

**CURRICULUM COUNCIL AMENDMENT BILL 2011**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 6 September.

**HON PHILIP GARDINER (Agricultural)** [7.40 pm]: A number of speakers have spoken very well about the Curriculum Council Amendment Bill 2011. I rise to speak in support of the bill. As we all know, the bill sets up the School Curriculum and Standards Authority of which there will be seven members, all appointed, and underneath that authority there will be two other councils: one is the Curriculum and Assessment Committee and the other the Standards Committee. The Curriculum and Assessment Committee will comprise 13 members and the Standards Committee five members. This bill intends to frame a government structure for the curriculum—the content, the structure and the assessment procedures by which the curriculum will be satisfied by the students and those who are teaching the students. Then, of course, there is the Standards Committee, which has the responsibility for measuring the success of the students in meeting the demands of that curriculum, which can then be assessed by the school or by the state to measure their progress.

One of the interesting changes to this bill is that all the people who comprise these committees and this authority will be appointed. That is a much better structure than having representatives of different organisations or groups, if we like, who are elected, either by the unions or different bodies, to become members of the old Curriculum Council. Very few people, outside of corporate board structures, really understand the difference between being on a council and representing the interests of those who are outside the council and someone on a council who should be directing their interest only to the interests of that body to achieve the goals that it was set up to achieve. I have experienced this firsthand at a committee meeting on agriculture at which one person, who was there as a representative from an organisation, argued issues from the ideological perspective of the organisation they represented and we could only deal with that by voting. That was the compromise under the former Curriculum Council structure. This structure is an improvement on the former one for that reason, at least.

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority has no responsibility for professional development. That also makes sense to me, because professional development should be in the hands of the organisation actually carrying out the work, with the resources that organisation has to achieve the objectives and the goals set by this authority. Certainly it comes down to schools—individual schools and maybe the Department of Education in general when it comes to government schools. So the professional development, then, becomes more of a micro-based activity. That is done so that we can achieve the goals set out by this governing body for its curriculum and its assessment.

Education is an area in which there will always be problems. It is a big job. We all go through it. As Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich said yesterday, I think it was, we are all, in part, experts, because we have all had that close, detailed experience, and we have all felt it individually. But that does not mean that we know how it should be done.

I would also like to say at this time how much I appreciated the speech of Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich yesterday. Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich was clearly then in the firing line, and I was just in the backblocks of the farm, but I could pick up some of the sentiments that were going on down here. I thought it was a very reflective and perspective speech, without any bitterness, despite the hard time that I am sure Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich would have gone through as she was trying to carry through a reform vision. I thought that was a very impressive speech. Thank you.

In that speech, Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich talked about the parental experience, and the hopes of many of us as parents when our children are going through school. Most of us as parents want our children to be better than we are; and, if they have problems, we want the school to fix the problems. That is a huge demand to place upon any institution, when it is really our own fault. But we expect it; and if it does not happen in the way that we think it should, so that we get the outcomes for our children that we wish to have, we often blame the education institution, when it has nothing to do with any of its shortcomings.

Schools also have to deal with the spectrum of students' enthusiasm, and the curriculum needs to encompass that; and we all know the huge spectrum that that entails. Therefore, delegated authority needs to be given to schools to enable them to be sufficiently flexible in the mix of methodology that they use to convey the education to the students at hand. The breadth of intellectual background also makes this difficult. It is a difficult area. Then there is the challenge of bringing education along with the cultural and technological developments that are taking place. That challenge is there not so much day-to-day, but as the years pass and the decades change. We have seen how things have changed with the electronic aids that are now present and can be used in

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schools. Of course, we have to also deal with the electronic aids and the way they impact on young children at a much earlier age than we as parents had any experience with when we were at school. We would think that the intellectual appetite of the young children going through schools today is much different from what it was in our time, because of their access and exposure to electronic aids and intellectual games and so on. Therefore, education, and the way we educate our children, has to adapt. But it is sometimes not easy for those who are teaching to adapt in the way that is required. Then, of course, above all those difficulties, we have a growing social dysfunction in our communities as a result of the lifestyle changes that have taken place over the last 30 or 40 years, with more single parents, and more parents working while their children are in preschool, and so on. It is a dynamic that is evolving all the time. It is something with which we have to change all the time, but that is not easy for many of the practitioners to do as they try to impart the curriculum that is being set up by, for example now, this new authority.

The implementation that results from this authority and the two committees—especially the Curriculum and Assessment Committee—is going to be tricky also. One of the disadvantages, members would think in theory at least, is that if we do not have representatives from the different education bodies on that curriculum committee, how do we bring the industry along with us, because it is not part of the deliberation? The deliberation for the setting of the curriculum and how it is assessed is made by people who have all been appointed by the minister for their professionalism and experience, and those kinds of skills. So, the implementation of this, so that the industry is brought along with the objectives that the curriculum authority is setting, is going to be a difficulty, unless it is managed very openly so that the industry can be brought along and not be left behind. One of the fears I have about this structure is that element of it, and I am interested in the response from the minister on whether that has been thought through as well.

Another part of the implementation is the Standards Committee, and the way that will work. We have already had a fair bit of experience in looking at this, the most recent of which has probably been the My School website, on which schools are measured for their performance. Those of us who have had some experience in the education field know about some of the serious distortions of what a school does for its students in that measurement. Nonetheless, I personally still believe one has to have that, but it does need to be qualified, because education and schooling is about not only the curriculum but also the other things. Schools are known for their intellectual capabilities and the intellectual standards they achieve, but all schools—some more than others—should pay more attention to learning for life, not just the learning. That is equally important, and Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm made the very relevant point that resilience is a very important part of our education. A lot of the building of that resilience occurs during those school years, but I have a personal view that we can only build resilience into any of us if we have sufficient security to be able to take the knocks. It is the knocks as we go along, and how we overcome them, that build our resilience; how we deal with the knocks, and how we let them fall off our shoulders rather than internalising and stewing on them. Someone who has a secure system, if members like, with their feet firmly on the ground, even as a young person, is able to deal with those knocks in a better way, maybe, than those who do not have that security.

