



## English Teachers' Association Submission to the Review of the BoSTES

### Introduction

The English Teachers' Association of NSW (PTCNSW) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the BoSTES Review. The ETA is the largest teaching association in NSW with a cross sectoral, voluntary membership of 1500 English teachers and 300 faculties of English in secondary schools.

A small working party has compiled this response to ensure that it is completed within a very tight deadline, incorporating school holidays when much of our membership is unavailable.

The ETA is proud of its endorsement as a BOSTES endorsed professional development provider and works to continuously improve and strengthen the quality, the quantity and the range of its professional services to English teachers. Its support of the curriculum through the development of resources, professional learning opportunities and our own research into how the syllabus may be delivered to achieve the best outcomes for students confirms our commitment to teaching quality and student learning in this state.

### Areas of discussion

#### **Have the opportunities of the amalgamation been fully realised?**

The amalgamation of the Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers was a logical, efficient and effective step, uniting curriculum, assessment and teacher accreditation in one body. We believe however that there are further opportunities that could be realised through this body.

As teachers are the key to education of students and have the keen interest in curriculum and teaching and learning that everyday interaction brings, the ETA feels strongly that there needs to be broader representation of teachers on BoSTES committees and particularly representation on the Board of BoSTES itself. We argue that this representation is best served through the professional associations whose sole interests are for quality teaching and high standards of learning. The professional associations are unaligned and so place these concerns ahead of system needs, administrative priorities or industrial requirements. That there is no or inadequate representation on BoSTES committees by the professional associations who deal solely with the core business of educators and have the curriculum and subject expertise is a significant weakness in the current structural arrangements.

#### Recommendations

1. That professional associations be allocated a position on the Board of the BoSTES
2. That professional associations' representation on committees of the BoSTES be increased to reflect the critical role, interests and understandings of teachers.

## **Are the roles and responsibilities clear and appropriate?**

The BoSTES brand is not understood by many teachers who cannot differentiate between the roles of their system, sector or school and that of the BoSTES. Nor do they seem to appreciate the distinction between the BoSTES and ACARA. Indeed, we have experienced teachers who cannot differentiate between what the BoSTES and what the ETA are supposed to offer!

Given the BoSTES' expected increase in breadth of operations in 2018 with the accreditation of all teachers, its functions and responsibilities (and all educational institutions teachers work with) need to be made clearer to those who use them. However, we have no suggestions as to how this can be achieved within the funding allocations to education.

There should also be recognition of the need to expand BoSTES services over the next years to ensure that there are sufficient staff to support the growing numbers of teachers requiring and maintaining accreditation and groups seeking accredited professional development provider status. While BoSTES staff are very helpful, it is quite clear that they are also under pressure.

Due to syllabus changes involving AC: E and teachers wanting to meet their accreditation requirements, this pressure is felt at the ETA too. We have been offering additional professional development to meet the increasing demand from teachers requiring and maintaining accreditation. We are asking that the government hold faith with article 16.4 in *Great teaching, inspired learning* (2013) p.19

*The profession will be supported to inform and provide registered teacher professional learning. Teacher professional bodies will be supported and utilised as high quality and effective providers of teacher professional learning. Systems for the exchange of information will be established across the associations, school authorities and the Institute to help associations provide professional learning that meets school and system priorities, as well as to inform school authorities of teacher-driven demands for professional learning.*

At this point in time, there has been no extra support to assist us in meeting the expectations outlined above. It would be useful to receive from BOSTES the professional learning evaluation data for ETA courses.

### **Recommendations**

1. That BoSTES frontline staffing be increased to meet the needs of increasing numbers of teachers seeking and maintaining accreditation and providers applying for accreditation.
2. That 'systems for exchange of information' be fast tracked to facilitate the demands of the accreditation process.

## **Are effective governance arrangements in place?**

One aspect of the governance of the BoSTES that is surprising is the fusion of the positions of President and Chief Executive Officer. Our understanding is that these two positions, aside from each having previously been full-time, have separate roles, the first of governance and the second of management. Given that teachers pay fees to the BoSTES for accreditation, the separation of those two functions is critical to ensure the scrupulous oversight of the work of the office through the independence of the President.

We would like to reiterate the point made above that at this time there is no representation for teaching associations on the Board of Studies itself or some other committees even though the

professional associations represent teachers as classroom teachers, not industrial workers, employees or systems or sectors. This omission weakens effective governance.

Recommendations

1. That the positions of President and CEO of the BoSTES be once again separated to ensure effective governance of the workings of the office.
2. That professional associations be allocated a position on the Board of the BoSTES.

Once again, many thanks for this opportunity to make a contribution to the review.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eva Gold". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Eva" and "Gold" being capitalized and prominent.

Eva Gold  
Executive Officer  
21<sup>st</sup> April 2016