The past few months have been very productive for the VCSPB. Since the appointment of our new Executive Officer, Rachel Saliba, we have been able to pursue various projects, be engaged with and further develop relationships with our stakeholders and continue to move forward in understanding our most important role in representing parents in Catholic schools across Victoria.

Since May 2016, members of the VCSPB have been involved in several initiatives and taken part in discussions varying from a review session for the Good Schools Guide and Good Careers Guide, review of code of conduct and complaints policies, to contributing submissions for the VCAA and Department of Education and Training on the proposed amendments to Initial Teacher Education in Victoria.

On of our representatives, Genevieve Muir-Smith continued to attend quarterly VIT meetings to discuss teacher professional learning to provide mandatory skills in teaching children with special needs.

Value of Catholic Parent Representative Voice in Victoria
The VCSPB has continued to demonstrate that the Catholic parent voice is essential in many forums and discussions on issues in education across Victoria and that the Catholic parent voice is highly valued by our Victorian Government, in particular the Education Minister, by other parent bodies in Victoria, CEO Directors, Principal networks, the VRQA, VCAA and VIT.

NCEC National Conference
Five VCSPB members travelled to Perth in May to represent parents in Catholic schools in Victoria and to learn from many leaders in education about what is currently happening across the broader education landscape in Australia.

The theme was Faith to Lead, Lead to Faith and we had the privilege of hearing several quality keynote speakers and leaders.

Each of our members enjoyed the rich learning and networking opportunities the conference provided.

Some of the highlights were:
Donna Cross - explained that ‘not everything that counts can be counted’ - referring to research that has found non-cognitive skills are just as important to teach and evaluate as cognitive skills in education.

Address by Minister Simon Birmingham - the NCEC conference was held prior to the recent election so it was a perfect opportunity to hear from our leaders’, their plans for funding Catholic education.

Minister Birmingham was keen to continue discussions with NCEC on funding models that include Catholic schools and emphasised the needs based strategy for funding if elected. Minister Birmingham has continued as Education Minister since the election and has promised negotiations to secure a plan for Commonwealth school funding for 2018 and beyond will begin in earnest next week when he meets with his state and territory colleagues.

Chris Lowney - explored a humorous perspective on leadership referring to Pope Francis and stories of his early work in Argentina, centred around dirty laundry, dusty shoes and the Church Bell.

Q & A Session - hosted by Tony Jones from ABC.

The panel were asked many questions of a controversial nature and didn’t shy away from discussing the ‘difficult’ issues that Catholic Church and education are facing. Parent voice was represented by Carmel Nash from Catholic School Parents Australia.

Break Out Sessions - there were many opportunities to attend break out sessions over the three days and all our members attended several that were relevant to the work of the VCSPB. We look forward to the next conference and in furthering parent representation at these events.

Strengthening Relationships
VCSPB Executive continued to engage with each of the Directors of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Diocese of Sale, Sandhurst and Ballarat with the intention of strengthening relationships and further developing strategies to support and engage with parents in Catholic schools. In order to achieve this, our membership base will need to continue to grow as we move towards improving representation.

(continued page 2)
We are currently seeking further parent representation from the Diocese of Sale, Ballarat and Sandhurst and from various regions in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

CSPA Update

Catholic School Parents Australia have engaged VCSPB to assist in interviewing Victorian school Principals and holding parent forums for the national Parent Engagement Project. The project, in conjunction with ARACY and the Federal Government, aims to research parent engagement, more specifically what schools are currently implementing at the time of transition into primary and secondary school.

Our members are looking forward to assisting with this project and to learn from the results, what more needs to be done to assist schools in engaging with parents as partners in their child’s learning journey.

VCSPB Meeting with the Greens

In August 2016 the VCSPB visited Sam Hibbins MP to discuss proposed changes to legislation that could impact same sex schools and employment of Catholic teachers in Victorian Catholic schools. The meeting was an important step for VCSPB in opening up discussion with the Greens about Catholic education and what being educated and teaching in a Catholic school actually involves. The meeting highlighted to the VCSPB that Catholic education is somewhat of a mystery or is not being perceived in the way that it should be, particularly by the media.