So, we have the measurements and standards that measure the scoreboard, if members like, and how each individual school functions and performs, and then we have the other tests, such as the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy and others, that need to be done so that we can see whether what we have in place is actually working and leading to a better result, be it with literacy or numeracy, or whatever the other measures might be. A number of members may remember that we used to have junior high school certificates, which we used to get in the third year of high school. Then we had the five-year certificate, which was the matriculation or leaving certificate. Now they are called different things. The junior certificate fell away. I think it is unwise to let some of these measures fall away because it is a very important base to see whether our techniques and standards of demagoguery and teaching are actually working to achieve what we want from our students. Teaching is really about whether we can add value to the inherent intellectual capability of each student. Sometimes that is measured by the intelligence quotient—the IQ. That gives each of us a base level, assuming that the test that measures IQ has some rigour to it. What a teacher makes a difference to is whether the performance of the student, when it is measured, comes in at better than what would be expected at that particular intelligence quotient. That is fine in theory and sounds good. Under this system, schools will assess that measure. However, it will be interesting to see whether the assessment aspect of the Curriculum and Assessment Committee starts delving into that so that we can measure how well teachers are able to develop their students and encourage them to learn. Therefore, it combines both the substance of the curriculum and the intellectual work that is imparted by the teacher, as well as the personal characteristics of the teacher that can inspire the students. That is an important part of the assessment which needs to be woven into the Curriculum and Assessment Committee's work but which would of course be the accountability of the particular educational institution.

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The Curriculum and Assessment Committee will allow for flexibility in schools around the curriculum that it lays down to be met. If we have a national curriculum, that is fine, but what is the flexibility within that? There needs to be some flexibility because each school will have a different set of students with different characteristics. That flexibility is important in being able to inspire students so that they achieve the goal set down by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee. This bill also provides for the endorsement of particular courses, such as those that have been mentioned before—St John first aid courses, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and a number of others. I am keen to know whether another of the flexibilities can be looked after. I know that one school has what is called the catalyst system. The catalyst system is based on not teaching the standard courses when students first come to year 7 and year 8, especially boys; it gives them options to study subjects in those first couple of years that they desire and, the theory is, it will stimulate their intellectual appetite and their enthusiasm for learning. Remember that enthusiasm for learning is something that we would like to have in all of us as we go through our lives because the learning never stops if we want it. But if we do not aspire to continue to learn, I think life takes us down an entirely different path. I think that is very sad if it does that go that way. I think that inspiring students to continuously learn is one of those things that need to come out of the way that the curriculum is structured. What I am not sure about is whether the Curriculum and Assessment Committee will consider the curriculum down to years 7 or 8 or whether that is at the school's discretion and maybe it will deal only with years 11 and 12. I would like to know a little more about that. This catalyst system makes so much sense. If boys especially, but also girls, can be inspired to want to learn when they first go into secondary school, and then after they have that inspiration and find it exciting, it can be switched slowly to the standard literacy, numeracy and so on, a much better result can possibly be achieved. That is what I know is working, at least at one school that has adopted this particular methodology.

In conclusion, I think it is important that this new structure can work to give us strategic settings of what to learn. I am confident that that structure is good, that it measures the improvement by school, by class or by state, and that the teachers in schools who implement this methodology to achieve the standards set for the curriculum and assessment do so in a way that is flexible and with individual school curriculum creativity being allowed, which of course also ensures, as I think Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm said earlier, that the three Rs are met. At the end of the day, what I think we want to achieve out of our school system with this very important part in place is the intellectual discovery that every person can make so that they can seek the truth and be resilient to take the knocks and we can measure the extent of educational improvement with what we apply. I am in favour of the bill.

**HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral — Leader of the House)** [8.02 pm]: I am not the minister handling the Curriculum Council Amendment Bill obviously, but I have had a long interest in education. I listened with great interest to the comments of Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, who talked about the gestation of the Curriculum Council. Although it did not provoke me to stand, it encouraged me to stand because I wanted to say on this occasion that, for the first time in a very long time, I found myself agreeing with some of the comments of Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich. I want to say as well that I have some sympathy for the situation she found herself in, because she and I share something in common. We both were ministers for education and we both were given other portfolios against our wishes. Although we have that in common, that is probably about the limit of it.

**Hon Kate Doust:** I'm sure you would find other things in common if you dug deep!

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** If I tried hard, but I do not propose to do so tonight.

The member mentioned the history of the Curriculum Council. It raises some issues about how this all began. When I became the Minister for Education in 1993, the first thing I did was engage Dr Robert Vickery, who, in my opinion, was an outstanding educator. He had been director general of the department of education, and I think he was sent to one side by a former minister prior to me, which I thought was a terrible mistake. Dr Vickery, in my mind, was the pre-eminent educator in Western Australia at the time and I asked him to do a report into the structure of the administration of education in Western Australia, because at that stage we had what was called the Ministry of Education. It was one of those bigger is better-type structures that seemed to be in favour at the time. My humble judgement was that it was too big and that it was not focused enough on the aspects of education that needed to have particular attention applied to them, one of which was the development of curriculum. The Vickery report was initiated and as a result of that report, a number of recommendations were made about the way in which we should restructure education administration in Western Australia.

