

Clarity sought on HSC shifts

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Federation Council has called for further clarification on the HSC changes and consultation regarding the processes for implementation.

The union will hold a meeting with BOSTES and the Department to clarify issues raised in the media commentary around the changes proposed in the “*Stronger Standards HSC Blueprint*”.

There is considerable confusion about how the proposed minimum standard of literacy and numeracy will be implemented. The reference to students demonstrating they have met the minimum standard by achieving a minimum Band 8 in NAPLAN in Year 9 has added to the confusion. The implementation process for the online literacy and numeracy test is also unclear.

Federation Council has indicated that the proposal to introduce a minimum standard into the HSC must be used as a measure to identify the needs of individual students and those communities most in need.

Implementing the standard will require extra funding and resource support for students and schools that are identified as requiring extra support. Clearly, sustained

Gonski funding must be deployed to address these educational needs over many years. The Baird government is obliged to insist on this continued Gonski funding in order to address the identified needs that their revised HSC policy uncovers.

In addition, Federation will discuss the testing process in terms of what support provision will be made for students with additional needs, as well as policy and procedures for dealing with exemptions. The union will demand that all data relating to the assessments of students in relation to the minimum standard will be kept confidential in terms of the individual students and the school.

Danger that STEM focus would lead to a narrowed curriculum

Federation will seek to ensure that students with additional needs in all educational settings are not disadvantaged by the minimum standard concept.

Council acknowledged the need for revision of years 11-12 English, mathematics, science and history syllabuses and noted that consultation has commenced. Concern was expressed that there must be sufficient time to consider the impact of the changes to the HSC in relation to

the syllabuses. Further, the existing practice of BOSTES, which allows one school year for familiarisation, preparation and planning for any new syllabus, must be maintained.

Council noted that while the attention to STEM is useful and, indeed, necessary, this should not come at the expense of other elements of the curriculum.

The goals set by the Melbourne Declaration for all young Australians to become “successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens” can only be achieved by providing a broad curriculum.

This means the humanities and the creative and performing arts must not be relegated to inferior status. Similarly, the development of further Extension courses must include the full range of subject areas that reflect the interests and capacities of all students.

The proposals around guidelines for governing school-based assessment including limiting the number of school assessments will need significant consultation in order to find effective ways to reduce stress on students. The reduction in the number of assessment tasks must not lead to a narrowing of the curriculum or elevate any or all tasks proposed in these guidelines to a “high stakes” level which

Feedback is vital

The union urges all members who teach years 11 and 12 English, mathematics, science and history syllabuses to participate in the BOSTES consultation. The BOSTES survey at <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabuses/curriculum-development/senior-years.php>, allows members to provide feedback. The strength of NSW syllabuses has been achieved by the active engagement of teachers in syllabuses development.

Council-elected Federation representatives on the Board Consultative Committees are analysing the documents and will assist in the development of the union’s response on each of the syllabuses to the BOSTES.

creates additional pressure on students.

Meaningful assessment of all learning is founded in formative practices. There must be extensive consultation around any proposals to change existing BOSTES assessment requirements terms of the HSC, the potential for statewide computer-based assessment and any assessment of functional literacy and numeracy to assure that the assessment process is authentic.

Federation will report on the outcomes of these discussions on a regular basis.