

INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS IN GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTION

We have a disabilities provisions program for examinations and they provide the support that students need to be able to read and understand the questions asked and respond effectively. There are a range depending on the particular needs of the student. Those same sort of provisions will apply for the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] and they will apply for the ongoing tests that we will make available for students to demonstrate that they meet the minimum requirement.

What is the intellectual rationale for having 2 to 3 per cent of students with intellectual disability on the life skills pathway being able to sit the HSC and other students who have met the year 9 minimum standards being able to sit the HSC and then a large group who do not fit into either of those categories, whose capacity may be somewhere in between, not able to sit the HSC? What is the rationale for the three tiers?

The actual sitting of the HSC, there is no barrier to any student doing that. This is one of the communication issues that got away at the announcement of this requirement. All students regardless of whether—

To be eligible for the HSC?

It is a similar argument for students to get an HSC: they need to have completed 12 units of preliminary courses and 10 units of HSC courses. The new requirement is that they need to do that as well as show that they have met a minimum standard in relation to literacy and numeracy. Students currently accumulate the pattern of study and in the future they will accumulate the requirement for the minimum standard as well. Once they have all of those components in place they will qualify for the HSC.

What proportion of students do you estimate, come 2020, will be completing year 12, meeting the existing requirements, the 10 and 12 units, but failing the literacy and numeracy standards?

Our projections are very conservative. Based on current information it would be a figure of less than 5 per cent of students. We believe that the support that is going to be offered through the New South Wales literacy and numeracy strategy will remedy that. When the results come out for NAPLAN this year we think we will experience what occurred in Western Australia when they established this standard and that there will be improvement shown straight away in relation to performance. That will

mean there will be a smaller group of students that require support and schools will be focused on those students and give them the help they need to succeed.

What proportion of those students will be students with special needs?

What do your projections say?

ANSWER

68% of Year 9 students achieved at least one Band 8 or above in reading, writing and numeracy in the 2017 NAPLAN test. This is 7 percentage points higher than in 2016.

NESA expects that the majority of students will meet the HSC minimum standard by sitting an online test in Years 10, 11 and 12. The minimum standard is set at a functional level that we expect all students can meet, with quality teaching.

All schools have policies and processes for identifying students not meeting expected literacy and numeracy benchmarks and providing additional support for those students.

Teachers and schools know their students best and will determine the most appropriate way of providing additional support to students at risk of not meeting the minimum standard of literacy and numeracy.

Life Skills courses are designed to provide students with an intellectual disability an equitable pathway to the HSC credential. To maintain this provision, students taking the Life Skills courses outlined below will be exempt from meeting the minimum standard:

- students taking an English Life Skills course in Years 10, 11 and/or 12 will be exempt from meeting the minimum literacy standard (in reading and writing)
- students taking a Mathematics Life Skills course in Years 10, 11 and/or 12 will be exempt from meeting the minimum numeracy standard.