

MEDIA RELEASE

December 15 2021

RELEASE OF NAPLAN NATIONAL REPORT 2021

The 2021 NAPLAN National Report has been released, confirming the [preliminary summary information](#) published in August 2021 that, at a national and state/territory level, no statistically significant changes were observed between 2019 and 2021.

However, there were some significant differences apparent when assessing long-term trends in the gaps between different demographic groups; for example, between male and female students, where the gap between the groups is widening when compared against 2016.

“The national report analysis shows that female students continue to outperform male students in reading and writing, while males are outperforming females in numeracy, except in Year 9 where the gap is stable,” said ACARA CEO, David de Carvalho.

“In the secondary classroom, we can see that the gap between boys and girls is widening for reading but stable for writing, and the gender gap is larger in secondary schools than in primary schools for writing.

“Compared with the base year, 2008 (2011 for writing), Years 3 and 5 reading, Year 5 numeracy, and Years 3 and 5 spelling have significantly improved nationally, showing gains equivalent to a term’s worth of learning since the base year, but these improvements were not reflected in every demographic group.

“We can now also see that the main group of students who fell behind the national average in Years 7 and 9 reading and Years 3 and 7 numeracy, compared to the base year, were students whose parents did not complete Year 12,” he said.

“At the national level, Indigenous students have improved performance in Year 9 numeracy (compared to 2008) and in Year 3 writing (compared to 2011).”

The report reaffirmed the preliminary findings that the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions to schooling had no statistically significant impact on students' literacy and numeracy achievement in NAPLAN at the national or state/territory level.

"The NAPLAN results for 2021 indicate that when compared with 2019 – the last NAPLAN taken pre-COVID – achievement in numeracy, reading and writing remained largely stable at a national level for all students," said ACARA CEO, David de Carvalho.

While there are indications that the gap between high and low socio-educational groups widened between 2019 and 2021, further analysis is being conducted to determine whether this can be attributed to the impact of the pandemic on schooling or whether it is part of a longer-term national trend unrelated to COVID.

ACHIEVEMENT TRENDS 2016–2021

Female and male students

- Female students outperformed male students in reading and writing, and male students outperformed female students in numeracy.
- Over the last 6 years, the gap in numeracy is generally widening, except in Year 9 where the gap is stable.
- For primary school students, the gap is stable for reading but narrowing for writing.
- For secondary school students, the gap is widening for reading but stable for writing.
- In addition, the gender gap is larger in secondary schools than primary schools for writing.

Indigenous

- The difference in achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is large with no noticeable closing or widening of the gap between 2016 and 2021.

Major cities and regional areas

- Students from major cities outperformed students from regional areas in numeracy, reading and writing. The gap in numeracy and reading has gradually widened between 2016 and 2021 for most year levels.

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Regional and remote

- Numeracy, reading and writing achievement by students from regional areas (inner remote and outer regional) was significantly higher than achievement by students from remote and very remote areas. The gap in achievement between regional and remote areas has remained steady over the past 5 years.

Test incidents

There were 65 test substantiated aggregated incidents in 2021, of which one was cheating, 21 were security breaches and 43 were “general breaches”. For comparison, there were 88 substantiated aggregated incidents in 2019. The number of reported test incidents is extremely small and does not affect overall NAPLAN results.

About the national report

The report provides nationally comparable data on the 2021 national and state/territory results for each test domain, as well as showing any changes in the performance gap between females and males, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and remote, rural and metropolitan students.

Any differences in results at the national and jurisdictional level between the preliminary Summary Report and the final National Report are due to the fact that the final report uses complete data and additional analysis. These differences are not statistically significant and should not be reported as such.

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The report is published on the National Assessment Program website:

<https://nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/national-reports>

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