As I recollect, out of all that came a recommendation that there needed to be a curriculum council or some organisation within Western Australia that could, in fact, provide advice to government and the community about the values contained within the curriculum. From my point of view, the most important thing about education is what we actually teach children, and it is an enormously powerful vehicle for those people who have an ideological bent to fill the heads of children with a particular view of the world. Curriculum has historically

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been written by academics, often in universities, or by educators employed in educational institutions or by education departments. It seemed to me that that did not necessarily reflect the values of the community. The original intention of the Curriculum Council was that it would be a body of about a dozen eminent citizens of Western Australia who would cast their eye over the content of the curriculum of Western Australia from a values perspective; not to write the curriculum or to get too engaged in the development of syllabuses and so on, but simply to get an understanding, on behalf of the community, about the direction in which the content of our education system was headed, and what children were actually learning in our schools. Was there a degree of brainwashing going on, if we like? Were our children being taught values that might be outside what the mainstream would consider to be appropriate in Western Australia?

Following the Vickery report, I took the decision to engage Therese Temby, who worked with the then deputy director general, to work on the curriculum framework and the way in which the curriculum was to be implemented in Western Australia, in conjunction with the curriculum council idea that I had accepted from the Vickery report. Interestingly, the report by Therese Temby arrived on my desk about a week before I left, so I did not have much to do with it other than to receive it. That report recommended a curriculum framework that included outcomes-based education, which ironically perhaps sowed the seeds of the demise of Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich as Minister for Education and Training, who inherited —

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** Look how far away I was from it!

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** Yes, the member was a fair way down the track.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** Now you admit it!

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I do not actually blame Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich for it; her problem was in trying to implement something that just was not working; there are times when one should cut one's losses on these sorts of things and say, "Look, this is just not working. Let's start again." But I am quite happy to acknowledge that it began with the Therese Temby report; how it was then implemented was something that I did not take a lot of interest in, because I was doing other things at that time.

To go back in time a bit again, if I may, my successor as Minister for Education, Hon Colin Barnett, then brought in legislation to set up the Curriculum Council, which is fundamentally what we have now. I was concerned about that at the time only because it had become a representative body and did not have the sort of community involvement that I thought was appropriate in respect of the curriculum. I still think that there is room, if anybody is interested in doing this, for there to be a sort of jury of citizens, if we like, who actually keep an eye on what the curriculum is all about and what values are contained within the curriculum, particularly as we are soon to have a national curriculum; I will talk about that in a few minutes. The Curriculum Council is the vehicle that came from those reports, which is now being amended by the current minister. I think it is a step in the right direction to try to resolve the issues that have been causing concern in respect of the Curriculum Council for some time. Obviously, I support the bill for those reasons.

I want to take a moment to talk about the national curriculum. I have a very long interest in the national curriculum. I wish to remind the house that as the Minister for Education; Employment and Training in 1994, I think it was, I chaired what was then called the Australian Education Council meeting of ministers. The federal minister was none other than Hon Kim Beazley. In the years prior to this particular ministerial council, there had been a majority of Labor ministers on the council. They had determined to go down the path of a national curriculum. As those members who have been ministers will know, ministerial councils grow like topsy—they create committees all over the place and provide lots of work for lots of bureaucrats right across the country. They have countless meetings and attend countless conferences, and spend countless numbers of hours on aeroplanes looking at issues given to them by ministerial councils. I discovered that the ministerial council on education was in fact heading down the path of a national curriculum, which many, many committees had been set up by the ministerial council to implement. As it turned out that particular meeting was the first meeting at which the Liberal–National governments of Australia had a majority of one on the ministerial council. I managed to persuade the Northern Territory minister that he should come with us, and we disbanded all the committees associated with the national curriculum, which in effect put an end to that as an exercise being undertaken by the ministerial council. I remember Kim Beazley complaining to the media that it was like going back to the days of different gauge railways and things of that nature.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** You run that argument yourself in this place.

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I am about to continue with it, if the member gives me a minute. One thing I have always been in respect of this matter is consistent.

The reason I was opposed to the national curriculum then, and why I have reservations about it now, is for one very simple reason, and it goes back to what I said at the very beginning: the most important thing about what

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happens in our schools is what our students learn. The material and the values learnt in schools are absolutely vital to the way in which children perform and behave as citizens in the community. If people want to, for all sorts of reasons, have significant control over what children learn, there will be significant control over the way in which they ultimately think. It is a very, very powerful weapon to have—that is, control of the curriculum. When there is one national curriculum, every child in every school in Australia will eventually be learning the same things. They will acquire the same values that are contained within the curriculum right across the country. The problem with uniformity and harmonisation is that in order to obtain consensus among the various jurisdictions in the nation we often finish up with the lowest common denominator. That is the only way we can get everybody to agree. By having one national uniform system, we can finish up having a curriculum which is about the worst we can possibly get because that is all that can be achieved in terms of cooperation. That does not just apply to curriculum; it applies to every other area of government which follows this trend. I have to say the Howard government had as much to do with it as anybody else. It tried to get uniformity across the nation. That will lead us to a situation whereby we are regulated by systems that are the lowest common denominator. The worry I have with the national curriculum is that ultimately we will finish up with a curriculum being delivered in every school in Australia that is fundamentally the product of academics from universities such as the Australian National University. Those people will have control over the way the curriculum is determined, and ultimately that will be the federal government. Every child in Australia will be taught what the federal government of the day decides is appropriate. Curriculum will be operated on the basis of what is provided by academics from probably the ANU and other universities, and every child will be taught what academics decide is appropriate.

