



**Catholic Education**  
Diocese of Parramatta

**Submission to the Review of the  
NSW Board of Studies, Teaching  
and Educational Standards**

**Catholic Education Diocese of  
Parramatta**  
21 April 2016

# 1 Summary

The 2013 amalgamation of the Board of Studies with the NSW Institute of Teachers has not fulfilled the opportunities it promised. Points highlighted in this paper for service improvement relate to:

- Syllabus implementation
- Student assessment
- Teacher registration and accreditation
- School leadership
- Teachers from pre- to post- school education
- Relationships between BOSTES and National Authorities
- Relationships between BOSTES and Teacher Accreditation Authorities
- Accreditation at Proficient
- Higher Level Accreditation processes
- Governance arrangements.

# 2 Introduction

Catholic Education, Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Review of the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) and provide a Catholic school system perspective from Western Sydney – one of the fastest growing areas of school education in Australia. The Catholic system of schools in Parramatta Diocese comprises 22 secondary and 55 primary schools with over 43,000 students and 4,500 teachers and 2 new secondary schools opening in 2017-18. The cultural diversity of our schools in Western Sydney is unmatched by any school system in the country. As a system of schools, we cater for the diversity of student learning need through a relentless focus on building the capacity of teachers and school leadership.

CEDP has also contributed to a submission to this review by the NSW Catholic Education Commission (NSWCEC) and supports the recommendations of that submission. This submission provides some specific detail in addition to that submission by commenting on how BOSTES processes affect operations at a school and system level.

This submission makes comment in the 4 areas related to the Terms of Reference (ToR):

1. Have the opportunities of the amalgamation been fully realised?
2. Are role and responsibilities clear and appropriate?
3. Are processes and practices as effective and efficient as possible?
4. Are effective governance arrangements in place?

# 3 Amalgamation

In 2013, the NSW Board of Studies amalgamated with the NSW Institute of Teachers to become the BOSTES. The amalgamation was designed to provide a single Education Board to provide improved services to systems and schools providing education service to the community. Improved service may have included a one-stop-shop for systems and schools to interact with BOSTES in relation to:

- syllabus implementation
- student assessment
- teacher registration and accreditation.

In general, it is recognised by CEDP and schools that there has been little change in relation to these opportunities for service improvement.

### 3.1 Syllabus Implementation

While the process of syllabus development in relation to implementing the Australian Curriculum is seen as robust and comprehensive in NSW, the opportunity has been missed to recognise the professional autonomy of teachers, schools and systems to implement curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum descriptions are comprehensive and developed using significant and robust consultation processes with National agreement. This effort is duplicated at a State level by BOSTES to develop NSW syllabuses. Many other States and Territories do not duplicate this process. By schools doing the program development work directly from the Australian Curriculum documents allows, "...Schools (to) implement the Australian Curriculum in ways that value teachers' professional knowledge, reflect local contexts and take into account individual students' family, cultural and community backgrounds."<sup>1</sup> Mediation to syllabus by BOSTES is not necessary.

CEDP notes the duplication is not necessary and recommends that resources devoted to syllabus development be diverted to provide comprehensive curriculum implementation resources and teachers be given a greater role in program development directly from the Australian Curriculum. Teacher professional judgment would be enhanced and valued by involving every teacher in curriculum development, rather than only curriculum implementation.

### 3.2 Student Assessment

In line with the above, CEDP recommends that the BOSTES enhance resource development in relation to practical application examples of formative assessment (generative assessment) and its role in improving student achievement would be helpful for teachers.

Various applications of generative assessments have been shown to have significant impact on student learning.<sup>2</sup> The current resource of how to apply A-E grades based on Standards and Outcomes is open to a wide degree of interpretation. Specific applications and examples would be far more helpful than statements such as "...Decide on the relative importance of each assessment activity..."<sup>3</sup> and provide no basis for teachers making such decisions.

## 4 Roles and Responsibilities

The BOSTES is a partially independent board while retaining close association with, and directed by, government instruction. As an entity with responsibility for teachers in all education sectors, it would seem appropriate for it to be more competitively neutral (ie. sector-blind) if it had a Chief Executive Officer and a General Manager and be fully funded by the government as a regulatory body of education generally in NSW. Current governance arrangements seem to be not so clear-cut.

CEDP therefore recommends that:

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<sup>1</sup> From: <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/overview/implementation-of-the-australian-curriculum>

<sup>2</sup> Hattie, J. (2009), *Visible Learning*.

<sup>3</sup> From: <http://arc.bostes.nsw.edu.au/go/sc/sc-grading/#Making-an-onbalance-professional-judgement>

1. BOSTES be brought in line with current governance models which have an independent chair, separate from the Chief Executive Officer.
2. The Board be reduced in number and be made up of experts and number no more than nine in members.
3. That a consultative committee be established with representatives from each sector to provide advice to the board.

