Introduction

The Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) is responsible for school curriculum, assessment, and teaching and regulatory standards in NSW schools.

BOSTES was established on 1 January 2014 following the passage of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Act 2013 (the BOSTES Act). It is responsible to the NSW Minister for Education for specific functions under the BOSTES Act, the Education Act 1990 and the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004.

BOSTES essentially amalgamated the functions of the former Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers. The former Board of Studies was established in 1990 to provide educational leadership through the development of policies, programs and practices in school curriculum, assessment, registration and accreditation. The former Institute of Teachers was established in 2004 to set and monitor quality teaching standards in NSW schools.

Overview of BOSTES functions

Curriculum and assessment: BOSTES develops curriculum and curriculum support materials that articulate NSW educational standards at each stage of learning from Kindergarten to Year 12. BOSTES is responsible for developing NSW syllabuses. When appropriate, this incorporates the Australian Curriculum.

BOSTES develops resources and provides guidance and support for teachers undertaking assessment of the educational standard of NSW students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Examinations and credentials: BOSTES develops and delivers Higher School Certificate examinations and awards the Higher School Certificate. BOSTES also awards the Record of School Achievement to eligible students who leave school prior to completing the Higher School Certificate.

BOSTES is responsible for the implementation and administration of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests in NSW. BOSTES is also responsible for administering the Australian Music Examinations Board (NSW).
Teaching quality: BOSTES is responsible for implementing and overseeing teacher accreditation processes against whole-of-career Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the accreditation of NSW teachers against those standards. Early childhood teachers and teachers qualified pre-2004 will be brought under the Teacher Accreditation Act later in 2016 and 2018 respectively.

BOSTES ensures the quality of initial teacher education programs offered by providers against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. It supports professional learning for beginning, returning and continuing teachers based on professional standards.

BOSTES also coordinates the implementation of the NSW Government’s Great Teaching, Inspired Learning: A Blueprint for Action across all NSW schools.

School registration and accreditation: BOSTES develops and implements school registration standards. This includes registration of non-government schools seeking to operate in NSW and accreditation of non-government schools to present candidates for the Record of School Achievement and Higher School Certificate. BOSTES is responsible for providing advice to the Minister on the compliance by NSW government schools with requirements similar to those required for the registration of non-government schools.

BOSTES approves schools to deliver courses to overseas students and administers the home schooling program under delegation from the Minister.

Information about the membership of the Board and its committees can be found in the Appendix.

About the review

The NSW Minister for Education commissioned the review to ensure the current role, functions, structure and membership of BOSTES 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.

An expert Review Panel has been established to consult, consider and advise the Minister on the roles and responsibilities of the Board, including the most appropriate governance and organisational arrangements to support the functions of the Board.

The Review Panel will also consult, consider and advise the Minister on the nature and scope of the role of BOSTES in establishing and monitoring regulatory requirements for schools and teachers; and optimum processes for assuring high standards for curriculum, assessment, schools and for the accreditation of teachers.

More information about the review, including the full terms of reference, can be found at http://bostesreview.nsw.edu.au/.
Areas for discussion

The Review Panel has identified a number of areas for discussion based on the terms of reference to help guide the preparation of comments and submissions to the review.

The areas for discussion have been split into four high level questions:

1. **Have the opportunities of the amalgamation been fully realised?**
2. **Are roles and responsibilities clear and appropriate?**
3. **Are processes and practices as effective and efficient as possible?**
4. **Are effective governance arrangements in place?**

Specific issues for consideration have been developed under each of these high level questions and are set out below. Detail about how to contribute to the review can be found on page 6.

1. **Have the opportunities of the amalgamation been fully realised?**

   BOSTES is unique by national and international standards. It aims to cultivate and leverage the interrelationships between the educational pillars of curriculum, teaching, assessment and educational regulation in a way that drives higher quality teaching and improves the educational standards of NSW students.

   In introducing the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Bill 2013 to Parliament, the Minister for Education noted that the distinctiveness and policy power of the new body would come from bringing together these educational cornerstones. He argued that curriculum, teaching, assessment and educational regulation should not exist in isolation from each other; rather, the data and experience associated with each has relevance and bearing on the other.

   In bringing together these cornerstones, the Government sought to create a single authority with accountability for driving improvements. The intention was to put teacher quality and educational standards at the heart of the NSW education landscape to improve student learning.

   In responding to this question, comments are sought on whether:

   - BOSTES has a clear mission and strategic focus to achieve the objectives sought by government
   - there are further synergies arising from the amalgamation that remain to be achieved
   - there are barriers to realising the full extent of these opportunities
   - there are further opportunities BOSTES could take to leverage high standards in education
2. Are roles and responsibilities clear and appropriate?

The Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers were national leaders in the development of curriculum, assessment and teaching standards. Since these bodies were established, however, the educational landscape has changed significantly.

There has been an increased focus, for example, on national consistency in curriculum, assessment and teaching standards. While the national education architecture has not overtaken the roles and responsibilities that rightly rest with states and territories, the changed national environment does mean that the context within which BOSTES now operates is very different from that of the Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers.