Some of the stuff I have read and some of the things I have heard people say about the national curriculum horrifies me. I think that the national curriculum does not contain anything about the resources industry, which is keeping the country alive. Some people in the eastern states who are interested in the curriculum activities do not recognise that the Western Australian economy and, indeed, the Australian economy are being propped up by a very vibrant resources sector. Therefore, they do not realise how important it is that everybody and every school in Australia recognises the importance of productive industry. We have all heard various stories about the ways in which history will be rewritten and how different values will be introduced into the system and how political correctness will overtake everything that we look at.

**Hon Liz Behjat:** Send it to the uniform legislation committee; we will protect state sovereignty, do not worry!

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I would be happy for someone to look at it.

**Hon Liz Behjat:** We all stand willing, ready and able at any time!

**Hon NORMAN MOORE:** I suspect only if one is in Australia, we would have the time to do that! That is unfair. I recognise the great and valuable work done by the Standing Committee on Uniform Legislation and Statutes Review. I look forward to the committee doing that work more speedily in the future; that is the only concern I have had about the uniform legislation committee!

This is a very serious issue and I know that the state Minister for Education is very concerned about the need for significant flexibility in the national curriculum so that states can have their own emphasis on what is contained in the state school syllabus. I am personally keeping a very close eye on this because I worry, as I did way back in 1994, that someone else from somewhere else will tell the Western Australian government what the kids in Western Australia should learn. That is very dangerous indeed. It is something that we really need to be very careful about as we go forward.

I do not want to take up much more time, other than to say that, obviously, I support the bill. The history of curriculum in Western Australia has been very interesting in recent times. We are now heading into largely uncharted waters and the new structure under the bill will hopefully put in us in a position to manage the national curriculum well. I simply say for the sake of the exercise that we would be very foolish if we did not keep some control at the state level over what is contained in the curriculum and the various syllabuses used in schools. Otherwise, we might find ourselves with a curriculum that is, as I have said before, the lowest common denominator and that delivers not only information and knowledge, but also values that we would regard as anathema. From the point of view of experience in these matters, we must be very careful about where we finish up.

**HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Minister for Energy) [8.18 pm]** — in reply: I start by thanking all members for their contributions and their indications of support for the Curriculum Council Amendment Bill 2011. The second reading debate was fascinating with two former education ministers among us and also a number of —

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** One aspiring!

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**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Who?

Several members interjected.

**Hon Norman Moore:** I suspect he is not the only one either.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Mr Deputy President, protect me, please!

The depth of knowledge and understanding of education throughout the chamber was clearly evident. I will not go right through the establishment of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority. Everyone understands what the bill is designed to achieve. Fundamentally, the understanding is very clear among all members that the separation between the provider and the regulator was very unambiguously articulated through the review of the Curriculum Council and that will be established by this bill. I will comment on a few issues raised by members and respond to some questions.

There was a fairly generic commonality in the views that were raised, so I will make a few comments to commence and then a few specific comments. However, as we are going into Committee of the Whole, I will perhaps leave some of the other issues to the committee stage. As I said, it was a good thing to have that depth and breadth of knowledge on where we have gone in education, particularly comments from Hon Norman Moore on the origin and establishment of the Curriculum Council right through to comments from Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich on outcomes-based education, which took us to the other end of the spectrum. Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm commented on the matriculation component, which occurred years back. I did not actually do matric. I was a product of the former Achievement Certificate, which was a stage in education that looked at different levels. Talking about levels, in those days we had, believe it or not, advanced, intermediate and basic levels, and actually labelled kids “basic”. It is hard to believe that in retrospect, but we did do that. I was not in the basic stream, but I can tell members that labelling students “basic” would not have done an enormous amount for the self-esteem of those in that stream. I am therefore pleased that that system did not last long. We then moved on through the following couple of decades and tried to find a system of education with which we could move beyond that sort of norm-referenced approach to educational learning. That approach was pretty much chalk and talk sort of stuff with monosyllabic and one-word responses from students. It was essentially worth one or two per cent to get a student entry into university, but it did not do an enormous amount to develop a student’s individual learning capacity. That is why we moved to much more of an outcomes-based approach. We were evolving in that way, which is and has been a good approach. However, how to assess students and how to work on ascertaining a differentiation between levels of different students has always been an issue in any education system globally. Certainly in Western Australia in particular we have tackled that issue over the past few decades. Yes, we did have a very volatile period a few years back with the final maturation of the outcomes-based approach, and I am a supporter —

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** You didn’t want it!

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am a supporter of an outcomes-based approach.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** Where is Kevin Donnelly when you need him?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I was certainly not a supporter of what occurred in the mid-2000s. I will talk about that right now.

As I said, we needed to get past the norm-referenced or norm-based approach to get to more of an outcomes-based system in which teachers became more facilitators for learning and allowed individuals to learn more with their own individual strengths, as opposed to being lectured to, and that is where we were moving to. The education system as a whole pretty much supported that, and we did move to it. Certainly at the primary level, the outcomes-based approach was pretty much embraced by a large number of teachers and schools right across the state. When it came down to the assessment of those learning procedures, though, that is when the trouble started. When we did move to actual levels as the determinate of where we were going, that caused a lot of consternation with parents who felt they did not know where their children stood compared with other students and peers in other schools; therefore, the clarity of standards was very difficult to ascertain. That is when the community started to question, first, whether we were going in the right direction and, second, at the right pace. It became extremely problematic, when the levels started moving towards the final senior secondary levels of education and the determination of entry into university, as to whether the levels were an appropriate form of assessment. There was an overwhelming sense in the education community and in the community at large that that was not the way to go. I am on the record for that.

