

## APPA says flexibility helps meet the challenge of a national curriculum

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) has welcomed the recent Education Council Communiqué endorsing changes to the Australian Curriculum.

APPA President, Dennis Yarrington, said that, after many years and wide consultation, we now have a national curriculum that provides the content in the eight learning areas but also allows for schools to be flexible in deciding how the curriculum is taught.

Mr Yarrington said,

“APPA has always recognised that managing the Australian Curriculum in the primary school classroom requires flexibility so that it is responsive to school context and also meets the varying needs of students. It is essential that schools and school systems have the flexibility to prioritise content and to decide when, and how, to cover those priorities.

“Principals also know that effective assessment and reporting is connected to, and interrelated with, the lessons happening each day in their schools. The focus in the Australian Curriculum on achievement standards encourages this crucial connection.

“The challenge is now one of implementation and support. Quality curriculum resources and professional learning, based on effective practices already in schools, are now a priority for primary teachers. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is positioned to deliver this support.

“A task of our association in the coming year will be to survey principals to see what content schools are prioritising, how much is being covered across the eight learning areas and what decisions are taken on how to teach the curriculum. The feedback we receive will be provided to ACARA’s Australian Curriculum *Monitoring and Evaluation* process.”

It was also pleasing to see that steps are being taken to strengthen entry into the teaching profession through rigorous selection for initial teacher education courses and there being an expectation that teachers possess literacy and numeracy skills in the top 30% of the population. APPA would expect to see the *Literacy and Numeracy Test* happening prior to commencing study or in the earliest stages of the course.

APPA looks forward to contributing to other issues covered by the Education Council including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy, national school STEM strategy, NAPLAN Online Assessment and changes to the *My School* website.

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**Media contact: Dennis Yarrington (APPA President)  
0466 655 468**