So too at the State level, where a stronger focus on teaching quality and educational standards means the school sectors, BOSTES and other education stakeholders are all involved, to a lesser or greater degree, in school standards, teacher accreditation and related activities such as professional learning.

In responding to this question, comments are sought on whether:
- there are areas of duplication or overlap
- there are areas of blurred responsibility which affect the achievement of high standards in NSW
- any areas of effort should be revisited given changes to the context in which BOSTES operates

3. Are processes and practices as effective and efficient as possible?

BOSTES has comprehensive processes in place to support the implementation of curriculum, assessment, teaching and educational standards. It works collaboratively with the school sectors, key educational stakeholders, universities, teacher educators and other professional groups and the broader community.

This approach has contributed to community confidence in the NSW education system. But today's education environment is placing new demands on schools and teachers; and the expectations of parents and students are changing.

The nature and pace of syllabus development is being affected by increasing access to digital resources and the evolution of the Australian Curriculum. In addition to syllabus material and resources, there is increasing recognition of the importance of supporting teachers in classroom assessment to improve student outcomes.

Changes to the regulatory environment require effective processes and appropriate powers to ensure high standards are maintained. The extension of the teacher accreditation process to all teachers, including in the early childhood education sector, will place significant demands on existing structures and practices. An expanded role in school regulation combined with an increased focus on quality, requires an approach that appropriately manages risk and balances compliance with setting and monitoring standards.

In responding to this question, comments are sought on whether:
- business process opportunities have been fully explored following the amalgamation
- there are opportunities to improve the curriculum development and assessment processes
- changes are needed to teacher accreditation processes to effectively manage an expanded system
- changes are required to BOSTES school registration and accreditation processes to ensure high standards
4. Are effective governance arrangements in place?

Given its responsibilities, BOSTES governance arrangements need to support the involvement and collaboration of the school sectors, teachers and wider education community in the delivery of high standards that meet the needs of students.

Effective governance is critical to the performance of all public sector entities and the capacity of those agencies to look forward, with a strategic focus and ability to adapt to a changing world. Good governance necessarily involves the establishment of fit-for-purpose structures, frameworks and processes to achieve expected outcomes, consistent with legal and policy requirements.¹

The passing of the BOSTES Act left the constitution and membership of the Board largely unchanged from that of the Board of Studies. The Institute of Teachers' Board of Governance was replaced in its functions by the new Board. The Institute's Quality Teaching Council was maintained in its previous form and with its previous charter. During its first year of operation, the role of the President expanded to take on the functions of chief executive.

While the BOSTES Act provides the Board with responsibility for reporting on matters relating to BOSTES functions, it does not prescribe any management and control responsibilities over the agency.

The broad scope of the Board is matched by a large number of standing committees, the structure of which reflects the previous committees operating under the former Board of Studies and the Quality Teaching Council. Some committees are statutory in nature, some exercise functions delegated by the Board, while others serve as advisory bodies.

In responding to this question, comments are sought on whether:

- the Board and committee structure are fit for purpose
- the governance arrangements give appropriate attention to the full range of functions of BOSTES
- the appropriate management structures are in place to support the functions of the agency

¹ Australian National Audit Office, Best Practice Guide to Public Sector Governance (June 2014)

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How to contribute

The Review Panel welcomes responses to this Issues Paper from those involved in schooling in NSW and other parties interested in contributing to the review.

Respondents may wish to address all four high level questions or only those questions that are of particular relevance or interest.

Written submissions (attached as a Word file or PDF) should be sent to bostes.review@det.nsw.edu.au. Please mark your submission “confidential” if you do not want it to be published.

The Review Panel will accept submissions until midnight, Thursday 21 April 2016.
Appendix

Membership of the Board
Under the BOSTES Act, the Board consists of the President, three members nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Education and 19 representative members appointed by the Minister.

The membership of the Board is prescribed in the BOSTES Act (see http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/about/boardmembers.html for the current members of the Board). Members are appointed for up to three years but are eligible for reappointment.

The office of the President is a statutory, full-time office. The President is appointed by the Governor for up to five years, with eligibility for reappointment. The functions of the President are to preside over meetings of the Board and to oversee the functions of the Board in accordance with the Board’s directions. Through the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, the President is also the head of the agency.

Committees of the Board
The BOSTES Act provides the Board with the power to establish committees, with the approval of the Minister, to assist it in the exercise of its functions.

The Quality Teaching Council is established under the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 and advises the Board in relation to its functions under that Act. The Quality Teaching Council consists of the President of BOSTES (chair), 11 elected members who are teachers and 11 members appointed by the Minister (see http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/about-us/quality-teaching-council-qtc/council-members/ for the current members of the Quality Teaching Council).

Other standing committees report to the Board directly or via the Quality Teaching Council. Information about these committees is available in the BOSTES 2014-15 Annual Report (see https://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/about/annual-report.html).