Dear Principal

I am writing to principals of secondary schools to provide an update on the development of the Australian curriculum.

On 1 March 2010, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (‘ACARA’) released draft K-10 curriculum for the Phase One subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and History. The draft curriculum consisted of content statements and achievement standards for each year of schooling. The content was further described through explanatory statements titled ‘elaborations’.

To inform the NSW response to the ACARA draft the Board of Studies NSW implemented a substantial consultation process. On the basis of this consultation, the Board’s response to the draft K-10 consultation was forwarded to ACARA on 8 June 2010 and can be viewed on the Board’s website at <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/australian-curriculum/consultation-reports-k10.html>. Since then, the Board has been engaged in further consultation with key stakeholder groups tracking developments in the Australian curriculum drafts.

From June to September 2010 the Board of Studies conducted consultations with key stakeholders, teachers and the wider community on the draft senior secondary Australian curriculum content for English, Mathematics, Science and History. When ACARA releases the senior secondary content with the draft achievement standards in 2011 the Board of Studies will undertake further consultation.

ACARA has begun work on the senior secondary aspects of Phase 1 subjects, as well as releasing the Geography shape paper. The Board will continue to consult as materials are released and ensure that ACARA is informed by the views of NSW stakeholders.

ACARA has advised that the K-10 Phase One Australian curriculum will be completed by mid-October 2010, subject to its own approval processes.

In NSW the curriculum will need to be approved by the NSW Minister for Education and Training following advice from the Board of Studies, having regard to factors set out in legislation. Subject to this approval, the Board of Studies will then conduct consultations on the material to be provided to support effective implementation in NSW schools within the requirements of the NSW legislation. This will include consideration of any additional curriculum support materials.
This process will in turn help determine the exact timeline which will be appropriate for effective implementation in NSW schools. The implementation schedule, including the order of subjects and affected stages of schooling, will be determined in close consultation with schools, principals and system authorities.

Subject to ACARA publishing the final K-10 Phase One Australian curriculum as planned, all Board of Studies NSW formal curriculum documentation is expected to be completed by mid-2011. Other support materials will follow in Semester 2, 2011. The Board will consult directly on an appropriate and effective implementation schedule for all schools having regard to the successful NSW practice of generally allowing teachers 12 months to familiarise themselves with and prepare for any large scale revision of the curriculum. There will be no expectation of any classroom implementation for 2011.

The Board is aware of the range of issues that all schools and teachers will encounter arising from the introduction of substantial changes in the curriculum. There will be careful consultation and coordination with secondary principals to ensure a reasonable and effective implementation schedule is achieved, subject to the approval of the Australian curriculum. In addition, please look for notice of specific developments in the Board’s Official Notices.

Please note that the Board has already communicated the curriculum requirements for all schools in 2011 in Official Notice BOS 18/10. This specifies that programs in 2011 should be based on the existing Board of Studies syllabuses.

I hope this letter has been informative and reinforces the positive feedback the Board has received about the openness and transparency of the Board’s process of consultation and engagement with the development of the Australian curriculum.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Tom Alegounarias

President

15/9/2010