The perception of Catholic education seems to be skewed and often based on hearsay rather than fact. It has prompted much discussion amongst the VCSPB in understanding our advocacy role in promoting Catholic education as a first choice for Catholic parents and the fact that the faith based and pastoral care approach to the education of children is not widely understood.

This has resulted in the creation of assumptions about Catholic education which we need to take very seriously as parents of children in Catholic schools.

The VCSPB will continue to monitor the progress of this legislation and keep you informed.

Chair’s Report

Be Brave Campaign

Children have many ups and downs throughout their education and as parents, we have a significant role in helping them to become brave and confident young people who have the strength to manage themselves when things are tough or don’t go to plan.

The Be Brave Campaign is an initiative from CatholicCare Social Services, CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn and Western Sydney University who have joined forces to create videos and resources for children to remind them to put their BRAVE into action.

Brave stands for;

Be Yourself - Somebody YOU are proud to be.

Remember your strengths and the good things in your life and the world.

Ask for help – talk to a friend, teacher, or family member:

Voice - Speak Up - Say what you want to say. Don’t be afraid to say what’s on your mind.

Everybody struggles sometimes. You are not alone.


National Approach to Awareness of Online Safety

eSmart Schools is a behaviour-change initiative in over 2,200 schools across Australia. eSmart Schools provides a framework that guides the introduction of policies, practices and whole-school change processes to support the creation of a cyber safe or eSmart environment.

The eSmart Schools Framework is designed to help schools improve cyber safety and reduce cyber bullying and bullying. National eSmart Week, recently held between the 5th - 9th September, was created to celebrate cyber safety and digital inclusion in our communities.

During National eSmart Week schools and libraries across the country are encouraged to showcase their commitment to cyber safety - last year we saw over 550 organisations celebrate in some way during the week.

“We want to create an Australia that is free from cyber bullying, and full of digital natives that know how to embrace the best that technology can offer, whilst being smart, safe and responsible online.”

Judi Fallon, eSmart Manager, the Alannah & Madeline Foundation

Students as Partners in Leadership

Vic SRC Regional Conference 2016
Written by Molly Jones, Genezzano FCJ College

The partnership between Catholic Education and Vic SRC represents a shared aim to empower our young people to have a voice on the issues that matter to their education and help schools to deliver new approaches for student-centred learning. Vic SRC Regional Conferences, for Years 7 -12, provide an opportunity for students to network and collaborate on common issues that help drive positive change in their schools, communities and across the education system.

In 2016, Genezzano FCJ College was one of 12 Victorian schools to host a Vic SRC Regional Conference. Year 11 student, Molly Jones, a member of the CEM Student Voice Reference Group, explained what the day entailed and what the students achieved.

On the 27th of April, 49 students from each Diocese in Victoria were united by Vic SRC to discuss student voice and the ways in which we can use our platform, skill sets and ideas to have a positive impact within our school communities.

6 different regional schools, 6 different SRC teams, from 6 different year levels all with one thing in common; a passion for student voice and the determination to drive positive change.

It was so exciting to see new friendships blossom as we all had the opportunity to connect and chat with our peers from different schools. There was an immediate spark in the dialogue and energy in the room. It was clear that everyone who attended was genuinely excited to be there and had an infectious enthusiasm and a passion for student voice.

The way we were able to bond over the fact we were interested in exploring ways to improve and better the lives of students in our own schools, set a positive and energetic tone for the day.

We began the conference with a few icebreaker activities, led by the fabulous Kate Wilde from Vic SRC. The activities mixed everyone up and gave us the opportunity to converse, bond and of course, bring our competitiveness to some unique team challenges. From guessing inanimate objects out of play-doh to being quizzed on what our team member's superpowers would be. These group activities were a fun way for us to get to know each other and take our minds off the stress of school.

