

## NAPLAN numeracy, single-sex schools, and SES

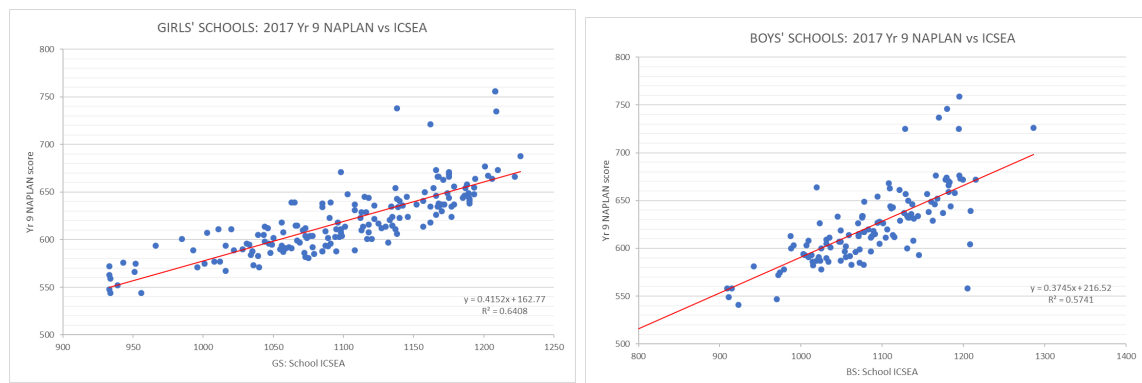
Gilah Leder  
 Monash University  
 <gilah.leder@monash.edu>

Helen Forgasz  
 Monash University  
 <helen.forgasz@monash.edu>

Since its launch in 2008, The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] (National Assessment Program, 2016) has attracted voluminous attention, favourable and unfavourable, from parents, educational authorities, and researchers. A decade later it is timely to reflect strategically on information gathered through this national testing regime.

We draw on 2017 NAPLAN numeracy data from single-sex schools to explore the putative link between students' socio-economic background, school sector, and NAPLAN achievements.

By focussing on students from single-sex schools (boys' schools and girls' schools separately), our sample is mainly restricted to schools with Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage [ICSEA] above the national average of 1000. Our analyses reveal that a school's ICSEA score is highly predictive of NAPLAN numeracy achievements at each grade level (3, 5, 7, & 9) for girls' schools and boys' schools. Sample graphs for Grade 9 national data are shown below. The correlations between NAPLAN achievement and school ICSEA are high: 0.80 ( $R^2=0.6408$ ) for girls' schools, and 0.76 ( $R^2=0.5741$ ) for boys' schools.



Are these correlation patterns repeated for boys' schools and girls' schools within each state/territory, and within the three educational sectors (Government, Catholic, and Independent)? What is the interpretation of these high correlations, particularly if the patterns differ by state and/or educational sector? Do these data contribute to supporting the strongly held belief that single-sex schooling is best for girls in STEM fields, and co-educational settings are best for boys? What other factors may be involved?

### References

National Assessment Program. (2016). *NAPLAN*. Retrieved from <https://www.nap.edu.au/naplan>.

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