

# Board Bulletin



BOARD OF STUDIES NSW

June 1995 – Vol 4 No 4

## GIRLS, GUYS AND GRADES

Females are now outperforming males in increasing numbers at the HSC, according to a recent study conducted by Dr Robert MacCann, Head of Measurement and Research Services at the Board of Studies.

Dr MacCann's comprehensive study, 'A Longitudinal Study of Sex Differences at the Higher School Certificate and School Certificate: Trends over the Last Decade', compared male and female performance in the eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs) of the school curriculum and the Tertiary Entrance Score (TES). The TES is an aggregate mark out of 500, from which the Tertiary Entrance Rank is calculated.

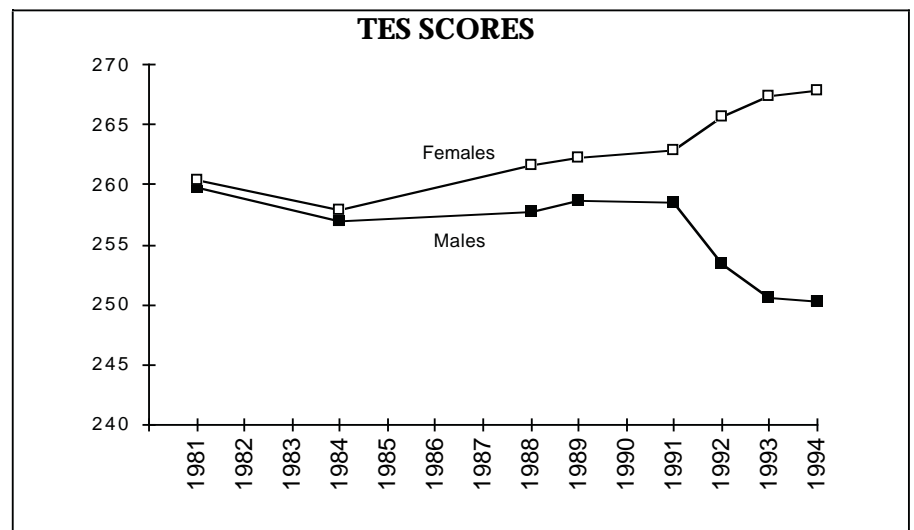
The study revealed marked improvement on the TES by females and changing patterns of participation and performance in individual subject areas.

- English produced the largest sex differences in achievement. Females were much superior on both examination and school assessment, averaging about half a standard deviation more than males in the course with the largest candidature, 2 Unit General.
- In contrast to English, the participation rates of females in Mathematics decreased as the courses became more difficult. Even so, in 3 and 4 Unit Mathematics there was little

difference in achievement between the sexes.

- Science presented a more even picture. Males were marginally superior in Physics, Chemistry, Geology and 4 Unit Science, whereas females were superior in Biology, General Science and Science for Life.
- As with English, females were clearly ahead of males in the Human Society and Its Environment KLA. In both examinations and assessments females outperformed males, on average, in every one of the 15 courses analysed.
- For languages, females' superiority was greatest in 2 Unit Chinese, Modern Greek and Italian. In 2 Unit French and German, females had a slight advantage throughout most of the mark range.
- In the Technological and Applied Studies KLA, males performed better than females in some subjects such as Engineering Science and Industrial Technology. On the other hand, females outperformed males in Home Science and Agriculture. In Computing Studies there was little difference between the sexes.
- On average, within the Creative Arts KLA, the differences in achievement favoured females for every course.
- Females comprised 47 per cent of the candidature for Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and clearly outperformed males over the entire mark range.

*continued on page 3*



## HSC AND SC IMPORTANT DATES

### Year 10

- 16 Jun** Final day for changes to School Certificate Mathematics courses and correction to course entries for Mathematics.
- 23 Jun** Presiding Officers' Handbook for School Certificate Reference Tests dispatched from the Board.
- 3–14 Jul** Term 2 Vacation
- 2–3 Aug** School Certificate Reference Tests.
- 11 Aug** Principals' determination (under Board delegation) of 'N' awards forms and schedules dispatched from the Board.