We were then introduced to the Vic SRC who gave us an insight into the work they do. We also had the ever so passionate Sam Ilbouchi inspire us to consider joining the Vic SRC’s Executive team. It was a fantastic opportunity for us as students to be aware and learn about organisations like Vic SRC and individuals that work tirelessly to support student led initiatives. Vic SRC are so serious and passionate about driving change for students across Victoria.

We also learnt more about the ‘Teach the Teacher’ program and it was really interesting to see the initiatives explained from a young person's perspective.

I think it was great for the students to realise the plethora of opportunities there are regarding student voice beyond just our own school gates.

The day continued with a look at the essence of leadership and the different types of leaders that can exist in a school community. It was interesting for us to distinguish between the styles of leadership and then determine what category we thought applied to us as individuals.

We were then able to delve into ways that our leadership skills can be put to use in determining what issues affected students in general and more specifically, what issues had the biggest impact on our specific school.

Some of the common issues discussed included:
• facilities
• student-teacher relationships
• student voice
• technology and
• curriculum.

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..."the conference was hugely successful in not only connecting like-minded students who care about making a difference in their schools, but to ignite an infectious energy of passion and drive."
Students as Partners in Leadership - Vic SRC Regional Conference

Our Genezzano SRC team then decided on the issue most relevant to our school and we began to brainstorm ideas on how we could address the issues in practical and tangible ways. We were given an action plan, which acted as a step by step guide on the practical ways to transform an idea into a concrete change within our schools.

Having the extensive planning module was highly effective in encouraging all of the SRC teams to collaborate and work together to plan an idea that could then be put into action once the students returned to their school.

This process of firstly identifying an issue, coming up with an idea and generating ways to put it into action was a highly engaging and exciting experience. It was fantastic to see all of the SRC teams so engrossed in their ideas and to witness the teamwork everyone displayed. It was such a great opportunity for our SRC teams to really push each other to come up with fresh ideas and solutions to challenges.

Developing ideas and putting them onto paper, then seeing it manifest in the planning stage was an equally empowering and motivating experience.

We felt like we were actually doing something that could benefit the lives of countless students.

Finally we had the opportunity for our supervising teacher to report the idea from our SRC team back to the rest of the group. It was really inspiring to hear all the other teams ideas and great to see the supervising teacher equally as excited and on board.

Overall the conference was hugely successful in not only connecting like-minded students who care about making a difference in their schools, but to ignite an infectious energy of passion and drive. An indescribable wave of motivation and enthusiasm seemed to wash over all the students at the end of the day. We all left feeling inspired and enthusiastic to get started on making real changes in our schools. It was a privilege for Genazzano FCJ College to host the conference and to be the first Catholic school to run a Vic SRC event.

I would like to thank Vic SRC for making these conferences possible as they really do connect, challenge and inspire students from all over Victoria to be partners in developing their education and realising the potential they have in bringing about real change.

The Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) is the peak body representing school-aged students in Victoria. We believe in a world where all learners have access to education that is student-led, student-driven and student-focussed.

We exist to empower all student voices to be valued in every aspect of education. Students are at the centre of everything we do. As an organisation, we utilise the Teach the Teacher method to create positive communities through student-led conversation. When student voice is heard and valued, the change to school culture is remarkable. Keen to find out more? Join the roar of student voices.

Visit www.vicsrc.org.au or call 03 9267 3777

www.vcspb.catholic.edu.au • secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au
Naplan - What do the results mean?

What does the Naplan summary mean?

No doubt you will have now received your child’s Naplan results and may be wondering how to respond to the information that has been provided from your school.

When our children are required to complete the Naplan each year, there is much hysteria in the media about how the results may impact schools and how they are a dire reflection of the state of education in Australia compared with the rest of the world.

A recent article stated that “the overall literacy and numeracy skills of students have stalled, with no significant improvement since 2015.”

As a parent, it is difficult to know whether or not to believe the hype surrounding articles of this nature or whether to ignore the results and focus on the rest of the year rather than on one test every two years.

