

NAPLAN

By Frankie Bray

For the fifth year, over a million Australian students sat the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests in May of this year.

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 were assessed in five categories – reading, writing, spelling, grammar & punctuation and numeracy. As in 2011, the writing component was a persuasive writing task, rather than a narrative task as in years 2008-10.

When the NAPLAN testing began in 2008, South Australian parents raised concerns over our students' performance. Sadly, the situation has not improved.

How the States fared

The Northern Territory lags significantly behind in all categories, which is attributed to low participation rates. Excluding the NT;

- In Years 7 and 9 Tasmania fared the worst, with the lowest percentage of students meeting National Minimum Standards (NMS) in 7 out of the 10 categories.
- For Years 3 and 5, QLD and WA share the title, with the lowest percentage of students meeting NMS in 4 and 5 categories respectively.
- The ACT has the greatest percentage of students at or above NMS across the board in 16 out of 20 categories.
- SA had the lowest percentage of students scoring at or above NMS in Year 3 and Year 7 numeracy.

How SA rates nationally

- In regard to mean scores, South Australia is below the national average in all five categories, for all four year levels tested.
- In 19 of the 20 reported categories, the percentage of SA students at or above the national minimum standard is below the national average – the same as last year.

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Do our students meet the national minimum standard?

- In SA, the only significant improvements were for Year 7 grammar and punctuation and Year 3 spelling.
- There were significant decreases in the percentage of students at or above NMS in Year 3 and Year 5 numeracy.
- In each of the five reported categories, over a quarter of Year 9 South Australian students are either at or below the NMS.
- In Year 9 persuasive writing, over 40 per cent of SA students failed to score above the National Minimum Standard.
- No less than 20 per cent of SA students in each year level failed to score above the NMS for numeracy.

Participation

- SA again had consistently low participation rates. Excluding the NT, SA had the lowest participation rate in 11 of the 20 categories. SA participation was below the national average in all categories. ■