

## PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

### DISTANCE EDUCATION, SOTA & CURRICULUM REPORT

#### **Chandra Ridley – Portfolio Holder, March 2021**

At the 2020 State Conference there was one motion, A7, presented relating to the Distance Education/SOTA/Curriculum Portfolio concerning funding for the Support Teacher Learning (STL) in Schools of the Air (SOTA).

Letters were sent to various Government Departments with Ms Lisa Rodgers, Director General, Department of Education responding, assuring ICPA that there are no plans to change the funding for the STL or cease the funding beyond 2020.

#### **CURRICULUM**

The 2019 NAPLAN report was released in February 2020. Nationally Year 5 Numeracy, Year 3 and 5 Reading, Year 3 and 5 Spelling and Year 3 Grammar were significantly above the 2008 average when NAPLAN began.

Cumulative gains by Indigenous students are positive. The rate of improvement for Indigenous students is almost twice the rate of improvement for the general population since testing began.

The full report can be found at <https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/naplan-2019-national-report>

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 it was announced that, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, NAPLAN 2020 would be cancelled. Those students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2021 will sit the assessments.

In June it was decided that the full transition to online NAPLAN testing would be delayed until 2022 due to the 2020 NAPLAN testing being cancelled and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

For Year 9 students unable to sit NAPLAN more flexibility will be introduced into Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA). Year 9 students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate Literacy and Numeracy standards to achieve the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE).

In April it was announced that every Year 12 and ATAR student will be able to obtain a WACE and an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) in 2020. Students working towards Vocational Education and Training (VET) will not be disadvantaged due to workplace cancellations.

In May Minister Ellery announced that all ATAR written exams would go ahead as scheduled from 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020. Reporting on student achievements would be amended: The Semester 1 report would include information about student's general learning progress without using grades. Also, the individual's performance in relation to their peer group. Semester 2 reports would be made following the usual minimum reporting standards.

On 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Minister Ellery announced work placements could resume if employers were complying with COVID-19 Health Guidelines.

ATAR examinations went ahead as planned beginning on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) announced in June 2020 that it would be reviewing the Foundation to Year 10 Australian curriculum. It is being reviewed to ensure it continues to meet the needs of students now and into the future.

In 2014 Ministers agreed that ACARA should undertake a six-year cycle of review of the Australian Curriculum to keep it up to date. There will be opportunities for consultation with teachers throughout the review process.

Minister Ellery announced in January that development of curriculum Hindi, Korean and Tamil will begin in July and syllabuses will be developed for Pre-Primary to Year 12. The syllabuses for these languages will be available from 2023.

In 2021 every student in Year 3 to 6 at a Western Australian public school will learn a language.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) are producing a series of videos designed to help raise awareness around disability and how online tests have enabled students to participate and be included in regular school activities such as NAPLAN.

The Australian Government has introduced an initiative to gauge and support Year 1 students' phonics skills. Understanding phonics is foundational to the development of writing, reading and spelling skills.

A website called The Literacy Hub ([www.literacyhub.edu.au](http://www.literacyhub.edu.au)) contains resources for parents and teachers including a Phonics Check for teachers, a Reading Awareness Check for families and tips and activities for families to participate in at home.

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Due to COVID-19, parents were encouraged to keep their children at home where possible from 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and access online learning. Minister Ellery announced the "Learning at Home" website to provide lessons in line with the Australian Curriculum. There are a variety of resources aimed at each year level with documents showing how they tie in with the Curriculum. There is also a lot of support for parents and carers including tips on how to set up a learning environment and advice for parents to take care of themselves when teaching their children at home.

On 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020, a soft Term 2 opening for schools was announced. Public schools were to open on 29<sup>th</sup> April with Years 11 and 12 encouraged to attend. Distance Education packages and online resources were available for all other students to continue learning from home. These arrangements were to be in place until the end of week three.

On 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020, it was announced that all students except the medically vulnerable or those with a family member who has chronic health issues should return to school. Distance Education resources would continue to be available for those students unable to return.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020, ICPA held the inaugural Geographically Isolated Distance Education Day. The aim was to recognise the vital role parents play in geographically isolated distance education and to raise awareness of the ongoing plight of families who must educate their children at home at all times.

COVID-19 has highlighted the challenges parents face in educating their children at home which is a situation many rural parents face on a regular basis. The aim was to put forward a positive message celebrating what families do but also calling for recognition.