It is tempting to believe what we read, however according to ACARA, the independent governing body responsible for Naplan, “the data released demonstrates that, compared with 2008 (the first year of NAPLAN), there have been gains in all content areas (except for writing), but not for all year groups.”

The press release from ACARA stated that;

- Reading results for Years 3 and 5 saw significant gain compared to 2008.
- Spelling results for Year 3 saw significant gain compared to 2008.
- Numeracy results for Year 5 saw significant gain compared with 2008.
- Grammar/punctuation results for Year 3 saw significant gain compared with 2008.
- Writing results for Years 7 and 9 saw a significant decrease since 2011 (the year from which results can be compared for this domain).
- Spelling results for Year 3 also saw significant gain compared to 2008.
- Numeracy results for Year 5 saw significant gain compared to 2008.
- Writing results for Years 7 and 9 saw a significant decrease since 2011.

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- Writing results for Years 7 and 9 saw a significant decrease since 2011 (the year from which results can be compared for this domain).

There have been some significant gains in some domains in each state and territory, with Western Australia and Queensland standing out more than others.

NAPLAN is about driving improvement in schools across the country. The data allow us to celebrate success and identify areas for improvement. It also contributes to sharing of successful strategies within and across states and territories, with the goal of improving learning across the country.

The NAPLAN national results also show that from 2015 to 2016 there has been no significant change in literacy and numeracy results, with results plateauing.

We are concerned that, on a national level, the results have shown no significant improvement across the domains and year levels from 2015. Plateauing results are not what we should expect or assume from our education systems.

Literacy and numeracy are the foundation of learning in and beyond school. Literacy and numeracy achievement needs to improve to ensure the wellbeing of individual students and the country as a whole.

Robert Randall

Chief Executive Officer of the
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

This summary is not a reflection on your child’s individual results but it is important to remember that “NAPLAN is about driving improvement in schools across the country. The data allow us to celebrate success and to identify areas for improvement. NAPLAN also contributes to the sharing of successful strategies within and across states and territories, with the goal of improving learning across the country.”

Each school in Australia uses a continuous improvement model as there is always room to improve. The results also provide an indication for us as parents of the areas we may need to further support our children.

Even though Naplan is not a reflection of a full year of school, there is no harm in exploring ways that you can support your child with spelling, reading and writing, particularly in primary school and continue this throughout their secondary years.

When supporting your child in these critical areas of their education, we encourage you to work in partnership with your school to build on their current learning and provide opportunities at home to expand and enhance their learning in literacy and numeracy.

Your engagement in their learning can impact the rest of their schooling, not only for Naplan tests.


See also our VCAA update on page 9 of this newsletter.
What is a Parish Education Board?

“The Catholic Church establishes schools because it ‘has in a special way the duty and right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life.’”

(Code of Canon Law 1983, Canon 794 §1).

What type of board is a Parish Education Board?
Written by Sara Scungio, School Governance and Principal Induction, CLC, Melbourne

The Parish Education Board provides members with an opportunity for partnership between parish and school. Through participation in a school board, members are able to engage in the development of the unique identity and values of the school and its resources. The contribution of parents on school boards provides the school with confidence in decisions that the parish and school makes.

Different Types of Boards

There are different types of boards and the purpose and responsibility of boards can vary. Being a member of a Parish Education Board invites parents into an advisory role in matters of education related to the parish including the school or in matters only related to the school.

The school board therefore:
• acts as an advisory body
• acts as a forum for discussion
• provides a link between the parish priest, principal, staff and parishioners
• promotes community development

What is expected of a Board member?

Being a member on a school board can bring great fulfillment and reward. It is a valued contribution towards a shared responsibility in the ministry and mission of Church. It is a response to the call to support your school community in a particular way, sharing skills and talents for the common good.

A school board member is expected to:
• attend board meetings
• prepare for meetings by reading relevant papers beforehand
• participate in committee work
• participate in board formation activities
• actively participate in board discussions
• uphold board decisions

Are you a new member of a school board?

New members often have questions about their responsibilities. For new board members, a school induction session ensures each member understands the purpose of the board and role responsibilities. Often a current member of the board is delegated to support the induction process.

