

Review of the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES)

Modernising the educational architecture of NSW

Rationale

The last 5 years of evidence-based reform in NSW has laid the foundation for a high-performing education system which will improve student results. The key to achieving this goal is ensuring excellence in quality teaching, a focus on literacy & numeracy in the early years of school, needs-based funding reform and greater school authority in the public school system. From this strong base it is now timely to ensure the State's educational architecture complements recent reform and will drive continued improvements in student results.

NSW schools are increasingly influenced by the changing national and international environment for education. Recent years have seen not only the advent of annual national assessment (NAPLAN) but also Australian curriculum and the development of national teaching standards. Australian schools are now being judged by international standards as measured by student performance on international assessments in literacy, numeracy and science. Throughout the world schools and those responsible for them are addressing the rapid impact of new forms of information and communication technology on the nature of teaching, learning, and assessment. At the same time they are required to ensure that contemporary school organisation and practices reflect the needs and growing expectations of communities and governments.

Since 2008 Australia has been creating a new national architecture for schools through the establishment, by common agreement of Commonwealth and State/Territory governments, of new bodies for curriculum and assessment (ACARA), teacher quality and standards (AITSL) and educational information technology (ESA).

So too, NSW needs to ensure that the state's educational architecture best meets the present and future needs of NSW schools and all those with a stake in them. In particular, the state needs to operate with structures that are based on contemporary governance principles and standards, especially for government instrumentalities such as statutory boards and advisory committees. A major step was taken by the NSW government in 2013 by (i) bringing together in a single authority (BOSTES) the integral responsibilities for curriculum, assessment and teaching, as well as the Registration of all schools, government and non-government; and (ii) creating an authority with responsibility for educational standards.

Background

The NSW BOSTES was established in 2013, essentially by amalgamating the functions and structures of the previous Board of Studies (established in 1990) and the Institute of Teachers (established in 2004). It is responsible to the Minister for specific functions under the NSW *Education Act* (Section 6), the *BOSTES ACT 2013* (Section 6) and the *Teacher Accreditation Act 2004* (section 7). For all government and non-government schools, these functions cover school curriculum and assessment, the operation of NAPLAN, credentialing of the HSC, accreditation of teachers and teacher education courses, registration of schools.

To meet the challenges of the future, the BOSTES needs to build on its successful work to date. The BOSTES is a NSW Government educational body. It is charged with developing, applying and, in certain cases, monitoring standards in a way that improves student learning while maintaining flexibility across the education sector. All NSW schools depend on the BOSTES for their licence to operate (registration), all students depend on it for the curriculum they will be taught, the assessment they will undertake and the credentials they will receive, and all teachers will depend on it for their licence to teach in NSW (accreditation). It is crucial therefore that the BOSTES objectives, role, scope, functions, structures and processes are appropriate to meeting emerging challenges.

Terms of Reference

The Minister for Education has commissioned a review of BOSTES to ensure its current role, membership, functions and structure continue to best serve the community of NSW into the future by setting high and consistent education standards, building the best quality teaching and associated workforce, and improving outcomes for all students.

The Review will consult, consider and advise the Minister on:

1. The objectives, role, functions and responsibilities of the Board.
2. The most appropriate governance arrangements for BOSTES including:
 - a. the constitution and membership of the Board;
 - b. the functions of the members of the Board;
 - c. Board committees and related structures (e.g. Quality Teaching Council);
 - d. the regulatory responsibilities in relation to schools and teachers;
 - e. BOSTES consultative arrangements.
3. The nature and scope of the BOSTES role and functions in establishing, promoting, monitoring and assuring rigorous regulatory requirements for schools and teachers and the processes for dealing with failure to meet regulatory requirements.
4. The optimum processes for formulating and assuring high educational standards for curriculum, for assessment, for schools, and for the accreditation of teachers.
5. The most appropriate organisational structure for supporting the functions of the Board.
6. The implementation of recommendations including identifying legislative or other necessary changes.
7. Any other matters considered relevant to achieving the outcomes of the Review.

Review Panel

The review will be undertaken by an expert panel appointed by the Minister.

The members of the Review Panel are:

Chair: Emeritus Professor Bill Loudon AM, Emeritus Professor of Education at The University of Western Australia, formerly Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor at The University of Western Australia.

Lisa Paul AO PSM, former Secretary of the Australian Department of Education and Training.

Dr Phil Lambert PSM, former General Manager, Curriculum ACARA and Regional Director, Sydney NSW Department of Education.

Review Process

In undertaking the review it is expected that the Review Panel will consult widely with those involved in schooling in NSW and other parties interested in contributing to the review, including employers, business, industry and higher education providers, and with the BOSTES.

The review should consider any functions that are, or should be: undertaken by any other organisations; not undertaken at all; undertaken by the BOSTES where they are not currently - to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness and remove duplication and overlap. This includes both state (e.g. DoE, CEC and AIS) and national (ACARA, AITSL, ESA) organisations, as well as universities, initial teacher education providers, and other relevant bodies. It should also consider the cost effectiveness of current and potential future responsibilities and services.

The deliverables of the review to the Minister are:

1. A report addressing the issues for consideration in this review and any other matters deemed relevant.
2. The recommendations of the Review Panel.
3. A schematic representation and/or description of the roles and functions of the various entities and agencies which impact on educational standards in NSW.
4. The proposed organisation structure chart for the BOSTES.
5. A summary of any significant legislative changes required to implement the recommendations.
6. An analysis of submissions received.

The Review Panel will be supported by a secretariat provided by the Department of Education through staff appointed or seconded on a full-time or part-time basis, for the purpose of the review. The services of the Department in relation to legal and other advice will also be available to the Panel.

It is anticipated that the Panel will commence the review in early March 2016 with its report to be provided to the Minister by the end of June 2016.