I said in my maiden speech, when we were at the stage of moving towards the courses of study, that we needed to slow them down for a year, get the assessment procedure right and then proceed. I appreciate the role that Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich played. I did not agree with her at all. I said quite consistently that I felt that we needed to

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delay the courses of study and consider a more effective assessment procedure. But that was not to be. Fair cop! As I said, I really appreciated Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich's speech yesterday. Her self-effacing comments were humorous but at the same time I think quite sincere. The long end of it is that at the end of the day we got a new Minister for Education. That education minister slowed down the process and eventually the levels were disbanded when the Liberal-National Party took office. We have had a fairly seismic shift in assessments in recent years, and that will continue to evolve. That brings us to the national curriculum, which has been identified by a number of members. I hold the same concerns about the national curriculum as Hon Norman Moore. If we are not careful, we will throw out the baby with the bathwater; we have to get it right. I will talk about that implementation a little now but also in the committee stage. The education minister has those reservations and we will not be bulldozed into accepting the curriculum until it is ready and we, in particular, are ready.

That is where we are at now and where we have been. As I said, education is a constantly moving feast. We always want what is best for the children throughout our community to ensure we have an educated community and that we prepare students as effectively and competently as we possibly can, regardless of whether they go to university, which is less than a third of the number of students. We pay tribute equally to those who do not go to university and ensure that the education system is as comprehensive and effective for them as it possibly can be and that the assessment of the learning process is as effective as it can be and enhances learning and does not destroy incentive or self-esteem, as it has done in the past.

With regard to a couple of specific questions, a couple of members asked what is meant by standards and how they will be established. There are two kinds of standards, the contents standards and the achievement standards. Content standards are about deciding "the what" of the curriculum—that is, what knowledge and know-how should be taught. These decisions are made when the authority accredits a course developed locally or recognises a course developed nationally or, indeed, a curriculum developed elsewhere. That applies, for example, to Montessori schools, Steiner schools and the international baccalaureate schools. A number of schools are moving towards baccalaureate. The school I last taught at was Scotch College, and that has moved down that path to the baccalaureate teachings, and it seems to be working very well.

**Hon Kate Doust:** Are any of the public schools moving to that?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I do not know whether any of the public schools are moving to the baccalaureate teachings, to be perfectly honest. A number of the private schools are; PLC is one. In effect, the authority will be saying that of all the things that could be taught, this course or curriculum is worthy of our children's future. Setting achievement standards is about devising fair and valid assessments of student learning and deciding in advance what constitutes a pass, a particular letter grade or a numerical mark.

Moderation, which was identified by Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm, is about ensuring that all the markers mark to the same standard, which has always been an issue. I remember some of the moderation meetings I went to and there was a great diversity of marks between schools. That is why it is essential that we have an effective moderation procedure. There are various ways of doing it. It can be done through National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy markers, who are given very rigorous training before they commence and are cross-trained in advance; then their marks are cross-checked against the marks of other markers. I am sure Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm will be well aware of that and would have been an advocate of that. School-based assessments for years 11 and 12 courses are checked by Curriculum Council moderators, and that continues to be the case.

A few questions were asked about the three Rs—the resources, the readiness and the reports with regard to movement—particularly into the national curriculum. Members are concerned to see that schools are adequately resourced to take on the implementation of the curriculum, particularly the national curriculum. State resources are appropriated through the state budget under the School Education Act rather than the Curriculum Council Act. Several members asked about funding. The state government allocated \$5 million towards the implementation of the national curriculum for the 2011–12 financial year, and \$2.5 million for 2012–13. The amount of \$5 million was allocated for the first six months of 2011. The business case for funding implementation of the national curriculum in Western Australia in 2011–12 has been prepared collaboratively by the sector and articulates how and on what funding will be spent to support our teachers to familiarise and possibly in the future implement the national curriculum. The Curriculum Council's role in the implementation of the national curriculum is to facilitate statewide the national curriculum development and consultation processes, which it is doing at the moment.

Other resources come from the commonwealth and we will all look with keen interest at the recommendations of the commonwealth's Gonski "Review of Funding for Schooling", particularly given that national curriculum is a commonwealth initiative. While big ticket resources are not appropriated to the Curriculum Council, section 16(1) one of the Curriculum Council Act, which is retained under this bill, states that the authority, when

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performing its functions is to have regard to the capacity of providers to respond to its decisions and the impact of those decisions. It is not to make decisions that are unrealistic in relation to the school's resources. Again, let us hope that the commonwealth has similar regard to the capacity of providers as it develops the national curriculum.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** Is there an agreement about the resourcing of the implementation of the national curriculum signed between the commonwealth and the state?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am not sure about a formal agreement; we can check on that and I will respond in the committee stage. I am not sure whether there is a formal signed agreement. I know there is constant, ongoing dialogue at the ministerial level, but I am not sure whether there is a formal signed agreement.

The point was also made about the readiness of the new curriculum, whether everything is ready, and that is a valid point. If we are talking about a national curriculum, it is pointless to impose it if the system is not ready. Readiness, of course, means not only that the curriculum itself is workable, but also that all teachers have sufficient professional development. At the present time, as Hon Alison Xamon noted, aspects of the national curriculum are being trialled and validated throughout the nation. In Western Australia, this is supported by funding appropriated by the Curriculum Council and allocates ways for the Catholic Education Office and the Department of Education, with the understanding that they will work collaboratively and share the fruits of their labour. In this sense the council has acted as an honest broker across all schools—government and non-government. However, I note that the council is not delivering professional development itself, unlike what it did in the outcomes-based education period, and the authority will not do so in the future.

