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## Tutors in demand for extra lessons

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 EDITOR, The West Australian  
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Tutors are reporting a dramatic increase in the number of parents shelling out hundreds of dollars a term for after-school tuition.

They say one reason for the rise is the amount of pressure schools face because their results on national literacy and numeracy tests are now made public. Midland Tuition Centre owner Rachel Bradley said she had stopped advertising her business because she was struggling to keep up with demand.

"I'm at the stage where I'm going on to waiting lists because I can't service the students that are around, and I'm sure that we're just touching the tip of the iceberg," she said.

The centre charges up to \$55 for sessions lasting an hour and a quarter for students from preprimary to Year 12.

Most demand was from primary school students, but was not limited to any socio-economic group or area.

Ms Bradley believed the increase was being driven by the fact that schools and teachers had to contend with overcrowded curriculums and disruptive children.

"We get results, whereas schools don't, and I think that's the bottom line," she said. Ms Bradley said she had tutored some pre-primary students who felt like failures because they could not read.

Most of her students needed help because they had fallen behind, but some attended tuition because they were not being challenged at school.

Australian Tutoring Association chief executive Mohan Dhall said international experience had shown demand for tutoring increased wherever there were scholarship entry tests or national assessments.

"It's a direct experience of our members that there have been requests from parents and schools that they run NAPLAN preparation courses," he said. "Because the results are published on the My School website, and everyone wants their schools to look good."

But with no hard data available, the association is running the first national survey of parents to find out how widespread the use of private tutors has become. Mr Dhall said data from the survey should inform national education policy. It wants governments to subsidise tuition costs.

Parents can get access to the questionnaire at [www.ata.edu.au](http://www.ata.edu.au)

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