Becoming familiar with board documents is particularly important for new board members. These documents assist members to share in the vision and the mission of the school and to work strategically towards achieving goals.

Documents include:
• Constitution and Handbook
• Board Minutes
• Annual Board Goals/Plan
• School Vision and Mission Statement
• School Improvement Plan
• School Policies Schedule
• School Prospectus

What happens at Board meetings?

Board meetings are a time where discussion is enriched through dialogue and the contributions of each person. An effective meeting encourages all members to support each other in listening and speaking, acknowledging and affirming comments.

The focus of a board is strategic in thinking and action that is futures orientated. A board can run the risk of moving away from this, if it attends to matters related to management which fall outside the constitutional duties of the board.

Effective boards reflect on how they engage in discussion and deliberations on a regular basis, clarifying roles, rules and procedures of meetings.

Website Resources for Parish Education Boards

News and information related to school governance

Governance and Management

Assisting non-profit organisations to increase their governance effectiveness.

School board development workshops are offered to members of Catholic school boards.

For education board queries, contact Sara Scungio on 03 9267 0228, or via email schoolboards@cem.edu.au.

Join us at the Parent Engagement Conference in 2017

- Learn how effective parent engagement enhances children’s learning outcomes
- Hear from an outstanding line-up of International keynote speakers
- Participate in presentations and workshops designed to showcase high impact, evidence-based strategies to support parent engagement.

Key dates

**Call for abstracts**
Open: 31 October 2016
Close: 30 January 2017

**Early bird registration**
Open: 31 October 2016
Close: 17 March 2017
Online Resources for Parents, Teachers and Children

Throughout your child’s education, particularly in the early years, literacy and numeracy is a focus because of the impact it has as a foundation and other on areas of learning.

During Literacy and Numeracy week your school may have been involved in a number of activities and events with students and families. Following National Literacy and Numeracy Week you may have further opportunities to be engaged in learning at your school and in understanding how you can support learning at home with your child.

Learning begins in the home and it is important that you continue to be engaged with children’s learning, not only through homework activities but other ways that you can encourage these skills in every day activities at home.

There are a number of resources you can access to support you in your important role in guiding and supporting your child’s learning at home. Learning at home doesn’t have to be too formal or structured. It is about being aware and intentional with how you can enhance learning at school with other opportunities at home.

If you are unsure of what your child is learning in literacy and numeracy classes at school, we encourage you to speak with your child’s teacher about this and how you can support literacy and numeracy at home.

Literacy in Primary School - What you can do at home

- Try to spend at least 10 minutes a day reading with your child, it will make a difference to how well they do at school. Listen to them reading and keep reading aloud together even when they are able to read for themselves to improve their fluency when speaking and their range of vocabulary (words they can use when speaking and writing).
- Have a range of different reading materials available for your child at home. Encourage your child to read from a book or comic or whatever they are interested in reading. You can also ask your child to read school notes, recipes, and instructions to you.
- Visit your local library and let your child choose books they like. Borrow books and audio books you can read and listen to together. Check out the Learning Potential app for tips on picking books for your child.

A great new website to encourage children to read about current affairs written just for kids and a great learning tool for teachers and parents has been developed by the Herald Sun - www.heraldsun.com.au/kids-news. Talk with your children about what they are reading, ask them questions and answer any questions they might have about the news.

- Visit www.learningpotential.gov.au and www.partners4learning.edu.au for further resources

Literacy in Secondary School - What to do at home

- Help your child see how you use maths in everyday life. For example, explore how you use fractions in cooking; percentages while shopping; distance in driving; keeping score in sports games and telling the time.
- work out how many pieces they will need to cut the birthday cake into so that everyone has a slice
- work out the cost of discounted items (e.g. 25% off $20)
- figure out when you will arrive at a destination (e.g. “It is 4:15 pm now. It will take us 30 minutes to get home, what time will we arrive?”)
- find maths in every day activities that you do naturally, like watching a football match and identify statistics.

