

New industry feeds on Naplan crammers

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A LUCRATIVE test-preparation industry has sprung up around Naplan as panicked parents look to give kids an academic edge with practice resources, after-school coaching and vitamins.

Students in Years 3 and 5 are more likely to receive tutoring for the national testing but commercial practice booklets are now available for Year 4 students — despite there not being a Naplan test in that year.

Bookseller Dymocks said the number of Naplan-related books sold in 2012 was almost double that sold in 2011 and, with a broader range this year, it predicts strong sales to continue.

“The products first came into stores in 2010 and the range increased in 2011 and again in



Jess Price at Dymocks.

2012,” buying manager Sophie Higgins said.

One store had a 43 per cent growth in sales of Naplan resources this year, Ms Higgins said, adding that Year 3 and Year 5 workbooks were most popular.

Australian Tutoring Association chief executive Mohan Dhall said there had been an increase in parents seeking Na-

plan coaching in NSW, Victoria and southern Queensland.

Mr Dhall said some tutors ran Naplan courses in the April school holidays — costing \$300-\$600 — in direct response to parent demand.

“There has been an increase in the number of parents of children who are already getting tutoring requesting that Naplan be the type of tutoring they receive,” Mr Dhall said.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has repeatedly stated that students who sit the tests do not need to be coached.

It offers sample questions on its website and recommends against the use of commercial products such as booklets and practice tests.

Mr Dhall said tutoring provided students with strategies for the thinking required to

successfully undertake the tests. “If ACARA want literacy and numeracy standards to increase then any extra support given to students is likely to improve the outcomes,” he said.

TV commercials linking children’s dietary supplements with Naplan success were pulled after a public outcry.

Federation of Parents and Citizens’ Association spokeswoman Rachael Sowden said Naplan was an opportunity to assess students’ weaknesses and strengths and parents didn’t need scare campaigns.

Checking out the Naplan books at Dymocks, student Jess Price said some parts of the Naplan tests made her feel nervous. But she said she and her friends at St Scholastica’s College were more concerned with One Direction than the upcoming Naplan tests.