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Media Release

Catholic education to enhance student learning through PISA for Schools partnership

Catholic schools across Australia will have access to the OECD PISA-based Test for Schools as a result of a partnership between the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and Janison an Australian online assessment company.

National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins said the partnership will enable Catholic schools to engage in PISA for Schools with up to 50 Catholic schools participating in the pilot program this year.

“PISA for Schools aims to build teacher capacity and drive school improvement which contributes to our strategic priority of improving student learning opportunities,” Ms Collins said.

PISA for Schools measures performance across three cognitive domains - reading, mathematics and science - and examines the ability of students to think critically and apply their knowledge creatively in novel contexts. The questions are not curriculum-linked, but provide insight into how well-prepared students are to apply the knowledge acquired at school to the real world.

The assessment is delivered digitally on the Janison Insights Platform and includes a cognitive and student questionnaire, affording strong student voice. The data will empower teachers and school leaders through global connections and international benchmarking based on a common scale provided by PISA.

“This is an exciting opportunity for our school communities to build on their existing data to understand how to best support their students,” Ms Collins said. “The insights individual schools and our sector will capture will provide a picture of what we have not been able to access until now.”

“While PISA currently delivers national-level results, PISA for Schools will deliver school-level results and will allow individual schools to benchmark their performance with that of national education systems worldwide.”

OECD director for Education and Skills Andreas Schleicher said, “We know from experience that high quality assessment can generate meaningful data to guide change. But we also know that the real work starts when school leaders and teachers, working together with students and parents, take actions tailored to their own school’s unique ambitions, needs and context.”

“With PISA for Schools we look forward to contributing to Australia’s vibrant school sector and learning more from participating schools about what it takes for students to reach their full potential,” he said.

Janison group executive Sara Ratner said PISA for Schools is being delivered for the first time across Australia in 2021, with a pilot program underway and a national rollout scheduled in early 2022.

“Janison is proud to be partnering with the Catholic school sector to provide them with reliable data to inform their aspirations for continual improvement,” Ms Ratner said.

“PISA for Schools is unique in bringing together heart and mind to assess a school’s performance relating to cognitive skills alongside student motivation, well-being and social-emotional skills. It is a holistic health check for school improvement that measures qualities that are strongly aligned to the values of the Catholic school sector in Australia.”

Not only will participating schools benefit from a personalised report based on their school’s performance but they will also gain access to exclusive professional learning opportunities with like-minded peers from around the globe. By collaborating with fellow educators in the 15+ countries that currently participate in PISA for Schools and working directly with the OECD, participating schools will have the opportunity to provide students with an education that is future-focused and global.

There are 1,755 Catholic schools, educating 777,000+ students – or one in five Australian students and employing over 100,000 staff across Australia.

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