

National Catholic education says NAPLAN changes will put learning data into the hands of teachers sooner

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) says changes to NAPLAN, announced today by Education Ministers, are designed to provide a clearer picture of student learning progress and put data into the hands of teachers and parents sooner.

The new proficiency standard, with four levels of achievement, will replace the previous 10-band structure and the old national minimum standard set in 2008.

“These changes, endorsed by federal, state and territory government education ministers, have been designed to provide parents, school leaders and teachers with a better understanding of how individual students are performing in literacy and numeracy,” National Catholic Education executive director Jacinta Collins said.

“The Ministers listened to feedback and amended the categories to ensure they were clearer for teachers and parents.

“This is a new type of testing that aims to identify where gaps exist and where students need additional support and intervention to improve educational outcomes.”

Ms Collins said the new NAPLAN testing schedule, which will be brought forward from May to mid-March this year, will put data in the hands of teachers sooner, but will require a transition phase.

“Moving NAPLAN to earlier in the year will allow our school leaders and teachers to access literacy and numeracy data sooner to inform teaching and to put in place interventions to improve the foundation skills critical for success in schooling,” Ms Collins said.

“As with all change, there may be a few teething issues as schools and families get used to a new timetable and way of reporting, but it's important that we continue to develop more effective and rigorous ways of assessing where students are at, and how we can better support them.”

Ms Collins said while the new reporting approach won't be able to make direct comparisons to previous NAPLAN data, the Ministers have agreed that individual jurisdictions can work with ACARA on the feasibility of comparative or research studies utilising previous data.

“NAPLAN will need to keep evolving as we improve our capacity to assess and report on student learning.”

NCEC is the peak body for Catholic Education in Australia and is responsible for the national coordination and representation of Catholic schools and school authorities. There are 1,755 Catholic schools educating over 785,000 or one in five Australian students and employing over 102,000 staff.