Maths is a learned skill that improves with practise. Talk positively about maths and encourage your child to practise as much as possible as part of a regular routine.

Written by the VCSPB. Permission for publishing this article provided by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training under Creative Commons Attributes 3.0 Australian License. www.literacyandnumeracy.gov.au/parents accessed 24th August 2016.
Preparing children for their digital future through fun and interactive resources

According to Google, there will be 1 million more computer science jobs than students by 2020, but only 1 in 4 principals say their school offers computer science classes.

Digital literacy involves knowing how to use a range of technologies to find information, solve problems or complete tasks. Digital literacy is also about knowing how to act safely and respectfully online.

It is important that all children and young people in Australia learn to become ‘digitally literate’ in a safe and supportive environment, engaging with the materials, data, systems, tools and equipment that are available in their schools and communities.

This also means being able to explore digital literacy at home along with parents as their guides. This is a great opportunity for you to explore this new area of interest together with your children and to learn more about the resources that are available for learning at home.

In order to drive children’s digital literacy in schools, Digital Technologies has been developed as one of the new learning areas of the Victorian Curriculum. To learn more about Digital Technologies, go to www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/digital/Pages/default.aspx.

Digital Technologies aims to ensure that all students from Foundation (Prep) to Year 10 benefit from learning about and working with traditional, contemporary and emerging technologies.

Digital Technologies focuses on developing knowledge and understanding of data and digital systems and the processes and production skills involved in using digital technology.

Through the Australian Curriculum Digital Technologies learning area, students will have the opportunity to learn coding or programming skills and to develop the general capability of information and communication technology (ICT) competence. Coding or programming is a list of step-by-step instructions to get computers to do what you want them to do, to complete a task or solve a problem. Coding is what makes it possible for us to create computer software, apps and websites. ICT competence is knowing how to use traditional computers like desktop PCs and laptops, with a focus on practical skills in particular types of software.

Resources for Students, Teachers and Parents

Google CS First
CS First clubs, the fun and free way for your child to be introduced to coding.
www.cs-first.com/materials
www.csunplugged.org/activities
This site helps children learn about computer science without a computer which is called ‘unplugged learning’. Each activity is available in pdf format for downloading and exploring language and activities related to coding and computer science. This website is suited to secondary school students. It includes videos, resources and activities available in different languages with links to the Australian curriculum.
www.codeclubau.org
Code Clubs are helping over 45,000 Australian children between the ages of 9 and 11 learn about digital technology to create new ideas through technology, not just interact with it.

The volunteer-run clubs provide children with the opportunity to strengthen problem solving skills and logical thinking, and supports key academic subjects such as science, maths and technology.

Programming is an incredible skill that engages both our creative and our problem solving sides which assist children in many areas of learning and life skills.

Code Club has free teacher resources, and training.
www.codeclubau.org/teacher-training as well as 100+ hours of aligned curriculum available for free when you register for access.

Written by the VCSPB. Permission for publishing this article provided by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training under Creative Commons Attributes 3.0 Australian License. www.literacyandnumeracy.gov.au/digital-literacy-activities accessed 24/8/16
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Quarterly Meeting

VCSPB recently attended the VCAA meeting as we regularly do each term to hear an update on the Curriculum, Naplan and Assessment. This is also an opportunity for us to represent parent voice and ask questions about each of these key areas.

The recent update provided us with rich discussion and information on the following:

Communication of curriculum with parents
This was raised as a concern that many parents are unaware of how the Victorian Curriculum is being implemented in their schools.

We discussed that each school is responsible for providing information about curriculum updates and how elements of the Victorian Curriculum are being introduced and integrated into the school, however not all schools are providing this information to parents.

VCAA have information readily available on their website and encourage schools to utilise this information to communicate with parents. However, information will need to be disseminated and explained according to what each school is currently doing.

The VCSPB is interested in exploring opportunities to provide information sheets for parents to explain the curriculum and welcomes your feedback.

