



Improving national data quality

About

The improving national data quality initiative is one of eight national policy initiatives in the [National School Reform Agreement](#), which will enhance the national evidence base.

This initiative has two components:

1. Establishing agreed equity and proficiency standards (for numeracy and literacy assessed by NAPLAN) as part of the review of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling
2. Developing a range of projects to enhance the national evidence base, including measures of child development status at school entry, student learning gain, general capabilities, post-school destination information, attainment, retention, wellbeing, post-school outcomes throughout the life of the National School Reform Agreement.

Delivery

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is leading the first component of this initiative.

Milestones and timing for the initiative are set out in Schedule B of the National School Reform Agreement.

Proficiency Standards for NAPLAN (complete)

Proficiency standards are proposed standards of achievement in each National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) domain. The proposed proficiency standards will provide a benchmark of what is expected of a student, in a reasonably challenging level of performance, at their particular year of schooling. Individual student reports would

display the student's performance in comparison to the standards, and summaries would be reported in the National Report on Schooling in Australia.

Currently, literacy and numeracy results are reported against a national minimum standard (NMS). Proficiency standards will provide greater information on the range of student proficiency in Australian schooling and will more closely reflect the standards used in international assessment. These standards will give students, parents, teachers and governments a better understanding of how our students are progressing.

On 11 December 2019, Education Ministers approved the revised Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia 2019, which includes the NAPLAN proficiency standards in its key performance measures. ACARA is currently undertaking technical development of the proficiency standards, and reporting will commence once Education Ministers have approved the design.

Consultation

Progress of projects under this initiative continues with close working between key stakeholders including ACARA, states and territories and national data agencies

Projects to enhance the national evidence base

Work on several projects to improve national data quality is well underway, while others are in earlier stages of development.

A national approach to understanding and building the evidence base on pathways, post-school destinations and labour market outcomes

The National Post-School Destinations Subgroup is exploring the development of a nationally consistent approach to the collection of post-school destination data through two complementary projects:

- A new national longitudinal post-school destinations survey that provides information on longer-term outcomes.
- An associated project linking data to measure post-school destinations and outcomes to obtain national measures.

Measures of student wellbeing

The ACT Education Directorate is leading the development of a common understanding of student well-being and principal measurement tools. This project will determine the principal domains of student wellbeing and assess the relative significance of these domains. It will then map the key domains being measured by jurisdictions, identify the principal measurement tools being used, and analyse well-being data in conjunction with other education evidence.

Measures of student learning gain (complete)

The Victorian Department of Education and Training led work on measurements of student learning gain in 2019 that was incorporated into changes to My School reporting. On 18 March 2020, ACARA released an updated version of the My School website that makes it easier to tell if Australian students are making the progress that they should, and our education system is on track. These improvements were recommended by Emeritus Professor Bill Louden in the NAPLAN Reporting Review 2019 and were approved by Education Ministers at their meeting on 12 December 2019.

Measures of child development status at school entry (school readiness)

The South Australian Department of Education is leading a project to improve the evidence available to education systems on the readiness of children to attend school, based on their social, emotional and physical development. A final report will provide insights into improving student school readiness data quality, and identify potential areas to improve data collection and the future work.

Improved Socio-Economic Advantage (SEA) Data (additional project to enhance the national evidence base)

ACARA collects student background data from all schools. The Australian Government then uses these data to calculate the Educational Disadvantage loading and the Low English Proficiency loading, as defined in the Australian Education Regulation 2013.

Following an expansion in the scope of the data collection, the Australian Government provided funding to ACARA in 2019-20 to enable additional support for participation by independent schools. These data improves the accuracy of information about our students' socio-economic backgrounds, and ensures a fairer distribution of the equity loadings. More information about the data collection is available from ACARA's website.

More information

- www.dese.gov.au/quality-schools-package/national-school-reform-agreement