




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Equity and Excellence; NAPLAN

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.56 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to giving our youngest Queenslanders the best start in life, preparing them for a great future. That means supporting our students, teachers and school staff every single day, which is at the heart of our new education strategy, Equity and Excellence. Twelve months in the making, Equity and Excellence sets a new direction for Queensland's state schools focusing on educational achievement, particularly literacy and numeracy; wellbeing and engagement; and culture and inclusion. As we embark on this new strategy, it is fantastic to see already the statewide improvements in student outcomes over the past 12 months. The results include improvements in A to E report cards in English and maths across all year levels, including our First Nations students. We have seen both an increase in the proportion of students getting a C or higher and an increase in the proportion of students getting an A or B in English and maths.

In the latest national Closing the Gap data released last week, we saw Queensland improving our results at a faster rate than the rest of the nation. While there is clearly more work to do, I was particularly encouraged to see the proportion of First Nations students in Queensland attaining year 12 or equivalent increase more than five percentage points to 75 per cent in 2021. That is above the national average of 68 per cent. That is what our Equity and Excellence education strategy is all about—maximising attendance and engagement, lifting student outcomes and ensuring no student is left behind.

I want to give a shout-out to the nearly 300,000 students across years 3, 5, 7 and 9 who will start sitting their NAPLAN tests from tomorrow until 27 March. This year NAPLAN is being held earlier which means earlier results in four new achievement standards—exceeding, strong, developing and needs additional support—which replace the previous 10-band reporting structure. This reduction to only four levels will help simplify the data so parents and carers can look forward to earlier and clearer reports. My advice to all students is stay calm and focus on doing your best.