

PROOF

EDUCATION AMENDMENT (RECORD OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT) BILL 2012

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Bill introduced on motion by Mr Adrian Piccoli.

Agreement in Principle

Mr ADRIAN PICCOLI (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Education) [4.16 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

Last August I spoke in this place of the need to develop a new school credential for those students who leave school prior to receiving their Higher School Certificate. I spoke of the need for a credential that was meaningful and modern. I spoke of the need to replace the outdated School Certificate test with a credential that reflected the demands and aspirations of students, employers and the broader community. After substantial consultation on those matters with educators, employers and the community I am pleased to introduce a bill that represents the most significant change to New South Wales secondary school credentialing in more than a decade. This bill introduces the record of school achievement, which has been developed in place of the former School Certificate.

The record of school achievement ensures that all students who leave school before completing the Higher School Certificate can receive a formal credential that captures the breadth of what they have learnt. The credential will demonstrate what students have achieved in relation to the New South Wales curriculum as well as other worthwhile studies, experiences and contributions within and outside of school. These key measures ensure the record of school achievement will provide meaningful information to students, their families, future employers and educators. In recent years a number of key stakeholders have expressed the view—from both an educational and an employment perspective—that the School Certificate, first awarded in 1965, was no longer valued by the majority of students or teachers.

Last year, following a review conducted by the Board of Studies involving consultation with key education stakeholders, I announced that the School Certificate would be abolished. I asked the Board of Studies to develop a credential for a changed context, including the 2010 increase in school leaving age to 17, the Federal Government's National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN] testing up to year 9, the introduction of the Australian curriculum and developments in technology. The development of the record of school achievement involved extensive consultation. The consultation included meetings with key stakeholder groups, separate meetings with more than 500 principals, teachers, students, parents and community members at nine venues across the State and more than 450 responses to an online survey.

The details of the record of school achievement have been developed in response to the expressed needs of those who will be receiving, administering and using the credential. Stakeholder feedback continues to inform the implementation process. The record of school achievement will be a cumulative comprehensive credential, awarded by the Board of Studies to eligible students when they leave school. It will include school assessment grades for all courses completed in years 10 and 11 and a process of moderation will allow for grades across the State to be consistent. The Higher School Certificate will continue as is and is

unaffected by this change.

I turn now to the specific provisions of the bill. The bill largely amends the Education Act by replacing references to the School Certificate with references to the new Record of School Achievement. In this way, it does not make any changes to the school curriculum or to the requirements for the registration of non-government schools or to the requirement for accreditation to present candidates for Board of Studies credentials. The most substantive changes are made to sections 94 and 98 of the Act. Section 94 has been amended to outline the eligibility requirements for the award so that the Record of School Achievement will be a cumulative credential awarded to students when they leave school. To qualify for the award of a Record of School Achievement, a student must have attended a government school, an accredited non-government school or a recognised school outside New South Wales, undertaken and completed courses of study that satisfy the board's curriculum and assessment requirements for the Record of School Achievement, complied with any other regulations or requirements, such as attendance, imposed by the Minister or the board and completed year 10. The changes reflect that the Record of School Achievement will not be awarded at a specific point in time in a student's schooling but when the student leaves school provided that eligibility requirements are met.

The section 94 amendments also remove the requirement for mandatory statewide tests in nominated learning areas and instead refer to any examinations or assessments the school may wish to include in its internal assessment program. The legislation specifies that these will be in the learning areas and that they will be moderated in a manner determined by the Board of Studies so that an A in history awarded to a student in one school is consistent with an A in history in another. Section 98 has been amended to specify that the Board of Studies will maintain and provide transcripts of study on request to students who have completed year 10 regardless of whether the student qualifies for the award of a credential or leaves school. There is also provision for transcripts of study to be provided upon leaving school for students who have undertaken but not completed year 11 or 12 courses. Transcripts of study may also be requested by the school attended by a student.

The bill also provides for consequential and transitional provisions. It provides that students who complete year 10 in 2012 will be the first recipients who may be eligible for the new Record of School Achievement and will subsequently be the first cohort of students eligible for transcripts of study for courses undertaken in year 11 in 2013 and year 12 in 2014. In addition, non-government schools currently accredited for the School Certificate will continue to be accredited for the new Record of School Achievement. The Record of School Achievement recognises that school-awarded grades are the best means of communicating student achievement across the curriculum and that additional achievements in other areas of development are an essential part of an holistic learning experience. The credential will be an important part of encouraging students in New South Wales to see themselves as lifelong learners who are able to engage with their communities and to develop the range of skills necessary for success in the workforce.

New South Wales has an outstanding education system, and the credentials awarded to its students must respond to the changing demands of a modern community. The measures introduced in this bill to create the Record of School Achievement will help to ensure that our suite of credentials is kept current and meaningful in the education and broader communities.

I acknowledge Tom Alegounarias from the Board of Studies and the executive and other members who do a terrific job, and particularly the work they have done in developing the

Record of Student Achievement. I also acknowledge the organisations and individuals who participated in the consultation process, particularly the Secondary Principals' Council, the Catholic Education Commission, the Association of Independent Schools and the many others who were involved. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Robert Furolo and set down as an order of the day for a future day.