School leadership does not currently fall within the remit of BOSTES. School leadership is identified by all sectors and widespread research as a significant contributor to student learning and achievement as well as for teacher quality professional growth. Some sectors are moving toward appointing school leadership positions using the higher levels of the Teacher Standards as criteria.

CEDP recommends School Leadership come under the aegis of the BOSTES into the future to ensure accountability and quality.

CEDP is an employer of teachers in the areas of childcare, pre-school, schools and vocational training centres. We recommend that the registration of all teacher types rest with a single body.

## 5 Processes and Practices

This section highlights the following processes and practices requiring improvement:

- Relationship between BOSTES and National Authorities
- Relationship between BOSTES and TAA's<sup>4</sup>
- Accreditation at Proficient
- Higher levels of Accreditation.

### 5.1 Relationship between BOSTES and National Authorities

To provide the professional educational support services that teachers, schools and systems need, there should be a much closer alignment between BOSTES and the national authorities of AITSL and ACARA.<sup>5</sup>

As stated previously, teachers and students do not need NSW versions of nationally agreed instruments:

- Australian Professional Standards for Teachers resources
- Australian Curriculum.

CEDP recommends that BOSTES endorse the resources produced by AITSL. The resources currently available through AITSL are an excellent support service and do not need to be duplicated with NSW versions of the same thing.

There are differences in the ways that AITSL and BOSTES talk about, promote and provide resources for accreditation at Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead which is very confusing for teachers, schools and systems. BOSTES endorsement of AITSL resources would resolve this issue.

### 5.2 Relationship between BOSTES and TAAs

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<sup>4</sup> TAA = Teacher Accreditation Authority

<sup>5</sup> ACARA = Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

CEDP recommend a partnership model between BOSTES and TAAs.

BOSTES is better placed to:

- Monitor due dates for accreditation/maintenance periods, non-payment of fees and alert teachers and employers for action
- Approve school-based PD through an online application process
- Provide advice through an improved web site – current web site is frustrating for users to find up to date information easily
  - The Catholic and Independent sectors provided a percentage of their National Partnership funding in 2012 (up to \$750,000) to the then NSWIT<sup>6</sup> for a major update of the website to improve functionality – CEDP did not notice much functional change as a result of the funding.
- Either:
  - Confer accreditation at Proficient and send certificates (PDF) directly to teachers
- Or:
  - Allow TAA's to make a final decision to accredit teachers at Proficient
  - Teachers notify BOSTES that they have been accredited by their employer and to send their certificates (PDF) directly

The current process *nominally* rests power to accredit with the TAA as the employer but this decision can be overturned/delayed/rescinded by BOSTES based only on the evidence presented. The TAA is better placed to make final accreditation decisions without the BOSTES approval required as well. The TAA has access to a wide range of information with which to support teacher accreditation that is not currently used in the accreditation process including knowledge of schools and the teachers. BOSTES can still provide the storage and upload facility where teachers store their evidence against the Standards, but it will not be available for viewing by BOSTES unless the TAA or the teacher gives them the rights eg. to resolve disputes.

TAA's are better placed to:

- Accredit teachers at Proficient as a final decision. Disputes can be settled with BOSTES providing a second opinion if required.
- Remind teachers to apply for leave from BOSTES when they apply for extended periods of leave through the employer (TAA)
- Provide support for early career teachers to become Proficient.

### 5.3 Accreditation at Proficient

If the above model is adopted, CEDP recommends the current process of accreditation at Proficient be streamlined by using more descriptive narrative reporting from early career teachers and their supervisors, with mentors and system support staff providing specific examples of evidence against the Standards. Current supervisor reports are very limited in their effect or information provision. This would allow teachers more time to focus on their teaching.

### 5.4 Higher Levels of Accreditation

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<sup>6</sup> NSWIT = NSW Institute of Teachers

The process of gaining voluntary accreditation at HA (Highly Accomplished) and Lead is long and convoluted, seemingly working from the premise that their work at HA or Lead really only began when they made application. This is clearly not the case.

CEDP recommends a quicker process of accreditation, using the tenets of a RPL<sup>7</sup> process. Currently, it is less work and time to become a principal – the person who provides a significant reference for the applicant at HA and Lead.

## **6 Governance Arrangements**

This paper endorses the arrangements proposed by the CECNSW submission ie. the replacement of BOSTES with a NSW Schools and Teaching Authority – a regulatory body that leverages the work of the national bodies (AITSL and ACARA) – and provides a single entity for schools and systems to deal with education from pre- to post- school education.

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<sup>7</sup> RPL = Recognition of Prior Learning