

OPENING STATEMENT

Good morning, my name is Mrs Chris Arnold and I am the Principal of Narembeen District High School. We are a small but high achieving school with a group of talented students who do their community proud.

Narembeen District High School has had students studying Year 11 & 12 courses through SIDE for a number of years. The number of students studying senior schooling at Narembeen increased after the school leaving age was raised to 17 years of age.

It is important to note that Narembeen DHS is not a District High School that requires, nor uses SIDE courses for our Year 8 – 10 course delivery. We are in the enviable position of having experienced teachers in all areas of the curriculum, including the hard to staff areas of Design & Technology, Science and Mathematics. We have only ever had students requiring SIDE courses if they stay on site for Year 11 & 12 studies.

Historically, students who have remained at Narembeen DHS to complete a SIDE course for University entrance have done very well, scoring excellent TER's. Students have since completed Bachelor of Nursing & Bachelor of Education degrees while our most recent TEE student (2008) is completing a double degree in Economics and Commerce at UWA. At present we have one Year 12 completing a difficult course for entry to Murdoch in 2011 and a Year 11 student who is studying a less demanding course. We receive no FTE senior school allocation for either of these students. However, due to funding made available in 2008 to set up facilities for Year 11 & 12 SIDE students, they have an excellent working environment, with their own computers, internet access for research and mooble/centra lessons, fax, phone, headsets, desks, shelves etc – all specifically purchased with funding to ensure the provision of facilities for Year 11 & 12 students – just two years ago.

We are providing a valuable service to these students. Not all parents can afford, nor do they necessarily want to send their children away in Year 11. Other students quite simply cannot cope with the forced change or boarding away from home. I know first hand the difficulties faced by rural students who leave home in Year 11 to board away from home. Further, many parents do not want to be faced with 'losing' their son or daughter from the family home at such a young age. Many students simply do better in the family environment.

One of the reasons that Narembeen is on the list of 21 schools that will no longer be providing the opportunity for students to stay and study in Year 11 & 12, is that we are considered to be close enough to a senior school to bus students. I would like to point out that while the township may be only 70 km to Merredin, at any given time up to 60% of the students reside on farms and may need to be bussed to town first. At present, our Year 12 student studying SIDE, has a 45 minute bus trip to get to Narembeen. While on the subject of bussing to senior school campuses – we don't have a bus to Merredin and, in the near future, I cannot see us getting one!

I hope that I will be able to answer any questions you have regarding our provision of Year 11 & 12 SIDE courses over the past and also what we consider viable in the future. I have a great knowledge of the school having actually attended it myself in Years 7 – 10 and then teaching here for the past 19 years. Although I have only been Principal for the past two years I was Deputy Principal for 8 years prior to that. Narembeen community and in particular the school and its students are my number one priority and I will continue to strive to do what is best for every one of the students – not just those who cope with living away and can afford the option.

Mrs Chris Arnold

PRINCIPAL
NAREMBEEN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

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