

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Inquiry into the delivery of the Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) program

From: PRIOR Leanne [Mount Barker Community College]

Sent: Sunday, 6 August 2017 7:01 PM

To: Committee, Education & Health Standing <laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au>

Subject: Inquiry into the delivery of the Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) program

Mount Barker Community College comments for the VETiS review.

There are four items for consideration:

1. How well the program is meeting the needs of schools, students and industry

- Large numbers of students doing some Certificate II Qualifications (particularly Business and Sport and Recreation, as these are easier to manage in schools with larger student numbers) is a concern as it appears to devalue these qualifications – are there really jobs in these areas?
- Completing a Certificate II Qualification is 'foot in the door' to further TAFE studies for many students. Often the competency structure of Certificates, and the support offered in the TAFE system for students with learning difficulties, and additional support from teachers and Education Assistants in schools, ensures they are able to experience success and pass.
- Completing one Certificate II in Year 11 and not being funded to continue into Certificate III or IV, or even complete a second Certificate II is a disadvantage for students.
- It is problematic when students are 'out' of school classes for one (or two) days at TAFE, and one day in Work Placement. This puts more pressure on classroom teachers and on students to be organised to complete work. The structure and difficulty of General courses, and school timetables work against some students being able to succeed (and classes being viable at schools with smaller numbers of upper school students). Some students choose to pass the Certificate qualification at the expense of their other school studies and achieving WACE.
- I don't think it is meeting the needs of schools in some ways. It is creating heaps more work and organisational issues, and requiring more of teaching and administrative staff – who already have lots to do with new curriculum requirements. It is much easier to have all students doing subjects and not having more individualised career pathways. And we lose more students during Year 11 into Year 12 – making some classes unviable for those who stay at school with our small senior secondary numbers.
- In our context it is meeting the needs of students because for most of them we are able to personalise what they do to meet their career aspirations, or at least put them on a pathway to where they might want to be in the future. (Mainly because of the large number of School-Based Traineeships we are able to set up in relation to our Work Place Learning numbers). This is because our WPL/VET coordinator is really committed and works over and above to make it happen.
- It is also meeting industry needs in our rural community – a country town which services an agricultural community – Certificates in Rural Operations, Agrifoods and Engineering are useful. Also because we set up many SBT/SBAs – some businesses have had multiple work placement

students who have ultimately gone on to full apprenticeships and employment in our community.

- Those who choose to 'have a go' at ATAR, then decide it is too hard and 'drop' to a General course are often disadvantaged because it is too late to enrol in TAFE VETis courses, or to complete the whole certificate if they have missed a term or a year. Without our SBTs many of these students would not be able to achieve a Certificate II at all.

2. Challenges for regional and remote areas.

- The ability of students to get to TAFE colleges for programs. Distance / time / bus availability are issues for our students. (There's a whole story around the buses to Albany from Mt Barker and Denmark)
- Student numbers / funding – making it viable to run courses.
- Setting up SBTs for individuals enables students to access a wider range of qualifications in areas of their interest. However, monitoring these is an increased workload for school staff – liaising with various RTOs, ensuring students do the work booklets.... Schools used to get an incentive payment for each SBT set up and monitored, this does not happen anymore. Yet we still need to set up, monitor and support kids.
- Benefits for our community – the culture of Training developing in the town, linking the certificates we offer to our local needs.

3. Registration and ongoing monitoring of training organisations

- As a school which is also an RTO the requirements of maintain that status is onerous. Especially when the requirements of particular qualifications keeps changing.
- In particular ensuring the 'Industry Currency' requirements for full time teachers (this is also for teachers/trainers who are being auspiced by other RTOs). When do they have time when working full time, to also undertake a work placement? Who pays for this?
- Some external RTOs have no idea of what working with teenagers involves! The training sector is an 'adult learning environment', but many teenagers are not there yet and need additional support and motivation that needs to be provided by school staff. We spend a lot of time selecting RTOs on demonstrated merit to meet the needs of our students. Some private RTO's are excellent. TAFE as the required 'first port of call for schools would be problematic.
- Most of our SBTs use the private sector RTOs as they can be more flexible.
- RTOs that manage SBTs at Certificate II, get \$4500 (Certificate III approx \$6000) to manage. However, students doing these qualifications are more likely to be successful when school is actively involved in monitoring and providing support to students. At present we are doing this over and above – for love. Parents phone the school, not the RTO or TAFE.

4. Resourcing of the program

- RTO fee has to come out of school budget. This is a significant amount for a small school and not part of our budget allocation.
- Funding to schools to support SBTs. It is school staff who spend time working with students to meet the requirements.

Other

- Built in meaningless as large number of students do Certificate IIs in bulk. SBTs are meaningful and lead to 'real jobs'.

- General students are no longer the tail that wags the school. It is better. More students are choosing this pathway as a real alternative to ATAR.
- Would be good if there were ways for ATAR students to access more VET stuff too. Often they finish school with only ATAR and no VET qualifications. Even part time jobs now are asking do you have a Certificate II in Retail? Even short courses would be good. The logistics of doing VET and ATAR is very challenging for individual kids, and for schools to manage.

Regards,

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