

Jewell, Renae**PUBLIC**

Subject: FW: Inquiry into the removal of senior school allocation funding for Year 11 and 12 courses at district high schools

From: Kath Ward [mailto:Kath.Ward@det.wa.edu.au]

Sent: 10 June 2010 9:20 AM

To: Council

Cc: Kim Guelfi

Subject: Inquiry into the removal of senior school allocation funding for Year 11 and 12 courses at district high schools

Attention: Hon Giz Watson MLC

Dear Ms Watson

Many thanks for the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Committee's inquiry regarding senior schooling in district high schools.

As the only senior high school for 160 kilometres with five district high schools in our catchment area – Kellerberrin, Bruce Rock, Narembene, Mukinbudin and Southern Cross – we have always been differentially staffed to ensure that we can provide a range of senior schooling options with specialist teachers. Our facilities and our staffing expertise ensure students considerably better opportunities for success in senior schooling subjects than in the district high school environments.

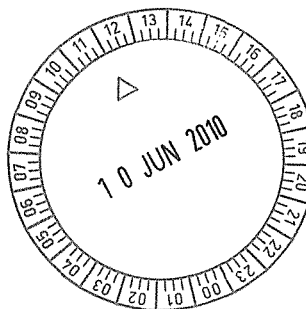
It should be noted that district high schools have a mandate to offer curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 10 and that it was always envisaged that students would transfer to a senior high school for their senior schooling years. This is not a new development. Schools like Bruce Rock District High School have always promoted the idea that their education in their own community ceases at Year 10 and they have not offered curriculum into the senior years. The provision of a residential college in communities like Merredin ensures that students who have a considerable distance to travel can be accommodated.

It is my professional view that students who elect to remain in their district high school and study a full course via the School of Isolated and Distance Education when reasonable access to face to face teaching is available do themselves a disservice. Very few 15 to 17 year olds are able to manage their time, work independently and learn new and complex concepts in isolation to the standard that makes them competitive across the state. This is of greatest concern if they aim to study a course that involves external exams and gaining a tertiary entrance ranking.

For our consortium of schools in particular, we have recently embarked on establishing a trade training centre that will guarantee all students in our region access to trade facilities as early as Year 9 with an intention that interested students aiming to gain qualifications in the automotive, metals and/or building and construction fields will transfer to Merredin as senior schooling students to pursue this pathway. We are well equipped to accept further numbers in our school in all pathways – university entrance or various workforce pathways including apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational fields of business, hospitality, horticulture and trades. – We welcome the opportunity to provide these youths with a transition program and curriculum offerings that will empower them to contribute effectively to society and/or embark on further education beyond secondary school.

Yours faithfully

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