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NAPLAN 2022 results show sustained effort in teaching and learning despite COVID-19 challenges

The Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA) says NAPLAN 2022 results are further evidence of the robustness of Australia's school system.

'Schools, their students and families should take great heart from the 2022 NAPLAN results,' said AHISA CEO Ms Beth Blackwood. 'The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to affect schooling this year. Ongoing teacher exhaustion, student mental health and wellbeing difficulties, staff shortages and increased student absences from schools have all taken a toll. Yet despite all these challenges, NAPLAN results tell us that students continued to make progress in their learning comparable to, and in some instances even better than, progress in previous years.'

Ms Blackwood said results of Australian students in the 2021 PISA and PIRLS international testing regimes, due in December, would help enrich the insights to be gained from 2022 NAPLAN testing.

'PISA and PIRLS survey students, teachers and principals,' said Ms Blackwood. 'Student surveys give us information on a range of factors that can have an impact on student achievement, such as students' attitudes to their learning and sense of belonging at school.'

Ms Blackwood said students' views on their experiences of learning would help throw light on some of the "blips" in the 2022 NAPLAN data.

'The NAPLAN data show a decline in the proportion of male students in Year 9 meeting the National Minimum Standard in reading,' said Ms Blackwood. 'Student survey data from PISA 2021 may help us determine whether this is likely to have been the result of disengagement due to COVID-19 or other longer-term factors.'

Ms Blackwood said that, overall, 2022 NAPLAN results tell a story of sustained effort in difficult circumstances.

'COVID-19 has caused enormous disruption to schooling in Australia,' said Ms Blackwood. 'Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 – the NAPLAN test years – have been particularly critical years for students this year, especially in terms of their socialisation and re-adjustment to school routines and disciplines. That has been an additional challenge for students and teachers, which should not be under-estimated.'

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AHISA is a professional association of 450 Heads of independent schools. Its members lead schools that collectively account for over 11 per cent of total Australian school enrolments, 70 per cent of independent sector enrolments and 20 per cent of total Australian Year 12 enrolments.