

CURRICULUM REPORT

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I am pleased to once again report on curriculum related matters and highlight areas of interest for families educating children living in rural and remote locations.

Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA), Federal Council continues to meet quarterly with the Australian Curriculum and Report Authority (ACARA) through the Parents and Principals Peak National Bodies meetings. This allows us to hear firsthand from ACARA about the latest updates, as well offers the opportunity to contribute to discussion relating to the curriculum, reporting and assessment.

Federal Council is pleased to see that work continues to be done to improve parental access to the Australian Curriculum. Work samples and videos are available in the resource section of the Australian Curriculum website <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> and I encourage parents and teachers to view these resources.

Agriculture in Education. Federal Council welcomed news last year that the Australian Government had committed to investing \$2 million into developing Agriculture in Education. The materials showcase the diversity and economic importance of food and fibre production in Australia. The online teaching and learning resources are aligned to the Australian Curriculum learning areas including science and geography.

Topics covered by the materials include: designing and making a financial plan for a market garden, free range chicken farming, food security and sustainable production practices in food and fibre. More than 75 high quality digital learning resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum are now freely available to schools online. The resources are available to schools through the [Scootle education portal](#). They can also be accessed through the [Primary Industries Education Foundation](#) and [Agrifood Skills Australia](#) websites.

NAPLAN online from 2017. Work is well underway. There are various options for schools to pick up the test, should they have connectivity problems. From the middle of this year there will be a small demonstrator test that can be taken by schools. There are a number of studies to be conducted, which are essential to moving from paper to online. The trialling study makes sure the new and traditional item types translate to the online environment. The device study makes sure the test is fair, regardless of the device used. The autoscoring study will test if scoring by the computer can work as well as people marking the writing test. Students typing their answer to the writing test has not been a problem in trialling studies and other comparable assessment programs.

NAPLAN online: extended test window. The test window for NAPLAN online in 2017 will be nine days (though schools may choose to complete testing sooner if sufficient devices are available). This expanded test window allows schools more flexibility in scheduling and accommodates schools which have fewer devices than students. An infographic explaining the extended test window can be found on the ACARA website.

Members have raised concerns about expectations in the Australian Curriculum that 'students will use software, including word processing programs with growing speed and efficiency to construct and edit texts'. The speed and efficiency is not specific and does not clearly define words per minute or accuracy.

The skill of using word processing programs is still very broad, however writing skills are very definite in the expectation.

Federal Council is working with ACARA regarding the year three NAPLAN writing task being implemented in a way that is age and skill appropriate for that cohort. Results from studies being carried out with this year group indicate that the results are comparable between written and typed responses. The amount of text Year 3 students are asked to produce is relatively small.

ACARA will work with state and territory curriculum authorities on readiness and factors which could cause them to take up/not take up NAPLAN in 2017. In some places, state and territory departments and sectors and in some areas schools, will make a decision about when to move online. Students who complete the online test will get their results in 2-3 weeks, significantly faster than those who take a paper-based test.

Federal Council would like to encourage everyone to ask their school when and how they plan to rollover to NAPLAN online.