

---

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

### Changes to curriculum and teaching need a primary edge

Education Ministers attending this week's Education Council meeting would do well to bring a 'primary school perspective' to their curriculum and other discussions, says Malcolm Elliott, president of the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA).

"Generally speaking, the primary teacher works all day and all year with one group of students covering most if not all subject areas. This is far different from the secondary subject specific model which strongly influenced the development of the Australian Curriculum.

"In the end – and despite the repeated advice of APPA since 2008 – we ended up with a cluttered primary curriculum overlaid with programming complexities. Primary teachers, attempting to plan and cover the sheer volume of content with depth, have found the task both impossible and stressful."

Mr Elliott said principals support Ministers and education authorities taking carefully considered steps to lift student achievement.

"We have seen, for example, the call to focus on literacy and numeracy in the primary years. Principals know this is critical and we have the evidence of what works best. In reading, for example, a range of strategies including phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension are key. Knowing this, a good primary teacher must also find the right balance between explicit teaching and opportunities for children to explore, create and wonder.

"The recent PISA results sparked a great deal of discussion and, it seems, brought out many solutions from commentators. APPA's hope is that any change coming out of the Education Council centres on setting the path for school education to be valued by the community, uncluttering the primary curriculum and making teacher education courses rigorous and demanding."

APPA is the professional association representing over 7,200 school leaders across Australia.

10 December 2019

**Media contact: Malcolm Elliott (APPA President)**  
**0418 312 265**

