

INQUIRY INTO REVIEW OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Organisation: Australian Education Union NSW Teachers Federation

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**AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION
NEW SOUTH WALES TEACHERS FEDERATION BRANCH**

SUBMISSION TO

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE 3 – LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

ON

**INQUIRY INTO THE REVIEW OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES SCHOOL
CURRICULUM**

Authorised by

**John Dixon
General Secretary
AEU NSW Teachers Federation**

7 August 2020

Introduction

The Australian Education Union NSW Teachers Federation Branch (Federation) represents teachers in all public education worksites in NSW. The current financial membership totals over 61,000 practicing teachers and student teacher members.

Federation is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry on behalf of members across the state.

This Inquiry into the Review of the New South Wales school curriculum by the Legislative Council follows a comprehensive NSW curriculum review which engaged the broadest of stakeholders across a period of two years. The report and recommendations of which were released on 23 June 2020, alongside the NSW government's response to the same.

To embark on another inquiry into the NSW curriculum through a politically motivated parliamentary process would be to ignore the thousands of submissions and voices, views and experiences of those who are most deeply committed to curriculum reform in NSW, from early childhood to the tertiary sectors and beyond, inclusive of teacher associations, students, parent bodies, employer organisations and community groups.

Comprehensive review processes

The NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced a comprehensive review into the NSW curriculum in May 2018 alongside the then Minister for Education, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP. This review would be inclusive of all years of schooling, from Kindergarten to Year 12, and was touted as the first major review into curriculum since 1989.

A two-year process of statewide consultation, refinement of directions based on community feedback, further consultation and engagement and an analysis of both national and international research and evidence-based findings ensued.

An Interim Report was released in October 2019 which again sought engagement and consultation from the public before the final NSW Curriculum Review was released in June 2020.

Recent curriculum reform initiatives from several countries around the world and evidenced based practice from the same were also studied by the reviewers. These took into consideration world's best practice in curriculum but also evidence underpinning human learning and the conditions that promote successful learning outcomes for children and young people.

Extensive consultation

Public consultation from the announcement in May 2018 until its conclusion in 2020, included teacher associations, parent bodies, community members, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, non-government organisations, youth agencies, multicultural communities, employer organisations, tertiary education providers, industry associations, early childhood and vocational education organisations, business and industry groups, principal groups and teacher unions across NSW as well as nationally.

Engagement throughout the review process was undertaken via the following means which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 2000 online submissions

- 60 meetings with stakeholder groups across educational sectors and beyond with industry and business groups, parent groups etc.
- Public roadshows involving face to face community meetings
- 5000 individual and organisational responses
- Survey responses from over 1000 students
- School visits
- Focus groups
- Apprenticeship Engagement Forum

The following organisations are specifically referenced as providing input to the comprehensive review process.

- Council of Catholic School Parents NSW/ACT
- Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.
- Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA)
- English Teachers Association NSW
- NSW Department of Education
- University of Technology Sydney
- Mathematical Association of New South Wales
- The History Teachers' Association of NSW (HTA)
- Careers Advisers Association of NSW and ACT
- Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW
- The Australian Education Union NSW Teachers Federation Branch
- NSW Business Chamber
- Independent Education Union of Australian – NSW/ACT Branch
- Australian Association of Special Education
- Parents for ADHD Australia
- National Advocates for Arts Education
- Engineers Australia
- NSW Environmental Education Centres (ECC)
- ADHD Australia
- White Ribbon Association
- Family Advocacy
- Australian Major Performing Arts Group
- NSW Youth Advisory Council

The NSW Curriculum Review, titled *Nurturing Wonder and Igniting Passion*, could not be more comprehensive in its methodology and commitment to its stated aims. While some of the findings and recommendations do not align with the views and experiences of our members, the NSW Teachers Federation accepts that this process has been extensive, consultative of all stakeholders and evidenced by current research.

The Federation asserts that to embark upon another Inquiry into the review of New South Wales school curriculum would be to disregard the contributions and voices of thousands of our community who are genuinely committed to the education and lifelong learnings of their students, children, communities and broader employment outcomes for our society.