### Year 11

- 2 Jun** Confirmation of entry schedules dispatched from the Board.
- 3–14 Jul** Term 2 Vacation
- 11 Aug** Principals' determination (under Board delegation) of 'U' awards forms and schedules dispatched from the Board.

### Year 12

- 3–14 Jul** Term 2 Vacation
- 17 Jul** Illness/Misadventure Forms dispatched from the Board.
- 21 Jul** Last date for change of HSC Music course options. Drama project options (see Official Notice 72/95).
- 1 Aug** 1995 HSC Examination Timetable dispatched from the Board.  
Advice to candidates of venues and times for HSC Oral/Aural examinations in Languages progressively dispatched from this date.
- 7–14 Aug** Notification of individual dates for practical examinations in Design & Technology, Drama, Music and Visual Arts, Industry Studies (Hospitality) and Industry Studies (Metal and Engineering) dispatched from the Board.
- 11 Aug** Principals' determination (under Board delegation) of 'U' awards forms and schedules dispatched from the Board.  
Final submission date for Society and Culture Personal Interest Projects.

## Contents

<b>Girls, Guys and Grades .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>HSC and SC Important Dates .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Check your Mailbox .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>President's Message .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Key Decisions of the Board of Studies.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Preliminary Evaluation of HSC Pathways .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Official Notices centre lift-out</i>	
<b>Special Presentation of AMEB Diplomas .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Primary Matters .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Current Issues in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Minister's Young Designers Awards 1995.....</b>	<b>8</b>

## CHECK YOUR MAILBOX



- School Certificate Credentialling for Students with Special Education Needs
- HSC/TAFE Recognition
- 'On Board' for Year 12
- Urgent Official Notice — Computing Studies
- Memo to Principals and Teachers of English
- Acknowledgments for HSC Exam Papers
- Preliminary Evaluation of HSC Pathways Survey

## Documents currently being developed by the Board

- Course Performance Descriptors for Visual Arts, Music, Aboriginal Studies and Studies of Religion
- Studying for the NSW Higher School Certificate

The Board Bulletin is a regular publication by the Board of Studies NSW. Principals are requested to circulate it among teachers and members of the School Council, P & C and parents. One copy should be filed for reference. Schools may only photocopy this publication for use by teachers, students and parents. Contributions or suggestions for articles are welcome. Board Bulletin produced by: Media & Public Relations Branch, Office of the Board of Studies NSW

Editorial Inquiries: (02) 925 8248

Desktop Publishing: Heather Cooper

Published by: Board of Studies NSW, 35-51 Mitchell Street  
McMahons Point NSW 2060

© Board of Studies NSW 1995

ISSN 1038-5053

Printed on recycled paper. Print Post No. PP24163100021

## President's Message



At a recent TAFE NSW national forum on 'Current Issues and Practice in Recognition' the challenges facing schools, TAFE and the Board in developing a process of recognising and formalising past work skills were examined in detail. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is defined by the National Framework for the Recognition of Training as the acknowledgment of skills and knowledge held as a result of formal training, work experience and/or life experience. The purpose of RPL is to provide a measure of flexibility and equity to access to education and training. Clearly, while we cannot come up with all the answers to the challenges, some of the significant issues include:

- The links between off-the-job and on-the-job training.
- What is considered as suitable evidence when RPL is sought for on-the-job performance towards formal qualifications.

- The recognition of skills and/or knowledge gained through life experiences.
- The links between RPL and assessment — reliability and validity.

In addition, educational institutions struggling for the magic formula for making valid judgments about RPL are faced with questions such as:

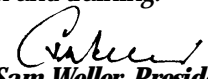
- How can we guarantee that the candidates can do what they claim, even though they hold a certain qualification (or don't have a qualification)?
- What do we consider as verification?

Many institutions now give RPL within formal learning programs for qualifications or experience gained in similarly formal settings. In this context, RPL is judged against the learning outcomes of the courses of study. On-the-job performance, however, is judged against performance criteria for competencies in a particular knowledge

or skills area and is judged by what competencies the worker can demonstrate in the workplace. The question of how such workplace competencies can be mapped with formal learning outcomes remains a major question for educators.