Members want to know more about reports on standards that the authority will prepare, what they will be about, what happens to the recommendations and whether they will have an undue negative impact on schools. The basic material for reports on standards will be all the results of student achievement on external tests and examinations that the authority will have in its database. This will include results from the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy tests and year 12 examinations, along with results from international tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment. This data can be analysed in a multiplicity of ways. The authority will take advice from its standards committee on what the most useful way would be—by “useful” I mean analyses that are aimed at improvement. The decisions on what reports to prepare and finalise will be taken by the board and not the standards committee, and the board will be accountable for its decisions and for the quality and fairness of its reports. Once a finalised report has been given to the minister, the authority's job is done, and any action taken by the minister from then on will be taken in accordance with the provisions in the School Education Act and there are a few questions about that from Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm that we can deal with in the committee stage.

As I mentioned, there was strong support for the principle of separating the regulator from the providers—it was always one of the issues with regard to the Curriculum Council and this principle is clear in the proposed governance arrangement for the authority. It also underpins why the authority will not be delivering face-to-face professional development for the providers. I note that this is the same principle in evidence in the acts of the state and national regulators of higher education and vocational education and training, and I can attest to that. I also note that the council's predecessor, the Secondary Education Authority, and indeed all its predecessors, did not have a professional development function. Hon Alison Xamon raised the question of the Western Australian College of Teaching's role in professional development. Under its act, WACOT is enabled to require teachers to undertake ongoing professional development in order to maintain their registration. The current requirement is set out in regulations; it is not specific to curriculum implementation, but it certainly includes that. As to the quality of professional development, it would be open to WACOT amending its regulation to set the bar higher, which would of course be a matter of interest to not only teachers but also the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation and to this chamber.

As I said, that is a fairly general overview. I have answered all of the general questions and some specific areas; others I think are more appropriately dealt with in the committee. This has been a very valuable debate about what I would imagine will be a fairly contentious issue in the next couple of years. But it is important that we get it right and I think this bill, as far as educational delivery in Western Australia is concerned, will go a long way to achieve more positive outcomes for students in our schools. Once again I thank all members for their contributions and their indications of support, and I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee*

Hon Philip Gardiner; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Collier; Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy Chairman; Hon Alison Xamon; Hon Nick Goiran

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The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Hon Brian Ellis) in the chair; Hon Peter Collier (Minister for Energy) in charge of the bill.

**Clause 1: Short title —**

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** I do not necessarily want to go through this bill clause by clause but I do want to raise a few issues within the context of clause 1. My questions cut across what I consider to be the more significant parts of the bill. The minister has already addressed many of my questions in his second reading response, and I thank him for those. I am particularly concerned about assessment standards and moderation. Those areas perhaps cut to the core of this bill and I think they also resonate with parents and educators. At the end of the day, fairly obviously, people want to see some demonstrated proof that the students they are working with are making some sort of progress. I am sure, as a former educator, the minister would agree with that.

First, I want to ask a couple of questions about the Curriculum and Assessment Committee. I have a rough idea how this committee will be chosen or formed and things like the tenure. Is it possible for the minister to give us any specifics about how particular committee members will be chosen? I know we talk about numbers. For instance, is it possible or expected that we will have any non-metropolitan representation? Given the geographical nature of Western Australia and the experiences that hopefully educators will provide for their students, are we talking about representation from Albany, Esperance, the Kimberley region, the Goldfields or somewhere like that?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is a valid point. The member is right. If we are going to be determining quality of assessment and quality of learning et cetera, in looking at the quality of the committee members it is essential that we look at their knowledge, experience and expertise in things such as board governance; the running of non-government schools, both large and small; preschool, primary and secondary school teaching; the development and implementation of school curriculum, vocational education and training, which would be essential as that is an evolving component of the curriculum; higher education; policy development; and strategic planning. All of those things will be taken into consideration to ensure there is a broad depth of experience.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Is it likely then to include current school-based practitioners and people of that nature? Perhaps in that context the minister might look at professional organisations such as the Economics Teachers' Association of WA, of which I was a member. Are these the types of organisations the authority will work with to bring about the sort of expertise that I am sure would be necessary?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes. Syllabus committees will have exactly the same composition as they have now with those teaching practitioners. That will not change; they will still have that experience and expertise.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** The minister mentioned moderation and standards. Will the standards component put in place any mechanisms to help schools reach required standards through the authority itself?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is not the responsibility of the Standards Committee; it is the provider's responsibility.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** I will make a qualifying comment and ask the minister who will determine the standards that are going to underpin any student achievement. Is that going to be something that necessarily comes through the authority?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The elements of the national curriculum, the F-10 standards, are a national responsibility. The authority will be responsible for implementing the standards across the jurisdiction—that is, Western Australia

**Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm:** It will not necessarily have any influence on the determination of those standards.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes, it will. It will be a key component in the development of the national curriculum.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** But it will not be a direct involvement; it will have an indirect involvement through its role in the development of the national curriculum. That is where it will come through, and nothing will necessarily come out of offices here in Perth.

**Hon Peter Collier:** No.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm was referring to matters relating to the setting of standards, and I want to move to something else, so I assume that is okay. We are on the short title and I want to ask a general question about the funding of the implementation—both commonwealth and state funding. How much has been spent to date by the commonwealth and the state, and what is the projected total cost of the implementation of the national curriculum?

