

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 9 August 2020

Partially
Confidential

Inquiry into the review of the New South Wales school curriculum

Introduction.

As a retired teacher in the field of special education I would like to take this opportunity to respond to some aspects of the Review into the New South Wales curriculum. I commenced teaching in 1973 and retired in 2012my roles over my teaching career involved being a classroom teacher and a co- teacher across the curriculum in high school settings. I am on the Executive of the Professional Association for Learning Support (PALS) and we have as members those teachers who are often described as Learning and Support teachers (LAST) but more recently Learning Enrichment and Diverse Learning teachers. To give you an understanding of the role I've included two job descriptions.... one from the Department of Education and one from the private sector. This teaching role will be integral in the implementation of the New South Wales Curriculum as envisaged by the Review. My submission will concentrate on those aspects of the terms of Reference that are specific for this teaching role to be referred to as the LAST role.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Curriculum content, flexibility and pedagogy

The Review signals a change of teacher mindset where the emphasis will be on the student rather than the subject content. That is an incredible change to teaching pedagogy and requires a very flexible curriculum. It is a change that I as very experienced teacher welcome wholeheartedly. Too often I saw classroom teachers move on to new content before students had mastered prerequisite skills. The demands of registers far outweighed the learning needs of students. This meant that they fell even further behind in their learning leading to being not engaged or motivated.

Recommendations for student-centred 'progression points' and 'differentiated learning' in schools and whether such initiatives are research-based and proven to be effective.

Progression points and differentiated learning underpin individualised learning that ensures individual learning needs are met. You will see from the job descriptions of the LAST role that assisting teachers differentiate is part of the professional development provided to teachers. Frameworks such as Response to Intervention (RtI) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are critical for ensuring that assessment processes are directly linked to relevant intervention programs to meet individual learning needs. Teachers need to be able to diagnostically examine students responses and design a program of intervention. How many times do students get corrective feedback after completing an assessment?

Ensuring students' acquisition of excellence in literacy and numeracy, as well as deep knowledge of key subjects.

The scope of this submission does not allow me to emphasise how important each teacher is in developing the literacy and numeracy skills of their students. There are many times in the school day when the skills can be reinforced and taught but the opportunities for this learning are missed because the teachers do not have the relevant professional development to bring it about. Professional development in a team

teaching situation with a very skilled learning and support teacher is one way this can be achieved. The LAST teacher must be very experienced and qualified to effectively support classroom teachers. Too often the LAST role is given to a teacher who is NOT trained to be able to provide this professional development. Consequently opportunities right across the curriculum are missed and crucial learning that could be integral to the development of literacy and numeracy do not occur. In some cases students will need direct instruction in a small group or in a one-on-one situation to enable them to acquire the skills that they need. This instruction should be delivered by a specially trained teacher or by a teacher assistant or a volunteer under the direct supervision of a teacher. The RtI framework is built on 3 tiers of instruction.....classroom, small group and individual. It is highly recommended that the intensive level is delivered by a highly trained specialist.

Given the importance of English literacy across the curriculum, adopting the most effective evidence-based approaches to language acquisition, especially for reading and writing.

Traditionally LAST teachers have been responsible for initiatives like Language Across the Curriculum and other policies and they can alert/ instruct other teachers re the opportunities and strategies that can be employed to enhance student language acquisition. Effective vocabulary instruction for instance is vital across all subject areas and is an area where a specialised professional development is essential. Such instruction has been proven to significantly increase the achievement levels of students and there are many opportunities across the curriculum to develop students vocabulary.

Conclusion.

Professional development of teachers will be essential to the successful implementation of the new Curriculum. Integral to this implementation will be the teachers in specific roles such as the LAST. It will be up to Systems to ensure that these teachers are qualified and experienced enough to deliver the professional development. In many schools there is a critical shortage of such teachers and if they are the only teacher in the role at the school the demands on their time is enormous as well as meeting the demands of supporting the Disability Provisions program and funding programs. You will see in the job descriptions below that in some schools the LAST teacher will be part of a team of others in the same role.....whereas a Learning Support Team in some schools may only have 1 teacher actually working in that role. The role of the LAST/Enrichment teachers in the successful implementation of the new NSW Curriculum will be vital. Successful implementation of this curriculum would revolutionise learning in our State and lead to better outcomes for our students.

Submitted by

To follow Role descriptions current as of 9th August 2020