At the Board a number of provisions has been set in place aimed at creating a high quality, flexible education system under the Higher School Certificate and offering a broader, more equitable range of choices to young people. Following wide consultation, the Board's policy document Recognition of Prior Learning for the Higher School Certificate was issued to all secondary school and TAFE college principals earlier this year.

The Board's initiatives aim to maximise opportunities for the full range of students and meet their credentialling needs, whether they are proceeding to seek employment or further education and training.

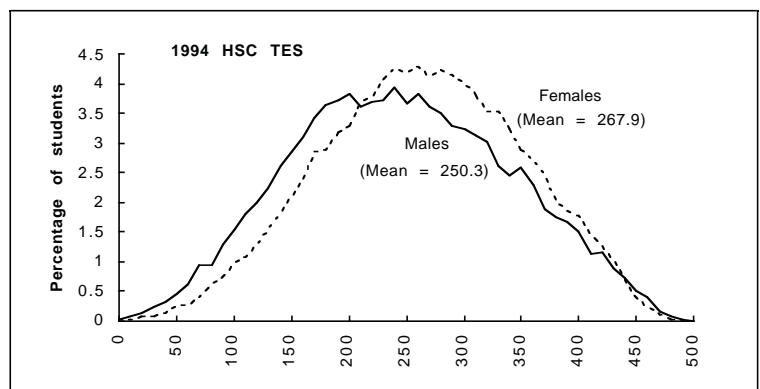
  
Sam Weller, President

## GIRLS, GUYS AND GRADES (continued)

Dr MacCann's study also found that:

- Females have improved their percentage representation in the top 500 and the top 1000. For the top 500 this increased from 36 per cent (1988) to 46.4 per cent (1993), while in the top 1000 it increased from 42 per cent (1991) to 47.3 per cent (1994).
- There is some evidence that females perform relatively better on school assessments than on public examinations. This effect varies according to the KLA.
- Regardless of whether females attended Government, Catholic or Independent schools or TAFE institutes, they were clearly outperforming males by 1994.
- Female improvement on the TES has not been restricted by geographical location or socioeconomic status. The pattern for the regions of Metropolitan North and

Metropolitan East is similar to the pattern for Metropolitan West and Metropolitan South-West. The region in which females have improved most in the past four years is the Riverina, where males led females by 9.8 marks on average in 1991 and trailed females by 21.2 marks on average in 1994. ❖



# Key Decisions of the Board of Studies

16 MAY 1995

## Draft HSC English review

The Board agreed that the report of the HSC English Review Sub-committee should be adopted. Section 5 of the report, which contains an outline of the rationale, structural framework, nature of the courses, assessment and examination, has been forwarded to the Minister for approval for distribution to schools as the consultation draft writing brief for the revised Preliminary and HSC English courses. It was also agreed that the services of the members of the Review Sub-committee be retained to work with the Syllabus Advisory Committee and the Project Teams in the

development of the course. The minister has approved Section 5 of the report for distribution to schools as a consultation document.

## Preliminary evaluation of flexible progression under HSC Pathways

The Board agreed that, subject to addressing comments by the Board, the Pathways survey should be endorsed for distribution to schools and, after appropriate adjustments, to TAFE institutes.

## Report on responses to the draft Visual Arts Years 11–12 Syllabus

The Board endorsed the draft syllabus, now awaiting ministerial approval to distribute for consultation. Visual Arts teachers should note that the current syllabus will still apply for Preliminary and HSC years in 1996.

## Project Proposals: Years 7–10 English, Science and Asian Social Studies and Years 11–12 Economics

The Board agreed that, before it could endorse the project proposals, a paper should be prepared which presents revised proposals for the selection of writing teams. Further work on the 7-10 syllabuses will have to await the report by the committee inquiring into Outcomes and Profiles.

## Publication and distribution policy

The Board endorsed the publication of all syllabuses and support materials in B5 format. This will result in considerable savings as well as providing more user friendly documents.

