



Full Day Hansard Transcript (Legislative Council, 13 November 2013, Proof)

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BOARD OF STUDIES, TEACHING AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS BILL 2013

Second Reading

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for the Illawarra)
[5.22 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This bill gives effect to changes the Government recently announced to the way we support teachers and schools to deliver on improving student learning in New South Wales by the merger of the Board of Studies NSW and the NSW Institute of Teachers.

This new body will be the first of its kind in Australia. Its distinctiveness and policy power will come from bringing together the educational cornerstones of curriculum, student assessment, and teacher quality under one education body.

These three components should not exist in isolation from each other. The data and experience associated with each has relevance and bearing on the others. In the real world these cornerstones are intrinsically linked.

While each of these components is currently of a high standard in NSW, we believe that creating a single accountability for driving improvements across all of them not only makes sense, it creates the opportunity for significant improvement.

Consolidation of these functions in one organisation enables the Government to ensure that the key variable of teacher quality is at the heart of school organisation and is focused on improving student learning outcomes.

In a modern context administrative processes must be responsive to evidence of what works best for students. and the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards will assure that the continued work of these highly regarded bodies is brought to bear directly on supporting student learning across all sectors.

This reform puts standards at the heart of our education landscape. It signals our intent to use our educational resources to address the evidence, rather than rely on established practice. It also signals our determination to help the teaching profession to meet the challenges of educational quality in a competitive global environment.

It will also mean that there is a single entity responsible for the implementation of the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning Blueprint for Action across the government and non-government school sectors.

In addition to being responsible for many key measures in the Government's Great Teaching, Inspired Learning initiative, the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards will analyse data and consult experts, principals, teachers and parents to continuously improve policy settings for all New South Wales schools.

The current functions of the Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers will become the functions of the new board. As well, the Government is taking this opportunity to enhance the current registration requirements of the Board of Studies for non-government schools by strengthening the registration standards in the area of school governance. This measure has strong support from the non-government school sector and the new standards will be developed in close consultation with non-government school authorities. This consultation will occur so that these new standards will be implemented concurrent with the commencement of the new Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards from January 2014.

I turn now to the specific provisions of the bill.

The objectives of this bill are to constitute a new NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards and to consequentially amend the Education Act 1990 and the Institute of Teachers Act 2004.

Part 1 sets out the scheme of the bill by outlining that the new board will have functions set out by this bill as well as those of the Board of Studies and Institute of Teachers under the Education Act 1990 and the Institute of Teachers Act 2004. The latter is being renamed as the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 in recognition of the functions to remain in

that Act in relation to school system and individual school teacher accreditation authorities as distinct from the functions of the new board.

Part 2 deals with the constitution, membership and functions of the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards and administrative arrangements for the board president, committees and staff of the board. This carries forward the independence and strengthens the broadly representative nature of the Board of Studies to the new Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards.

Front and centre in section 6 is the rationale for this change:

The principal objective of the board is to ensure that the school curriculum, forms of assessment and teaching and regulatory standards under the education and teaching legislation are developed, applied and monitored in a way that improves student learning while maintaining flexibility across the entire school education and teaching sector

This is the paramount objective of the newly constituted board, and I emphasise the point again: the aim of this change is to enhance our capability to improve the achievement of all students in NSW.

Part 3 of the bill provides authority for the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards to appoint Inspectors. Inspectors will not only maintain their current functions under the Education Act 1990, these functions will also have regard to supporting the improvement in teaching standards and quality.

Part 4 of the bill deals with largely machinery provisions drawn from the existing provisions in the Education Act 1990 and Institute of Teachers Act 2004. The most significant of these is section 15, NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Fund. This ensures the continuation of the current practice of hypothecating teacher accreditation fees. This means that the fees teachers pay are only to be used for costs incurred by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards in connection with the accreditation of teachers and in monitoring, maintaining and developing teacher quality.

Schedule 1—Provisions relating to members and procedure of the Board—strengthens the qualifications, expertise and experience criteria for membership of the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards and its standing committees. In particular, these provisions recognise the broad scope of the new board in teacher education and continuing professional development but also the focus the new board will bring to bear in the critical areas of addressing the disparities in student outcomes for Indigenous students and for those in regional and rural NSW.

Schedule 2 deals with savings and transitional provisions. In particular, part 2—Provisions consequent on enactment of this Act—dissolves the current entities whose functions will merge—the Board of Studies NSW, the NSW Institute of Teachers, and the Board of Governance for the NSW Institute of Teachers. It ensures that there will be no lapse in operation with the creation of one new organisation by providing that:

Schedule 3 sets out the amendments to the Education Act 1990 that result from the bill. These are mostly administrative but also reflect the recent assumption of responsibilities by the Board of Studies under the National Assessment Program, in particular as test administration authority for the NAPLAN tests in New South Wales. As well, these amendments confer on the new board a strengthened role in relation to the registration of non-government schools. This is in response to representations from within the non-government school sector itself in relation to ensuring that proper accepted community norms for school governance are in place. These provisions also include the Government's response to a recommendation in a recent decision before the Administrative Decisions Tribunal to provide an explicit link between a school being required to maintain student enrolment and attendance registers and a safe and supportive environment for their students.

Schedule 4 deals with amendments to the Institute of Teachers Act 2004. Principally, it renames that act as the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004, and proposes various consequential changes brought about by this bill. The independent advisory functions of the Quality Teaching Council have been preserved. This bill also preserves the link between the council and the Chairperson of the Board of Governance of the Institute with the equivalent role of the President of the new Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards continuing in the role as the chair of the council.

Schedule 5 addresses the minor amendments to the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 and the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002 that reflect the merger together with other consequential changes arising from the commencement of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 that are required to preserve the independence of the new board.

The creation of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards represents the most significant reform of key education bodies in New South Wales since the creation of the Board of Studies by the previous Coalition Government in 1990. Just as that reform attracted bipartisan support in the Parliament, I look forward to similar support for this reform by this Parliament.

I commend the bill to the House.