



Primary Matters

Primary Curriculum Committee

The role of this committee is to advise the Board on the curriculum implications of strategic issues in education for Kindergarten to Year 6. In this context the Committee considers links between early childhood and the formal school curriculum as well as issues relating to continuity with secondary schooling.

The committee comprises Board members who represent primary interests, and additional members who bring a range of expertise in the K–6 area and who represent organisations which do not have a nominee of the Board. The committee meets on a regular basis throughout the year.

The Primary Curriculum Committee has discussed a wide range of issues, heard presentations on a variety of topics and received regular updates on curriculum and syllabus development. In the past twelve months the committee has considered matters including:

- values in primary education
- managing the curriculum in small schools
- information communication technology
- Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (Office of Child Care)
- Draft K–10 Curriculum Framework (Board of Studies)
- updates on K–10 Mathematics syllabus review and development
- update on English 7–10
- updates and demonstration of the Linkages website
- demonstrations of the CD-ROM worksamples for Science and Technology and English.



Trial Computing Skills Test for Year 10

Over the last few months the 20 schools participating in the trial computing skills assessment at Year 10 have developed their own school-based Information and Communications Technology assessment tasks within a number of subject areas. During Term 4 some of the schools will also trial sample assessment tasks developed specifically for this trial.

A pen and paper test has been trialled by fourteen to sixteen participating schools. A parallel form of the test to be taken online will be trialled by four to six schools using an Internet based delivery strategy.

The test comprised a range of item styles – multiple choice, true/false, and matching exercises. The external test is of 1-hour duration.

It is anticipated that a copy of the pen and paper test will be available on the Board's website in late November 2001. Further consultation will occur following the implementation of the 2001 trial and will involve a further trial with 100 schools in 2002.

On the Board's website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au), under 'School Certificate' can be found:

- Computing Skills Assessment for Year 10 (Board Bulletin article)
- Mapping of Information and Communications Technology in Mandatory K–6 Syllabuses
- Mapping of Information and Communications Technology in Mandatory Stages 4 and 5 Syllabuses
- Draft Record of Competencies Grid – Core and Extension
- Draft Competencies – Core and Extension



K–10 Curriculum Framework to guide syllabus revision

A K–10 Curriculum Framework that will be considered by the Board at its October meeting will guide future K–10 syllabus revision.

The Curriculum Framework document, amended following consultation between 28 May and 6 July, contains the following elements:

- a purpose statement
- broad learning outcomes
- principles to guide the development of syllabuses
- a syllabus and assessment model
- criteria for the revision of K–10 syllabuses
- K–10 curriculum requirements.

At its September meeting the Board considered a report on the responses received during the consultation on the draft document. 576 survey responses (465 written and 111 email) were received. Submissions were also received from organisations, and focus group meetings with teachers were conducted. A copy of the consultation report is now available on the Board of Studies website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).

Main findings from consultation report

The consultation report indicated that there is broad general support for the directions established in the draft K–10 Curriculum Framework, particularly the move to a standards-based approach to syllabus design, and for assessment and reporting. This approach is consistent with Board initiatives in recent years with K–6 syllabuses and HSC syllabuses and examination procedures.

There is also acceptance and endorsement of the purpose statement, broad learning outcomes and principles included in the draft document. Following advice received during the consultation period some minor changes were made to the curriculum framework document prior to submission to the Board.

New Features

- A Board of Studies syllabus and assessment model which responds to queries from respondents about how the Board will provide for a K–10 Standards Framework.
- Criteria for approval of Board of Studies syllabuses to ensure quality. The criteria are based on those provided in the HSC White Paper, *Securing Their Future*.

- Board of Studies Curriculum requirement which responds to the propositions contained in version 2 of the draft K–10 Curriculum Framework.

Key issues arising from consultation

■ Mandatory study requirements

There was general support for the proposition that the current mandatory subject requirements should be retained, with counter views expressed in relation to equity of the KLAs, the language requirement, creative arts opportunities and the attention given to technology.

The amended framework maintains the current mandatory subject requirements.

■ Indicative hours

There were a range of interpretations about the current indicative hours requirements, including the view that the proposition in the draft document was a significant shift from current arrangements. Many respondents considered that indicative hours should become mandatory hours.

The amended framework proposes that syllabuses indicate the number of hours that students would typically require to achieve the standards described in the syllabus.

There was also support for K–6 syllabuses to provide advice on hours typically required.

■ K–10 standards framework

There was significant support for a K–10 standards framework, based on syllabus and performance standards, to provide a common basis and language for assessment and reporting students achievement to students, parents and other teachers.

The amended K–10 Curriculum Framework now provides for a standards framework across all learning areas/subjects in K–10, mandatory and elective. It also states that for School Certificate mandatory subjects, the Board of Studies will nominate standards that all students will be expected to achieve by the end of Year 10.

The immediate use of the K–10 Curriculum Framework will be in evaluation of the Years 7–10 syllabuses. A timeline for the evaluation and revision of these syllabuses has recently been sent to all schools.

