

National School Reform Agreement: 2019 Annual Report on progress in implementing the National Policy Initiatives

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This report sets out Education Council's progress in 2019 in implementing the National Policy Initiatives under the National School Reform Agreement.

The National School Reform Agreement is a joint agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories to lift student outcomes across Australian schools. It outlines strategic reforms in areas where national collaboration will have the greatest impact on driving improved student outcomes. These reforms – eight National Policy Initiatives set out in Schedule B to the Agreement – are to be implemented over five years to 2023.

The reforms are vitally important, with Australia's results on the OECD's Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) and other indicators demonstrating that we must do better as a nation in educating our young people and preparing them for a competitive and fast-changing world.

In December 2019, Australia's Education Ministers released a new statement of goals for Australia's education system, the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, renewing their commitment to improving educational outcomes and delivering on key areas for action.

The Declaration recognises that early childhood education is critical in giving every child the best possible start in school. It reinforces the importance of literacy and numeracy mastery in the early years of school as foundations for future learning. It also commits to ensuring the development of creative and critical thinking skills, as assessed by PISA. These skills are best developed drawing on deep content knowledge, which needs to continue as a feature of school curriculum.

High quality education is essential not only to see individuals' lives flourish, but to make our communities stronger and more resilient, and our economy robust and competitive. Education remains the most powerful tool to overcome socio-economic disadvantage and build a more cohesive society.

At the Education Council meeting in December 2019, Ministers agreed that the National Curriculum for Foundation-Year 10 will be reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of students to develop literacy and numeracy mastery, deep content knowledge and the capacity for high-level thinking and application of learning.

The focus of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) reporting will move from school averages, to reporting on the gains made by students at the school. Gain measures will tell us if each student is making the progress that they should – and tell us if Australia's education system is on track.

In addition to these measures, progress in implementing the national policy initiatives outlined in this report will help improve quality in education. For example:

- the review of senior secondary pathways will report in the first half of 2020 with advice and recommendations on how senior secondary students can better understand and be enabled to choose the most appropriate pathway to support their transition into work, further education and/or training
- work on a new online formative assessment capability will produce tools teachers can use in classrooms at any time to help them monitor every student's mastery of skills and knowledge; and
- the establishment of a national evidence institute in 2020 will ensure that all schools have access to high quality research to underpin key decisions about teaching and learning practice.

Australia's Education Ministers are committed to collaborating on strategies to address long term challenges facing Australian education systems.

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2019 Annual Report: implementation of the National Policy Initiatives under the National School Reform Agreement

Under clauses 51-55 of the National School Reform Agreement, all parties have committed to reporting on the progress in implementing agreed national policy initiatives outlined in Schedule B to give the community confidence that Education Council is making efforts to improve the quality and equity of Australia's schooling system. This report reflects progress as at 31 December 2019 against the original timing in Schedule B.

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N	If no, the reason is:
A (i) Enhancing the Australian Curriculum to support teacher assessment of student attainment and growth against clear descriptors	a) Education Council consider proposal(s) for the development of learning progressions across the Australian Curriculum learning areas and general capabilities, including consideration of existing progressions, proof of concept and development stages, timelines and estimated costs.	Early 2019	Yes More information is available from: www.lpofai.edu.au	
	b) Subject to Education Council agreement at a), develop and trial learning progressions and formative assessment capability for proof of concept learning areas and general capabilities, with priority on literacy and numeracy in the early years of schooling.	Late 2019 for literacy and numeracy December 2020 for other proof of concepts	No	On 11 December 2019, Education Council agreed to change the timing of this milestone to 'Early 2021'. In 2019, the Project Management Board for the Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment initiative (supported by a dedicated Project Management Office and Project Team) completed the discovery phase of the initiative. Ministers accepted the final report in December and endorsed nationally consistent definitions of learning progressions and formative assessment. Ministers agreed that the initiative will proceed with strengthened engagement with the teaching profession and their representative bodies, so that the views and experiences of teachers, school leaders and their

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N	If no, the reason is:
				<p>representatives can guide the next (Alpha) phase of this initiative.</p> <p>The Alpha phase will include developing and testing prototypes to support and assist teachers to implement learning progressions and defining professional learning requirements for teachers.</p> <p>In early 2020, updated National Literacy and Numeracy Learning Progressions will be presented to Education Council for endorsement.</p> <p>In early 2021, the outcomes of the Alpha phase and next steps will be considered by Education Council.</p>
<p>A (ii) Assisting teachers monitor individual student progress and identify student learning needs through opt-in online and on demand student learning assessment tools with links to student learning resources, prioritising early years foundation skills</p>	<p>a) Education Council consider a proposal for the enhancement of formative assessment capabilities, including consideration of existing IT solutions, online assessment resources and digital learning resources and potential benefits to students, teachers and school leaders. It is expected the proposal will include proof of concept and development stages, timelines, governance arrangements and estimated costs.</p>	<p>Early 2019</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>More information is available from: www.lpofai.edu.au</p>	
	<p>b) Subject to Education Council agreement at a), Education Council commission the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> design, build and piloting of an opt-in formative assessment 	<p>Late 2019 for literacy and numeracy</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>On 11 December 2019, Education Council agreed to change the timing of this milestone to 'Early 2021'.</p> <p>In 2019, the Project Management Board for the Learning Progressions and Online Formative Assessment initiative (supported by a dedicated Project Management Office and</p>

