




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

NAPLAN

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.52 am): The 2023 NAPLAN results were released overnight by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA. Firstly, can I say well done to the more than 280,000 Queensland students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 who participated in this year's NAPLAN and to the teachers, teacher aides, school staff and families who supported students through the process.

Members will be aware the tests, and therefore the results, are earlier this year and that there are significant changes to the reporting standards. The revised NAPLAN standards put students into four levels of proficiency: exceeding, strong, developing, and needs additional support. I am proud that Queensland was a lead in the discussion at a national level. As a result, education ministers all agreed to changes to the NAPLAN minimum standards, deliberately raising the bar or the standards students are expected to meet. The changes we made make sure students who need additional support are more easily and earlier identified because we know early identification, intervention and additional support is crucial.

It is great to see that nearly two-thirds of our students are sitting in the top two bands overall, but of course we want to see continual improvement. Now it is about targeting funding and assistance where it is needed most and in Queensland that work is well underway. Our new Equity and Excellence education strategy has a very clear focus on lifting results in English and maths and ensuring schools and students get the support they need. As I advised the House previously, we have seen encouraging signs with improvements in A to E report card results for English and maths across the board over the past 12 months and there is some great work happening in schools every day on this front. For example, Early Start resources for teachers to monitor students' progress from prep to year 2 from next year will include free kindy; and the Reading and Writing Centre, which connects school leaders, teachers and parents with expert advice and information to support students experiencing reading and writing difficulties and disorders such as dyslexia—I know many parents in this parliament have children or know children who fall into that category; more than 1,100 specialist learning support staff in schools; and the development of new curriculum resources to support implementation of the revised Australian Curriculum to be fully implemented by 2025 and the strength and focus it has on phonics.

In addition, as I flagged at estimates, I have asked my department to provide me with options to focus our efforts even more sharply, particularly in reading. This work includes developing a Queensland reading commitment, a new system-wide consistent approach to teaching reading in every classroom in every school. Key elements of this commitment include explicit phonics instruction in line with the new Australian Curriculum; learning support officers to assist classroom teachers to provide individualised and targeted support; and capability development for teachers and teacher aides through our new Education Futures Institute. We look forward to working with stakeholders, including the Queensland Teachers' Union and the principals associations, on this important initiative.

I say it every year but I will say it again: it is vital to remember NAPLAN is just a point-in-time test and is not the be-all and end-all. It is just one of the many tools used to measure students' progress and, as always, the best way to get an update on how your child is doing is to talk to their teachers.