## Statement of Equity Principles

The Board has endorsed a Statement of Equity Principles which provides a guide to syllabus writers in developing syllabuses which are inclusive of the needs of the full range of students. This will be made available to Syllabus Advisory Committees and Project Team Writers.

## PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF HSC PATHWAYS

The Board is currently conducting a preliminary evaluation of HSC Pathways, which came fully into effect from Year 11, 1994. The evaluation is primarily concerned with implementation issues associated with:

- students undertaking flexible progression;
- separation of Stage 6 courses into Preliminary and HSC components;
- designation of Preliminary courses as assumed knowledge;
- commencement dates for Preliminary and HSC courses, 3 Unit and 1 Unit courses, and the study of prescribed texts.

As part of the evaluation, survey forms have been sent to all secondary schools and TAFE institutes. The closing date for return of survey forms is Friday, 23 June 1995.

Inquiries can be directed to Mr Andrew Goodyer on (02) 925 8260. ❖

## Languages Other Than English K-6

The Board proposes developing K-6 syllabuses in the four national priority COAG languages: Japanese, Indonesian, Chinese and Korean. In addition, the Board agreed that schools and key interest groups should be invited to provide Board LOTE officers with exemplar K-6 LOTE programs which follow the concept and format of the agreed generic framework, with the possibility of selected programs becoming Content Endorsed Courses, for use by schools on request. It was also agreed that the Board should give in principle support to joint ventures which facilitate the development of K-6 LOTE syllabuses across as wide a range of languages as practicable. The Board agreed that it should consider the question of the possible development of further K-6 LOTE syllabuses when Board priorities are next discussed.

## Aboriginal Studies Years 11-12 Support Document

The Board endorsed the support document. It will be distributed to schools in the near future.

## 1 Unit Applied Studies evaluation

The Board agreed that Board officers should prepare a draft project outline to revise the 1 Unit Applied Studies Syllabus to ensure that it retains its Category A classification. It was also agreed that a paper should be prepared, in consultation with the Syllabus Advisory Committee, outlining directions for the revised syllabus and describing additional support material required.

## Proposals for modifying the pattern of marks in reporting HSC performance

The Board agreed that a paper should be prepared setting out:

- the range of purposes to be addressed in the Board's HSC scaling processes;
- the considerations involved in establishing relativities between courses in a subject;
- the considerations involved in establishing relativities in the same course from year to year;
- possible methods of establishing these relativities.

It was agreed that the transformation of raw to scaled marks for the JSST courses and Industry Studies, which use competency-based assessment processes, should follow the procedure currently applied to courses with a candidature of between 20 and 200.

## Information to HSC candidates

The Board agreed that the issue of providing information to each candidature about the relationship between Board marks and university marks in the major subjects in an easy-to-understand format at the time of distribution of the HSC results be referred to the Committee reviewing the HSC. ❖

# Special Presentation of AMEB Diplomas



Australian  
Music  
Examinations  
Board

The AMEB is looking for past graduates.

Since 1990, graduates from the AMEB Diploma courses have been presented with their certificates, but the Australian Music Examination Board in New South Wales wants to give all students who graduated after 1951 a chance to attend a graduation ceremony with their families.

State Manager of the AMEB, Ms Yvonne White, explained that, because ceremonies were only introduced in this decade, hundreds of graduates had missed out on a presentation ceremony.

'This will be a one-off ceremony because we want to publicly recognise the achievements of those who received the AMEB's most prestigious Diploma Awards from 1951 to 1990,' Ms White said.

'Students who received an Associate Diploma in Music, a Licentiate Diploma in Music, an Associate Diploma in Speech and Drama, a Licentiate Diploma in Speech and Drama or a Teacher of Music Australia will have the opportunity to be presented with a new certificate and be able to wear full academic dress at a special ceremony in September.

'The AMEB is in its 77th year and it is not standing still. We hope all graduates will be able to participate in the ceremony and celebrate with their families and friends.'