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**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I mentioned this in the precis. Collectively, it is \$12.5 million from the state: \$5 million for the 2011–12 financial year and \$2.5 million for the 2012–13 financial year, and \$5 million was allocated for the first six months of 2011. In terms of the federal contribution, we do not have that information.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** Can you provide that information to the house—take it on notice?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Absolutely; we can do that.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** How much money has been allocated from both the commonwealth and the state for the specific purpose of the professional development of teachers?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** In terms of professional development, nothing has been allocated specifically from the commonwealth government. But professional development is incorporated within that \$12.5 million from the Western Australian contribution.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Would the minister be so good as to provide the house with a breakdown of the professional development allocation, and, if it extends over the forward estimates period, how much of that \$12.5 million is going to be spent on professional development over that period?

**Hon Peter Collier:** We can do that.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** I have a question in relation to comparability. Will the authority have the responsibility, for instance, particularly in years K–10—I stand to be corrected here, not having studied the system a lot in recent years—of validating school grades or scores on a year-by-year sort of basis?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Not on school-based assessment. They can do it on state-wide testing, but not on individual school-based assessment.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** So would that be the sum total of what the authority has to do in relation to comparability of achievement in, say, years K–10?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** In years K–10, yes.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** The minister mentioned moderation earlier on. Will there be any school-based moderation processes? Obviously we are going to find in different parts of the state different qualities of teaching. Perhaps that is not desirable, but that is a logical outcome. Given that there will be those variations, and that teachers' interpretations of the requirements and the standards will vary, the question is: will there be any school-based moderation processes of scores or grades throughout the year?

**Hon Peter Collier:** Are you talking about years 11 and 12?

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** No. I am particularly talking about up to year 10.

**Hon Peter Collier:** So K–10?

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Yes.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** If there is an expectation of it, or if it is deemed a necessity, the board can make that decision to have school-based moderation.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** So it will be an evolutionary occurrence—something that, over time, if it is deemed appropriate, the board can do?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes. The board can make that decision. It is up to the board's discretion to make that decision.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Minister, I understand that every student is to have an assessment record. I would like the minister to give us some information about what that assessment record is going to look like. Apart from a school report, I do not know what an assessment record is going to look like. The minister might be able to tell us what it is actually based on and what it is going to be used for.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The general information that will be used is outlined in section 19E(a) and (b) of the act; that is, general information on the student's name, including previous name; address; and date of birth; and particulars of any educational program in which the student is enrolled or that is being provided to the student. In terms of assessment, it will be any national testing that is done—that is, in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, and the year 12 assessment. But it will only be that national testing that is done, plus the general information that is contained in section 19E.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** So can you give us some sort of indication, minister, as to what it is going to be used for and how it is going to be used? Is it something like an old portfolio arrangement even, or is it some sort of a change to a reporting procedure that might have occurred in previous years?

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**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The template already exists from year 8 and above to contain that information. Basically, it is a database to contain records. What will happen now is that it will start earlier—so for the primary levels. But the template they currently have for that information already exists; it is just going to contain more information from earlier years.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Hon Michael Mischin):** Hon Alison Xamon has been trying to get the call for some time.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** My apologies.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Can I just clarify whether Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm is continuing with the provision, because if so, that is fine; but otherwise I am seeking the call for a number of other questions, through the Chair of course.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Through the Chair, Hon Alison Xamon, I just want to ask one further question of clarification that the minister has already alluded to, and then I will sit down and be quiet.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** In that case I will give the call to Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm, and then Hon Alison Xamon.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** I know the minister has already alluded to the answer to this particular question, but just for the record I want the minister to indicate the various external assessments that are to be included on this particular record. The minister has mentioned the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy, and I think he has mentioned year 12; can he just give us a bit of a run-down of some of the other assessments that are to be incorporated into this particular statement?

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich** interjected.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Exactly; that is a good point.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** In short, it is the NAPLAN tests, the Programme for International Student Assessment tests, which is that international testing model, and the tertiary entrance examination.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I just have some questions following on from the first questions that were asked by Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm in relation to the make-up of the new ministerially-appointed board. I also had questions about the sorts of qualifications that were expected, but I think the minister has outlined the level of expertise or the sorts of expertise that are being sought. Is there going to be any remuneration for members of the board; and how often will they likely be expected to meet?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is determined by the minister on recommendations of public sector management.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Are those positions in fact paid positions?

**Hon Peter Collier:** They can be.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Who is that determined by?

**Hon Peter Collier:** As I said, by the Public Sector Commissioner. It is in section 8 of the principal act.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Okay, because there are 24 positions all up that I calculated.

**Hon Peter Collier:** It is only the board you're talking about here.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I was also talking about the committees and whether their members would be remunerated. Take this on notice because there seems to be a bit of uncertainty about this. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority board will comprise seven members. The Standards Committee will have four people, and one person who is appointed by and is a member of the board, which is five people. The Curriculum and Assessment Committee will have 12 people appointed by the board. I want a list of all the potential positions and which will be remunerated and which will not. Take it on notice.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I do not think we need to take it on notice. Again, this comes under section 8, "Remuneration of members", which, when amended by clause 13, will state —

A member of the Board or a committee is to be paid such remuneration and travelling and other allowances as are determined in his or her case by the Minister on the recommendation of the Public Sector Commissioner.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Was it the intent that these positions are remunerated or not, because at the moment the minister is saying, "We might and we might not". I want some clarity around whether it was the intent that they be remunerated or whether all or some of these people will work and give their services freely. The minister must have some idea about which of those it is.

