

Teachers 'stressed' by state English test

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THOUSANDS of primary school children will be required to take a new English test that principals say has been forced on them without proper resources and with no time in the curriculum for it.

In the next two months, prep to grade 2 students will take part in the online test, which the State Government hopes will show how young children fare in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

But hundreds of Victorian schools have warned they will have to find up to 60 minutes for each child, taking time away from classroom lessons.

"Teachers are feeling really stressed about it, and principals are the meat in the sandwich because they've been told they have no choice but to do it. But schools just don't have the resources or time," Victorian Principals Association president Gabrielle Leigh said.

"October is a critical time in the school cycle, and suddenly the focus for all of term four, for prep to grade 2, will be on testing rather than just teaching."

The Government is believed to have set the test for next month so schools could use the results to plan for the next school year.

In a submission to the Government, principals have urged Education Minister Bronwyn Pike to rethink the timing, arguing that it should be issued later in the year so all students have had a chance to grasp what they are being taught before they are tested in English.

They also say they need more money for casual relief teachers so lessons are not compromised. It is estimated that schools will need about \$1.2 million to conduct the English online assessment and, in some cases, students with learning problems may need even more than the designated time.

Ms Pike stood by the test. "Parents expect that teachers have the most comprehensive information at hand to better provide individualised teaching for their children," her spokeswoman said.

"The data from the new test will be available to teachers instantly online to allow better targeted teaching and individualised help for students needing extra help," she said.

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