A quick guide is available at www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Moving to online testing

The rollout of Naplan online is continuing to take shape and recently involved 197 schools across Victoria participating in a trial test to determine the viability and readiness of both the technology and schools to move to the online version for testing over the next two years.

It is anticipated that most schools will be conducting the test online by 2019. During testing, the VCAA are gathering feedback to determine student response to the online version of the test and to compare the results of manual testing with online testing. This includes the comparison between writing by hand and writing using the keyboard to determine the results and differences between each method.

The VCSPB believes this is essential in determining whether writing tests should be included online, particularly for Year 3 level students who have little or no experience with keyboarding skills and are still learning to write by hand. The concern that VCSPB raised was that handwriting shouldn’t be dismissed purely so children can complete a test online for Naplan and that currently VCE students are still expected to complete their exams using handwriting.

If we were to eliminate handwriting in primary school, this will then impact students’ ability to complete tasks by hand when they reach VCE, not to mention other proven benefits of handwriting.

Most of the schools who will participate in Naplan online next year will be schools who have currently volunteered for the trial period. If you are unsure if your school is participating in Naplan online, please ask your Principal.

Further information on the progress of online testing will be made available in March 2017 following our first meeting with VCAA.

To understand more about the implementation of Naplan online go to www.acara.edu.au

Moving to the Victorian Curriculum F-10 in 2017

In Victoria, the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS) will be phased out at the end of 2016 and will be replaced by the Victorian Curriculum F-10 in 2017. This is the new curriculum for Victorian schools. It incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian standards and priorities.

Questions that parents may ask their school are:
• How is my school prioritising the implementation of the Victorian curriculum in 2017?
• What are the curriculum areas my school is providing for our students in the following areas; The Arts, Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts, Visual Communication Design, Critical and Creative Thinking, English, Ethical Capability, Health and Physical Education, The Humanities, Civics and Citizenship Economics and Business, Geography, History, Intercultural Capability, Languages, Mathematics, Personal and Social Capability, Science, Technologies, Design and Technologies, Digital Technologies
• How is my school communicating this information with all parents in my school community?
• How can my school improve communication of the curriculum with all parents in our school community?

For further information about the Victorian Curriculum F-10, visit www.vcaa.vic.edu.au
How to help your child choose a career

Study and career choices: How can I help my child?

Chris Lester, CEO of Good Education Group, publisher of The Good Universities Guide and The Good Careers Guide, provides some tips and tools to help you assist your child with their study and career choices.

While technology is increasingly pervading our everyday life and will significantly change the job market for our children, the fundamentals of choosing career and study options remain very much the same. There are thousands of potential paths for your child to take and finding the right one is a combination of careful course research and understanding where their passions lie.

**Step 1: Consider strengths and interests**

The first step is to narrow down career and study choices. This requires consideration of your child’s strengths and interests. This includes the subjects they perform well in and enjoy at school as well as their hobbies and interests outside of the classroom. They can then start to think about the broad types of work they would be suited to — analytical or scientific, helping or advising, practical or mechanical, creative or artistic.


**Step 2: Match interests and skills to potential careers**

Matching interests and skills to potential careers is certainly easier said than done. It’s at this stage that career advisers can play a very important role. It’s also at this stage you might like to refer to The Good Careers Guide, which is an updated and revamped version of the Job Guide that many of you would have used in high school.

The Good Careers Guide features profiles of more than 400 occupations — from accountant to zoologist. The guide looks at the most direct pathway to each occupation, with a focus on education and training, common tasks, personal requirements, employment opportunities and useful contacts.

**Step 3: Research courses and institutions**

There are many pathways to a career and The Good Careers Guide can help map out a path for your child — whether this means university, TAFE, a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification, an apprenticeship or traineeship, or straight to work.

Encourage your child to speak to as many people as possible — everyone’s study and career journey is different.

Hearing about the different paths people have taken may open your child’s mind to options they may have never considered before.

If your child plans to continue their studies beyond school, they’ll need to consider what type of institution they wish to study at. The range of higher education institutions has expanded considerably — in addition to universities and TAFEs, private colleges with an industry focus can be a great option. You’ll need to do some research. While each private college is not equal (there are some less reputable providers), universities also have their strengths and weaknesses.