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N	If no, the reason is:
	<p>facility with priority on early years literacy and numeracy. Assessments should be matched to proof of concept learning progressions (such as English, mathematics, science and critical and creative thinking), and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development of supporting professional learning modules to build teacher and school leader capacity and capability to use effective formative assessment practices. 	December 2020 for other proof of concepts		<p>Project Team) completed the discovery phase of the initiative. Ministers accepted the final report in December and endorsed nationally consistent definitions of learning progressions and formative assessment.</p> <p>Ministers agreed that the initiative will proceed with strengthened engagement with the teaching profession and their representative bodies, so that the views and experiences of teachers, school leaders and their representatives can guide the next (Alpha) phase of this initiative.</p> <p>In early mid 2020, prototypes of digital products will be tested with stakeholders, users and teachers to inform product design specifications for the next phase.</p> <p>Education Council will consider the outcomes of the Alpha phase and next steps in early 2021.</p>
A (iii) Reviewing senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training	a) Education Council agree panel membership and terms of reference for a review of senior secondary education, pathways to work, further education and training and consideration of prerequisites for university entry.	Early 2019	Yes More information is available from: www.pathwaysreview.edu.au	
B (i) Reviewing teacher workforce needs of the future to attract	a) Education Council consider an implementation strategy for the recommendations of the National Review of Teacher Registration.	Early 2019	Yes	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N	If no, the reason is:
and retain the best and brightest to the teaching profession and attract teachers to areas of need	b) Education Council begin to develop options for a national teacher workforce strategy.	Mid 2019	Yes More information is available from: www.aitsl.edu.au/research/national-teacher-workforce-strategy	
	c) Subject to b), Education Council agree to an option for a national teacher workforce strategy to support decision making of teacher employers and initial teacher education (ITE) providers. It is anticipated the strategy would identify requirements to address workforce issues of supply, demand, retention, attrition, hard to staff schools, specialisation, teaching out of field, rural and remote workforce and any gaps in data identified by Parties and sectors.	Late 2019	No	On 11 December 2019, Education Council agreed to change the timing of this milestone to 'June 2020'. On 28 June 2019, Ministers endorsed a scoping paper for the strategy development phase, including agreement that AITSL lead this work on behalf of all governments and additional time for consultation. Consultations with education authorities, professional associations, teacher unions and other key stakeholders have commenced. In June 2020, Education Council will consider the final strategy and proposed implementation approach.
B (ii) Strengthening the initial teacher accreditation system	a) States and Territories ensure that accredited initial teacher education programs require pre-service teachers to have successfully completed a rigorous final-year teaching performance assessment (TPA) prior to graduation.	From January 2019	No	This initiative is led by AITSL in consultation with the states and territories, teacher regulatory authorities and initial teacher education (ITE) providers. In 2019, AITSL established an expert advisory group to provide ongoing guidance and rigour on this reform. All teaching performance assessments were reviewed by the group by the end of 2019. By June 2020, all ITE providers and teacher regulatory authorities are expected to have TPA arrangements in place. AITSL will update Education Council on the status of implementation and proposed next steps at this time.

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N	If no, the reason is:
	b) Commence national quality assurance activities in cooperation with all jurisdictional authorities.	From January 2019	Yes	
C (i) Implementing a national unique student identifier (USI) that meets national privacy requirements in order to support better understanding of student progression and improve the national evidence base	a) Education Council consider a proposal for a national USI to enhance school and system self-review and external quality assurance, including proposed approach, governance, privacy protections, compatibility with existing USIs, national data access protocols and protections and estimates and proposed allocations of costs.	Early 2019	No	<p>On 11 December 2019, Education Council agreed to change the timing of this milestone to 'late 2019'.</p> <p>Education Council also agreed on design criteria and a model for the generation and operation of a national USI.</p> <p>In 2020, the Australian Government will develop options for the initial application of the USI, arrangements for governance (including ownership) and privacy, and a detailed implementation plan for the generation of the USI based on the model agreed by Education Council.</p>
	b) Subject to Education Council agreement at a), implement the institutional arrangements necessary to support the implementation of a national USI.	Late 2019	No	On 11 December 2019, Education Council agreed to change the timing of this milestone to 'Late 2020'
C (ii) Establishing an independent national evidence institute to inform teacher practice, system improvement and	a) Education Council consider options for an independent national evidence institute, including scope of functions, potential for expansion of existing capabilities, interaction with existing national bodies, funding and governance arrangements.	Early 2019	Yes	

National Policy Initiative	Milestone	Timing	Has the milestone been met? Y/N	If no, the reason is:
policy development	b) Subject to Education Council agreement to an option at a), implement the institutional arrangements necessary to support an independent national evidence institute.	Mid 2019	No	<p>On 11 December 2019, Education Council agreed to change the timing of this milestone to 'Early 2020'.</p> <p>Education Council also agreed to establish the national evidence institute as a joint Ministerial Company.</p> <p>In 2020, further consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders to facilitate engagement from philanthropic organisations, high-quality researchers and the broader education community. The inaugural Director for the institute will be appointed from the first quarter.</p> <p>In 2020, Education Council will consider a detailed implementation plan and funding arrangements for the institute.</p> <p>The institute will commence operations in 2020.</p>
C (iii) Improving national data quality, consistency and collection to improve the national evidence base and inform policy development.	a) Education Council agree equity and proficiency standards (for numeracy and literacy assessed by NAPLAN) as part of the scheduled review of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling.	December 2018	No	<p>On 11 December 2019, Education Council approved the revised <i>Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia</i> 2019 which included proficiency standards.</p>