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To the Principal
All Western Australian Schools

Dear Principal

2019 AREAS OF EMPHASIS

I hope the beginning of the 2019 school year has started smoothly for your staff and students.

It is seven years since the *Curriculum Council Act 1997* was amended to create the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) and eighteen months since the 2017 Machinery of Government changes took effect. On behalf of the Board I have signed a service level agreement with the Department of Education (the Department) which I believe will serve the education systems/sector well in ensuring the Authority is able to fully enact its remit.

I acknowledge the importance of the partnerships we share with the Department, the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) and Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA). I thank Ms Valerie Gould and Dr Debra Sayce, Executive Directors of AISWA and CEWA respectively, for their ongoing support. I welcome, and look forward to working with, Ms Lisa Rodgers as Director General of Education. I trust our shared commitment to standards and excellence, not only in curriculum and assessment but also in teaching and learning, will continue to deliver improvements in education for all students in Western Australia.

Much has been achieved since 2011 with regard to curriculum reform from Kindergarten to Year 12. I sincerely thank teachers and schools for their work in implementing these reforms. I also thank our Primary and Secondary Principals' Advisory Committees for their frank and honest advice. Their advice is always valuable and helps to guide the work of the Authority. In 2011 the Board committed to Western Australian teachers that it would work towards curriculum and assessment improvement via evolution rather than revolution. This recognised the key role of teachers in developing quality learning and teaching programs, and the importance of stability in generating successful outcomes for both students and teachers. To that end, I would like to outline the Authority's work and expectations for 2019.

Kindergarten to Year 10 curriculum and standards

The Authority requires all schools to implement the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* (the Outline), as stated in the *Pre-primary to Year 10: Teaching, Assessing and Reporting Policy* which outlines the mandated teaching, assessment and reporting requirements for English, Health and Physical Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Technologies and The Arts. Schools must ensure these requirements are implemented.

In 2019 Year 4 becomes a compulsory year for the implementation of Languages teaching and learning. The Languages curriculum for Western Australia was written on the basis that many schools provide a Languages program, in at least one language, from Pre-primary to Year 10. Early in the development of the Western Australian Curriculum: Languages it was acknowledged that some students would enter Year 7 provided with, or having to choose, a language different from the one(s) they had been studying through the primary years. To accommodate these students, in 2019 the Authority will begin the development of a Year 7 to 10 Languages sequence to be completed in time for the staggered implementation in 2022.

To support teachers and schools in developing shared understandings of the achievement standards set out in the year-level syllabuses across the eight learning areas, the Authority continues to provide schools with the following support on an opt-in-basis:

- access to Brightpath to support schools and teachers to consistently assess student performance against calibrated exemplars guided by performance descriptors. By the end of 2018, 531 (54%) Western Australian primary schools were registered for Brightpath
- Year 6 and 7 moderation processes in English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities Social Sciences, which will occur in Term 3.

Year 11 and Year 12 curriculum and standards

2019 is the fifth year of implementation since the introduction of the WACE reforms. It is therefore timely to remind teachers that syllabuses outline all the content required to be taught in a unit. It is unlikely that external written examinations will be suitable for assessing all the knowledge and skills contained within a syllabus. However, syllabus content that is not readily assessable in written examinations must still be taught and assessed at the school level.

The Authority will continue to ensure state-wide standards are maintained in the senior secondary years through moderation processes, including school grading and documentation reviews, syllabus delivery audits, consensus moderation, externally set tasks and ATAR course examinations. Details are available on the Authority website and through the *11to12 Circular*.

In 2018 the Authority piloted a non-approval of grades process for significant non-compliance with WACE requirements. Feedback from the pilot has been used to refine the process which will be formally implemented this year. See the *WACE Manual 2019* for further information.

During Term 1, I will provide Minister Ellery with the findings from the review of the compulsory Certificate II requirement for students not enrolled in an ATAR pathway. I thank the many people with whom we have met and have provided feedback. Your feedback will be important to the report and its recommendations.

Pre-primary to Year 12 school information briefings

The Authority's 2019 state-wide information (roadshow) briefings will begin in March.

Briefings for secondary school administrators will run from late March until May. They are an opportunity to be updated on curriculum, assessment and moderation in Years 7–12 and to provide feedback to the Board. In Term 2 we will hold workshops/briefings for primary administrators and curriculum leaders focusing on strategies, developed with teachers, on planning for all eight learning areas in recognition of the teaching time available to schools.

General – all years of schooling

I am pleased to advise that the Authority will soon launch a new Parents and Community website. It will provide information about what children and young people should learn, how they are assessed and the standards they are expected to reach at each year level, from Kindergarten to Year 12. The site will continue to be refined over time. We will advise you when it is launched through the ecirculars.

In closing, I urge you to attend the 2019 roadshow briefings and encourage you to continue to provide feedback to us regarding any matters associated with curriculum, assessment and standards.

Yours sincerely



PATRICK GARNETT
CHAIR, SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY

25 February 2019