

MEDIA STATEMENT

18 August 2014

2014 NAPLAN summary (preliminary) information published: overall student achievement has remained stable over the 2008–2014 and 2013–14 periods, with some increases in reading, and grammar and punctuation across the 2008–2014 period and a slight decline in writing.

The NAPLAN summary information, released today, provides comparable data for the nation and for states and territories for each year level (Years 3, 5, 7 and 9) and for each test domain (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy).

The report compares 2008 and 2013 results with 2014 results, except for writing where the comparisons are for 2011 and 2013 with 2014. As each new year of NAPLAN data are added, the nation obtains a more useful picture of large-scale (state, territory and national) NAPLAN performance trends over time.

[See the results on the NAP website](#)

This information is being released four weeks earlier than in the past. The early release reflects and builds on the Australian Government commitment for a faster turnaround of NAPLAN information. ACARA, with jurisdictions and contractors working together, has worked to shorten the analysis time and an earlier release of the summary information.

Individual student reports will also be released earlier than in past years (the exact timeframe varies between states and territories) with some individual student reports released to parents before the end of August.

Read the [ACARA CEO's open letter to parents](#) about bringing NAPLAN results home.

The preliminary findings – 2014

The preliminary information shows that overall student achievement at state/territory level has remained stable across 2013–14 and for reading, and grammar and punctuation has increased across the 2008–2014 period.

- **Reading:** The increase in performance relative to 2008 has been maintained in Years 3 and 5. There was no substantial change relative to 2013 performance in any year.
- **Spelling:** There was no substantial change in spelling relative to 2008 or 2013 for any year.
- **Grammar and punctuation:** Results for Years 3 and 7 indicate improvement on 2008 results. There was no substantial change relative to 2013 results.
- **Numeracy:** There was no substantial change relative to 2008 or 2013 performance in any years.
- **Writing:** Performance in all years appears to be lower compared to 2011. There appears to be a greater decrease relative to 2013 performance with Years 3 and 5 than Years 7 and 9.
- **National minimum standard:** The summary results also indicate that there has been some movement (up and down) in the number of students at or above the national minimum standard compared to 2013, although these are within the range that has been observed over last few years.

ACARA does not consider that the decline in NAPLAN writing results represents an overall decline in writing standards. The decline may be partly because the writing task did not engage some students. It might also be because, for the first time, schools were not told in advance the style of writing that would be tested – persuasive or narrative – requiring students to be prepared to answer one or the other. ACARA is investigating these and other factors.

There is some evidence of a small increase in zero scores awarded to some students. This might mean that some students either did not understand the task or they were expecting a narrative task.

ACARA will continue with the arrangement of not announcing the style of writing to be tested. We will explore the use of different tasks for primary and secondary students. We will also consider using more than one style of writing. We believe that if there is a focus on teaching the full range of styles of writing, then results should improve.

How is the writing task developed?

An information timeline on how writing questions are developed and trialled can be accessed on our website.

[See the information timeline](#)

NAPLAN – The future – Moving assessment online

ACARA has been working closely with partners and stakeholders in preparation to move assessment online. Moving NAPLAN online will deliver significant benefits that include:

- tailoring of tests to students ability to better meet and assess the full range of student ability
- increasing the reliability and validity of the assessment for all students with no increase in testing time
- significantly reducing time for providing feedback on student performance to students, teachers and parents.

NAPLAN will be linked to the Australian Curriculum from 2016. An assessment framework is being developed that articulates which elements of the Australian Curriculum: English and mathematics will be the subject of assessment through NAPLAN.

Withdrawals

Over one million children took the NAPLAN tests in 2014. Illiteracy and innumeracy are high stakes. Parents and carers of these students will soon receive nationally comparable data that allow them to see their child's strengths and/or areas for development. Approximately 2 per cent of children in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 withdrew or were absent from NAPLAN this year. ACARA is disappointed with any student's non-participation; however, participation remains high and more than sufficient to provide reliable and robust achievement data.

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