ACARA and Australian Curriculum Update

To: PRINCIPALS/ HEADS/ REFERENCE GROUPS
From: Katherine Zollo
Date: 16 November 2015

INTRODUCTION

1. On 6 November 2015 the ACARA Curriculum Directors Group was provided with the following information regarding the Australian Curriculum and the work of ACARA.

VERSION 8.0 OF THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

2. The updated Australian Curriculum website (version 8.0) includes:
   - The improved Australian Curriculum endorsed by the Education Council on 18 September
   - All learning areas and subjects that were previously listed as ‘available for use, subject to endorsement’, are now endorsed.

3. The previous version (version 7.5) of the Australian Curriculum will continue to be available until the end of 2016.

4. Version 8.1 of the website is planned for released in December. It will include additional PDF documents that provide alternative views of the Australian Curriculum and printing in MS Word.

LANGUAGES

5. The draft Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages and the draft Australian Curriculum for Hindi and Turkish were approved by the ACARA Board at its meeting on 7 October for forwarding to the Education Council (via AEEYSOC) for endorsement at its 11 December meeting.

6. The writing of the Australian Curriculum: Languages for Classical languages and Australian Sign Language (Auslan) is in progress. It is anticipated that draft curricula will be released for public consultation in early May 2016.

WORK SAMPLE PORTFOLIOS

7. Curriculum leads have resumed work on this project, following the pause that was required to address issues raised in relation to the four agreed themes arising from the Review of the Australian Curriculum. ACARA has contracted for a responsive website content management
system to be built that will house work samples. It is anticipated that the website build will be completed by 10 February at the latest and some portfolios will be ready to upload as soon as the site is ready.

8. Curriculum leads will provide details to jurisdictions about the schools with whom they would like to work.

2015 MONITORING REPORT

9. A draft 2015 monitoring report for the period July 2014 to June 2015 has been developed and will be circulated to the F-12 Curriculum Reference Group members for discussion and feedback. It is anticipated the report will be presented to the ACARA Board for approval on 10 December.

PARENT MATERIALS

10. In response to one of the four agreed themes arising from the Review of the Australian Curriculum the improving parental engagement materials (seven PDFs) are ready to be sent to the ACARA Board, AEEYSOC and Education Council for noting. Work is underway for the Australian Curriculum website to 'house' the materials and frequently asked questions and answers to be included in a parent section. The parent materials will be complete and ready to be uploaded inversion 8.1 of the Australian Curriculum in December.

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING ONLINE ASSESSMENT

11. The trial of four tasks for the Collaborative problem solving online assessment project was held from 13-23 October 2015. The trial was undertaken in 21 schools (ACT: 1; New South Wales: 10; South Australia: 3; Tasmania: 4; Victoria: 3). All schools, apart from one in a remote location, had an observer from ACARA or the NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) for at least one session.

12. Observation feedback has been collated and key issues to consider have been identified. While there were some technical issues generally the trial was successful and has provided a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data.

13. Two de-briefing sessions with observers and school contacts will be held over the next two weeks. The student data is currently being prepared by Janson for the psychometricians from ACARA and NSW DoE to analyse. Educational assessment Australia interviewed 10 students during the trial and are currently analysing collected data. A report will be provided to ACARA by the end of the year.

STEM

14. ACARA’s STEM project is nearing completion. Thirteen schools from around Australia participated in the program that required them to develop an integrated approach to teaching STEM disciplines in Years 9 and/or 10. Schools needed to focus their project on an authentic challenge that faced their school, the local community or wider society and use STEM discipline to investigate the challenge and propose a solution. Each school has collated work samples that demonstrate how students approached the project work and ACARA has developed five illustrations of practice that demonstrate how schools approached the integrated teaching of SEM and the benefits or otherwise form their approach.
15. ACARA is currently writing an evaluation report on the project and hopes to publish this in the curriculum resources page of the Australian Curriculum website along with work sample and the illustrations of practice.