Next, it’s time to compare institutions that offer courses in the selected area. The Good Universities Guide, contains ratings and comparisons of undergraduate courses and their providers, with profiles of every Australian university and select private education providers and TAFEs. For students looking to commence at university, the ratings are an important tool. Rather than focusing on research, The Good Universities Guide ratings are focused on student experience, outcomes and demographics. Looking at the results by field of study, you will see all universities excel in different areas.

Once you have identified the best-fit institutions, it’s worth attending their open days. Open days allow students to get a glimpse of what life is like on campus, gather information about courses and institutions, and talk to staff and students.

**Step 4: Make a short list and apply**

Most undergraduate applications are processed through the state tertiary admissions centre (VTAC). Students can complete their application online, creating a short list of courses, listed in order of preference. Applications are made by the end of September each year, with first-round offers coming out in January.

The modern career landscape has evolved rapidly over the past 10 years. The days of people remaining in the one career for their working life are gone. It is anticipated that teenagers of today will have 20 different jobs across 15 different organisations in their lifetime. It’s not a ‘once-and-for-all’ decision: there is always room for your child to change their mind about their study and career choices — whether they’re submitting applications, in the midst of study or currently in the workforce.

The Good Careers Guide is available from newsagents and at [www.goodeducationbookshop.com](http://www.goodeducationbookshop.com). Your school will also have a careers adviser who can provide advice to assist in decision making on which course to apply for.
Stay Connected

Access key resources and updates on various issues in education

Visit the VCSPB website—parents and schools have collated resources available in one place on:

- Student Wellbeing and Safety in Schools
- Catholic Identity
- Curriculum
- Parent Engagement in Learning
- Catholic School Funding

Subscribe to the VCSPB newsletter and participate in online surveys.

Contact our Executive Officer if you are interested joining the VCSPB.

To facilitate communication with parents the VCSPB has established a reserved email account for each Catholic school in Victoria. Please ensure your forwarding address and email is up-to-date. If you need to adjust the email address, please contact our Executive Officer via email: secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au or call 9267 4458.

Stay Connected

Parent Connectedness Project

At the conclusion of 2015, the VCSPB embarked on one of the most important projects in the history of the parent body. To address key areas in our strategic plan 2015-2018, we began the process of scoping and developing our Parent Connectedness Project.

The aim of this project is to determine best practice and successful engagement with stakeholders through researching interstate parent bodies, representative bodies, educational leaders and external organisations.

The research conducted so far has been with the State parent bodies. The interviews were conducted to determine the initiatives that have been successful for them in engaging with parents in Catholic schools and how they have maintained connection with parents around issues facing families in Catholic education.

Our research is still currently in progress as we move to discover further practices undertaken by organisations within and outside education, in how they engage successfully with their key stakeholders.

The first stage of the project will be completed in 2017 which will be followed by the implementation of new strategies and ideas that research shows to be successful and suitable to effectively engage our main stakeholders, parents of children in Catholic schools.

We look forward to discovering new ways to engage with and represent parents in Catholic schools.

Expression of interest for new members

As we rapidly approach 2017 we are planning to expand our membership so that we can provide further resources, support and representation for parents in Catholic schools across Victoria.

We are currently seeking expressions of interest for council membership from each region of Melbourne. We are seeking one member from Northern Melbourne, one member from Eastern Melbourne, two members from Western Melbourne, one member from South Eastern Melbourne region.

We encourage expressions of interest to be sent to secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au in the form of an application email with a resume attached.

Volunteer Council Members are required to:

- currently have children attending Catholic primary and/or secondary school in Melbourne
- currently serving on a school board or school-based parent organisation acknowledged by school Principal
- commit to attend four council meetings per calendar year either in person or via video link
- be committed to participating and contributing to VCSPB advocacy issues at and between meetings.

Please contact our Executive Officer, Rachel Saliba on 03 9267 0458 to apply or for further information.