



THE HON PETER GARRETT MP
Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth

MEDIA RELEASE

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First achievement standards for the Australian Curriculum

The final achievement standards for the first four subjects in the Australian Curriculum were endorsed today at a joint meeting of Commonwealth, State and Territory Education Ministers.

School Education Minister Peter Garrett said the endorsement of the achievement standards was a significant step on the road to a national curriculum.

“This means that as the new curriculum in maths, science, English and history is being taught, we will have a common understanding of the quality of student work across the country,” he said.

“This is the last piece of the puzzle towards implementing the first phase of the curriculum. We already had the content, now we have the validated standards against which students will be assessed.

“Teachers assessing student work in these first four subjects will use the same reference points in Victoria and NSW, for example, as they do in Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

“The Australian Curriculum tells teachers what they need to teach and what students are expected to learn. The achievement standards are a guide for teachers about how well the student has understood the content.”

Mr Garrett congratulated the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) for the extensive consultation work it undertook to finalise the achievement standards, allowing states and territories to get on with the job of rolling out the curriculum.

\$38 million Professional Development Package for Principals

Ministers today endorsed a Gillard Government proposal to invest \$38 million in a professional development package for school principals, as part of the Quality Teaching National Partnership.

The money will be allocated to states and territories and will be used to help school principals implement the Australian Curriculum as well as encouraging stronger school engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

“We understand the key role principals play in a rapidly changing education landscape, and we also know that many of them will benefit from professional development opportunities,” Mr Garrett said

“We’re putting all the building blocks together: utilising technology, training our teachers, helping disadvantaged students and creating a national approach for the teaching profession. Providing more professional support for our school principals will ensure they can continue to lead the way.”

The funding can be used by states and territories on a range of professional development options for principals, including coaching and mentoring programs, local and national workshops, online courses, and training in cultural engagement with indigenous communities.

National Partnership on Early Childhood Education

Ministers endorsed the 18 month review of the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education, including an independent report from the Allens Consulting Group which found that the universal access targets under the NP were achievable under the current budget and timeframe.

The Australian Government agreed to some modifications, including recognising early childhood teachers with three years training who graduate by 2013, as meeting the requirements of the NP. Distance pre-school services will also be considered under the universal access requirements.

“I once again made it clear that the Commonwealth has invested substantial money into helping the states achieve their universal access targets and no further money will be available. States are making great strides towards the goal of offering 15 hours a week of pre-school education for every child by June 2013 and recognise the Gillard Government’s investment of almost \$1 billion to help them achieve these goals,” Mr Garrett said.

Ministers also announced the release of the Education and Care Services National Regulations for the early childhood education and care sector, part of the National Quality Framework. This is a major milestone which implements the first truly national regulatory system for early childhood education and care services.

National Model for Identifying Students with Disability

Ministers agreed to develop a plan for implementation of a nationally consistent model for identifying students with disability. A working group will report back to Ministers by April next year. The model was piloted in 150 schools earlier this year by PricewaterhouseCoopers

Once implemented, schools will be asked to supply de-identified information about the adjustments provided to students with disabilities in their schools. When the data is collected, this will build a stronger body of evidence about students with disabilities, their backgrounds, locations, and the level of adjustment provided to them.

This will allow the reporting of comparable data on students with disabilities and means governments and the public can better track how students with disability are faring, including school completion rates.

“This is an important step in working towards a consistent, national approach to supporting students with disabilities,” Mr Garrett said.

“We want every kid in every school to be able to reach their full potential. At the moment, kids with disabilities are less likely to finish Year 12 and Australia is lagging behind other countries in the workforce participation of adults with disability.

“For this situation to improve, we need to have a clearer picture of just how many kids in our schools are considered to have a disability, and the level of extra support or adjustments they are currently receiving. The new model will help us develop this national picture.”

Nationally consistent registration of teachers

Ministers endorsed a framework developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and Learning (AITSL) which will allow a nationally consistent teacher registration process from 2013.

“This is an important step towards improving teacher quality, while providing more flexibility for teachers to move between jurisdictions will help address workforce issues,” Mr Garrett said.

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