Ms White urged those who are eligible to write to the State Manager, AMEB, Level 6, 111 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW 2000, for further details. The letter should be accompanied by a photocopy of the original Certificate or Examination Report. ❖



# Primary Matters

A number of significant K-6 syllabus and cross-curriculum projects are currently being developed. In some of these projects, formal consultation on draft documents has recently ended. In other cases, documents are in earlier stages of development.

## Human Society and Its Environment K-6

Now that formal consultation on the draft Human Society and Its Environment K-6 Syllabus has ended, the task of analysing the survey returns has commenced in earnest. The response has been enthusiastic, with almost 2000 surveys returned. Many of the surveys contain detailed comments and suggestions about the draft. After the statistical data on the survey has been entered and the qualitative data has been collated, an analysis of the overall response to the draft syllabus from teachers, systems and peak educational bodies will take place. The statistical feedback and recommendations received in the submissions will be taken into account during the re-development of the syllabus. It is anticipated that these processes should be completed by the end of May.

The Board is most appreciative of the valuable input from so many teachers, schools and organisations.

## LOTE K-6 Generic Syllabus Framework

The draft *LOTE K-6 Generic Syllabus Framework* was distributed to schools in early April for consultation. In its final form, the Generic Syllabus Framework will provide a structure for LOTE programs in primary schools.

The document will be of particular interest to schools with established LOTE programs and those considering the introduction of a LOTE program. The framework is also intended for use by the Board, should demand require the development of K-6 syllabuses for specific languages.

## Guiding Principles for the Primary Curriculum

An analysis of responses to the Board's draft document, *Guiding Principles for the Primary Curriculum*, has indicated strong support for the need for such a document and for the quality of the draft set of principles. This document, which was distributed to all primary schools for comment, has been developed by

the Board to provide a common set of understandings and principles for those involved in K-6 curriculum development.

A Primary Curriculum Working Party will undertake further development of the Guiding Principles based on comments received on the draft. Members of the working party have been nominated by the K-6 Curriculum and Assessment Committee of the Board and will be meeting over the next few weeks to make appropriate changes to the document. Following this work, the document will be presented to the Board for endorsement.

## Curriculum Integration Working Party

The first meeting of the Curriculum Integration Working Party was held in early May. The working party has identified key curriculum integration issues to be addressed, curriculum support requirements in the area and guidelines for the 'mapping' of the Board's primary curriculum materials.

## Creative Arts K-6

Consultation on the Writing Brief for the draft Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus has concluded. The Writing Brief defines the Key Learning Area using the four Arts strands of Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts (including the areas broadly known as art, craft and design). This structure is designed to express what is common among the four Arts strands while maintaining the unique nature of each strand. Teaching and learning will be able to take place through a range of subject-based as well as integrated programming approaches.

The Writing Brief itself is not designed for use in schools. Teachers should continue to use the current Music K-6 and Visual Arts K-6 Syllabuses until the draft syllabus is distributed to schools. There is currently no requirement for schools to teach Drama or Dance within the Key Learning Area of Creative and Practical Arts. It is anticipated that the draft syllabus will be distributed for consultation at the commencement of the 1996 school year.

*If you would like further information regarding these syllabus development activities or K-6 curriculum projects in general, contact Phil Lambert, Inspector, Primary Education, phone (02) 925 8199.* ❖

# Current Issues in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education

## School Certificate Requirements

This year the 7–10 PDHPE Syllabus is being fully implemented. All schools must have in place programs that:

- meet the mandatory requirements of 300 hour study
- include study in each of Years 7, 8, 9 and 10
- cover aspects of all content strands in Stage 4 and again in Stage 5
- cover all key ideas at some stage over Stages 4 and 5.

A School Certificate grade, A to E, will be awarded to all students who have satisfactorily studied either a 100 or 200 hour course in Stage 5. The student Record of Achievement will acknowledge the satisfactory completion of mandatory requirements and will record a grade for all courses of 100 hours or more completed in Stage 5.

The award of a grade should be on the basis of student achievement in Stage 5 in relation to the Course Performance Descriptors distributed to schools in 1992. Where schools are implementing the syllabus as a series of discrete modules, the grade should reflect the overall achievement across all course areas.

