

**The reality:** All that is needed is an indication of the answer. Colouring outside the boundaries of the bubble is only a problem if it extends into the next bubble. The colouring does not need to be neat.

**Myth 2:** Student writing won't be marked if the handwriting is too poor or the writing is too faint.

**The reality:** All scripts are marked. The markers put considerable effort into marking scripts with poor handwriting and, indeed, making sense of poor spelling. In such a large group of teachers, there is always someone who can read a script.

The greatest challenges in marking the writing are presented by the use of mechanical pencils such as Pacers, which result in very, very pale writing. Although these do not scan well enough to mark on-screen, the screen images are usually darker than the original script. Markers generally use both the screen image and the paper image to mark these scripts. Sometimes two markers will work together to mark a script. If students use the required **2B and HB pencils** these extreme and expensive steps would not be needed.

## 2012 NAPLAN — some observations

### *Handwriting*

Some students need to be helped to develop correct letter and number formation. While every effort is made to read and mark answers and QSA personnel check answers looking for potential misinterpretations, students give themselves the best chance when they write neatly and clearly.

### *Teaching writing*

Observations from the marking centre suggest that many students shaped their writing around a structural recipe, usually the five-paragraph or “hamburger” structure, rather than their own ideas or their audience’s needs.

Before students can craft their writing to be persuasive, they need to be able to take a stance and then to substantiate that position with related and elaborated ideas. This will help students to write a cohesive text that is more likely to feature their own voice and be more interesting to a reader.

### *Numeracy responses*

Students in all year levels need to pay more attention to the formation of the numerals they enter as answers to constructed-response questions. As with writing, every effort is made to read students’ responses. However, careless formation of numerals makes this difficult.

Many students also need to pay closer attention to the inclusion of “units” (e.g. centimetres, pages, faces) in their answers. Most constructed-response

items have these printed outside the answer box so there is no need for the student to rewrite them. This occasionally results in the incorrect unit being recorded, causing the answer to be marked incorrect.

The conventions for recording sums of money also need consideration. The ways in which some students record these indicates that they do not understand the meaning of the decimal point.

## Trial of 2013 test materials

A random selection of schools across Australia will participate in trialling the 2013 test materials, between 1 and 10 August 2012. All participating schools will have already have been notified and contacted by ACER, the contractor responsible for managing the trial.

The trial is needed to collect data and other information about items that will potentially be used in 2013. This will ensure that the tests have the necessary range and balance of items and that the items are working as they should. Schools can expect to be selected in either the equating or the trial sample about once in every three years.

As the Test Administration Authority for Queensland, the QSA has been kept informed of the trial processes and procedures.

Participating schools should direct any enquiries to: Lee Willett, Manager, NAPLAN (QSA) (07) 3864 0481.