**MATHEMATICS PROFICIENCIES PROJECT**

16. The purpose of this project is to improve how teachers engage with the proficiencies in the Australian Curriculum for Mathematics in Years F-10.

17. The intention of the proficiencies is to provide the language by which teachers will teach the content of the Australian Curriculum for Mathematics. Feedback from the monitoring and evaluation reports and the recent Australian Curriculum Review indicate that teachers are not using the proficiencies in the way they were intended to be used.

18. Desktop reviews and the Mathematics by Inquiry roundtable conducted by the Department of Education and Training have highlighted the need for annotated work samples that focus on reasoning and problem-solving approaches and that are readily accessible to teachers.

19. The Department of Education and Training has commissioned ACARA to look at improving teacher engagement with the proficiencies in the Australian Curriculum for Mathematics in Years F-10. ACARA will work with key stakeholders to develop illustrations of practice and related work samples for Mathematics in Years F-10.

20. Over July 2015 – June 2016, the project will include:

21. Development and publication of additional student work samples with a specific focus on the proficiencies in the mathematics curriculum, particularly in relation to reasoning and problem-solving.

22. Engagement with schools, teachers and students to film illustrations of practice relating to the use of the proficiencies.

23. On Monday and Tuesday, ACARA will host a 2 day workshop with Professor Peter Sullivan for 18 state and territory identified teachers. In the sessions, the teachers will be examining and critiquing specific examples of classroom learning experiences that exemplify explicit learning goals and a balanced approach to engaging student in building understandings through problem solving and reasoning, and using those understandings to foster fluency. These teachers will then plan and present their ideas for filming, interviews and student work samples that will be collected during 2016.

**KINGDON OF AUDI ARAFIA (KSA) PROJECT**

24. ACARA recently completed the first stage of this project. Between 27 January to 1 November, an ACARA team of three has visited Riyadh five times. During this time, ACARA has supported the KSA team as they developed four documents that will direct the further development of their curriculum. These are a vision statement for the curriculum, a general framework outlining the overall curriculum and its features and two manuals (design manual and development manual) that will guide learning area writers as they develop learning area frameworks and then curriculum document.
25. This is the first time there has been national curriculum planning and development in KSA and this process has presented a real challenge for the KSA team. ACARA has developed capacity in our KSA colleagues by present in its own experiences, looking at relevant research from around the world and using a series of exercises and activities that ultimately lead to decision making. The Public Education Evaluation Commission of KSA and the academics who have participated in the workshops have been highly complementary of ACARA’s work and valued the team’s input at all stages.

**AISSA IMPLEMENTATION ADVICE**

26. By now, all schools should be delivering the curriculum content as outlined in Phase 1 subjects. Schools and teachers would be wise to know, understand and use the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas and their subjects as outlined in Phases 2 and 3. We recommend Version 8 as the most recent thinking in these Learning Areas. The key components are the Year level descriptions, Concepts (HASS), Content Descriptions, Elaborations and the Achievement Standards.

27. Teachers would also be wise to familiarise themselves with the General Capabilities and the Cross-curriculum Priorities (F-10 Curriculum) and look for opportunities to include them in their planning where relevant and appropriate.

28. Thus far, the Minister for Education and Child Development has not specified a time by which schools must have rolled out Phase 2 and 3 subjects although both DECD and CESA have mandated 2016 for the entire curriculum and for assessing and reporting against the achievement standards.

29. Schools may wish to take the following into consideration when curriculum planning the next phase of implementation: From 2018, all NAP sample assessments will be aligned to the Australian Curriculum and will incorporate:
   a. Science Literacy
   b. Technologies (primarily Digital Technologies)
   c. Civics and Citizenship, and History.
   d. Health and Physical Education

30. The Australian Curriculum is a standards based curriculum thus encouraging students to be familiar with the application of standards to assessment prior to their engagement with the SACE. Additionally the SACE is progressively incorporating the Australian Curriculum general capabilities into each SACE subject.