An 'N' determination is given when a student fails to satisfactorily complete course requirements. Schools are required to give adequate warning to students who are in danger of this determination. The Board has recently dispatched to schools copies of sample warning letters that could be used as required.

For further advice schools may wish to contact their Board Liaison Officer.

## Anti-discrimination in the Curriculum

Anti-discrimination is an important issue raised in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education syllabuses.

The Board's 7–10 Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Syllabus, for example, emphasises the importance of accepting the right of others to be different. This involves the recognition of both the differences in others and the reactions these differences may evoke. Empathy, tolerance, sensitivity, respect, prejudice,

discrimination and hate-based violence should be examined in this context.

The syllabus also deals with an understanding of Anti-discrimination law: what it says, whom it protects and why it exists.

---

---

**Teachers should impress on students that in NSW it is against the law to discriminate directly or indirectly against people on the grounds of their sex, race, age, marital status, homosexuality or disability or against those who are related to or associated with people in the above groups.**

---

---

Vilification due to race, homosexuality and HIV/AIDS status is also against the law. Each of these perspectives should be considered when dealing with related issues. To overlook particular groups may be to discriminate by omission.



Anti-discrimination laws apply in the contexts of employment, State education, goods and services, accommodation and registered clubs. Exemptions are provided for under the law for particular groups, including charities and religious organisations.

There are a range of resources that may assist when teaching about Anti-discrimination including:

- the Board's 7–10 Teaching Kits, *Personal Awareness* and *Interpersonal Relationships*,

*continued on page 8*



### Minister's Young Designers Awards 1995

The Minister's Young Designers Awards is a competition centred on the Design and Technology curriculum for schools and is open to students in Years 7 and 8 from both government and non-government schools in NSW.

The Minister's Young Designers Awards encourage students to look at the world around them; to investigate products, systems and environments; and to design a successful solution to a problem in an area of interest to them. The challenge offered to students is to develop a project that meets a clearly identified need. Students may undertake individual or group activities in the development of the design projects.

The awards encourage students to develop:

- creative qualities (imaginative ideas, innovative developments, improvements of concepts and techniques);
- quality thinking in decision making (thorough exploration of identified problems and issues, investigation, reflection, evaluation);
- sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of people, communities and the environment.

Projects can be submitted, either as an individual entry or a group entry.

The design project should be undertaken in one of the following context areas:

- agriculture
- health and welfare
- built environment
- information and communication
- clothing and accessories
- leisure and lifestyle
- engineered systems
- manufacturing
- food
- transport and distribution.

The design project will require two clearly defined parts:

- a design solution — this could be in the form of a set of sketches, plan, drawings, video, publications, prototypes, computer software, models or other projects;
- a folio — this should clearly show how the design solution was developed and give reasons for the decisions made during its development.

The inaugural Minister's Young Designers Awards was held last year and proved to be an outstanding success with teachers and students. More than 5000 students participated, attracting high praise from the judging panels at both regional and state levels. The Awards are generously supported by the St George Foundation.

The Information Kit for the 1995 Awards has been sent to all government and non-government secondary schools.

For further inquiries phone  
(02) 925-8277.



ST. GEORGE FOUNDATION LIMITED ACN 003 790 761  
A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE (Incorporated in N.S.W.)

### Current Issues in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (continued)

provide advice on dealing with sensitive issues, a selection of appropriate teaching strategies and a list of suggested resources;

- the Anti-discrimination Board of NSW has produced a pack of fact sheets that deal with the various forms of discrimination;
- the NSW Department of School Education has developed a number of excellent kits including *Resources for Teaching Against Violence* and *The Prejudice Project — Activities for the Classroom*.

Finally, the effectiveness of Anti-discrimination education is enhanced by whole school action that goes beyond the curriculum. The 7-10 PDHPE Support Document explains that a health-promoting school is dependent on the interaction of formal curriculum, parallel curriculum and school/home/community. It is vital that PDHPE programs are complemented by supportive school policies, programs and structures, and that teachers as role models convey messages that are consistent and appropriate. ❖