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**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Where the rules allow it, yes, it was intended that they would be paid. If they are public servants, they will not be paid.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** That clarifies the criteria by which people will be recompensed. The other question I asked was approximately how often it is anticipated that the board will meet. I also ask that same question about the committees.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The council currently meets six-weekly and it is intended that will be the same. The syllabus committees meet eight-weekly, but it depends on the demands of the particular committee.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** In the shift from a representative body to a ministerially-appointed body, is there any expectation that the groups that have been represented on the council to date, such as universities, unions, teachers' groups and the like, will continue to be engaged or consulted on some level; and, if so, how is it envisaged that will occur?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** They cannot be on those representation boards; that is right. They can be on the syllabus committees. They can have, quite justifiably, input to the syllabus committees, particularly on content, direction et cetera. Yes, they can still be a key component of the syllabus committees.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I think it was clear that they would have no formal role on the board. What I was asking was whether there were likely to be any other mechanisms, apart from a potential for representation on the syllabus committees, for them to be consulted in any way. Are there any other mechanisms that perhaps exist or are likely to be created?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** No; there is no formal avenue, but it is at the discretion of the board. If it is felt necessary that the board have input from a particular group, it is up to the board to use its discretion. Aside from that, their input would be through forums such as the syllabus committees.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Just moving on to a different matter, I of course mentioned in my contribution to the second reading debate the issue of professional development, and the minister did reply. As has been acknowledged, professional development will be huge in the implementation of the national curriculum. Will a government body ultimately be responsible for the accreditation of professional development; and, if so, which one?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** No; the board will not have anything to do with the professional development of teachers.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Is the minister aware of which government department is likely to have responsibility for professional development in the implementation of the national curriculum?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Sorry; I was just trying to clarify a couple of things. Professional development is always a vexed issue because everyone likes to handball it. Essentially, it belongs to the providers; always has, always will do. If one goes to a school, the school is responsible for one's professional development, and that umbrella of professional development will remain.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** They don't get funded for it, though, do they? Do they get funded to deliver professional development at a school level?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes, they do get funded.

**The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Hon Michael Mischin):** Order, members! If Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich wants to ask a question, she had best rise, otherwise Hansard will not be able to record it.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I also want to ask about the transfer of staff to the new authority. I want to know whether there is likely to be any significant proposed changes in staff, or will the new authority be similar in size to the current Curriculum Council?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** No, the current staff will maintain their positions and then it will be monitored to determine whether there needs to be any fluidity with the staffing levels.

**Hon Alison Xamon:** So at this point it is not envisaged that there's going to be a dramatic increase or decrease; is that right?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes, that is correct.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** In relation to the professional development issue that Hon Alison Xamon has spoken about, is it expected that the authority will have any capacity to act in the case of schools or students failing to reach a standard or a benchmark? Following on from that, maybe the minister could possibly talk about a mechanism that may well exist—it certainly is not going to be professional development—for supporting schools to reach that required standard.

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**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes, the new authority will have responsibility for the analysis of school performance data relating to standards of student achievement. When the authority examines data relating to standards of achievement and identifies that additional information may be required from the school, the governing authority of the school will be given the opportunity to provide background information or an explanation. This information will be used to either finalise the investigation or maybe include it in the final report, which will be presented back to the governing authority and to the Minister for Education. The focus of such reporting is clearly on supporting the improvement of standards of achievement for students in all Western Australian schools, and it will remain the responsibility of the governing authorities of all schools to ensure that processes for improvement are supported.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Do I gather from what the minister has just said that the onus and responsibility are fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the school, as the provider, to address the issues, and that it is simply informed by the authority that this is a requirement placed upon it by the authority?

**Hon Peter Collier:** That's correct.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Given that I forgot to stand last time I asked a question, I want to ask it again standing! The question relates to baseline professional development funding. The minister has just advised that schools are, in fact, funded to provide professional development. Were they additionally funded in 2008–09 and 2009–10 to prepare themselves for the implementation of the new curriculum, where it applied to the foundation of year 10; for example, courses?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** No, they were not supplied funding, but we had not even agreed to be part of the national curriculum at that stage, so there was no need to be funded.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Since the government has agreed—I do not know on what date the agreement was signed—the question is: have schools been given extra money to undertake extra professional development to prepare their teachers for the introduction of the national curriculum and all that that entails; and, if so, how much?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is the fund I mentioned earlier of \$12.5 million. A component of that is being used for professional development.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** It did not seem to be a lot of money. We do not know what the commonwealth component is; the minister is going to provide the state component. I remember when we were trying to introduce the outcomes reforms here in 2005, we committed an additional \$19 million and it did not go very far. I guess I have a concern about just how far that budget will go and how much of that budget will go towards PD.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** This is just for the familiarisation component of the national curriculum; the trialling. We are not into the implementation stage at this stage. The demands are not, dare I say it, as extreme as they will be at that particular time. But the \$12.5 million is for this initial stage of the trialling component.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** My question relates to one posed by Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm. It concerns the engagement of this authority with industry. Is it expected that this authority, be it either the Curriculum and Assessment Committee or the Standards Committee, have a direct engagement with the service delivery part of the industry, being the teachers and other parts, or is it expected the communication will go through the minister for that engagement?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is actually contained in section 16(3)(a) of part 3 which refers to consultation–collaboration. That is in a very general sense. For example, it says —

consult and collaborate with such persons and bodies having functions relating to education and training and members of the community as the Council thinks fit in relation to the performance of its functions;

It goes on. It refers to organisations of employees and employers. It could be the syllabus committees, it could be members of the vocational education and training sector, members of industry or industry training councils, which are through the VET sector. All of those areas represent key components of education or training and industry, but as I said, it is contained in section 16(3).

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** I would envisage that that engagement will be a crucial part of whether this structure works or is deficient. For example, if the national curriculum is adopted, the delivery part of the industry has to know whether it can actually make delivery. Will that be a close engagement between this authority and the teaching industry, or will that really be determined by the minister if there is an issue whether to deliver one year or a later year, for example?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is why we need eminent people on the board. The chairman of the board will make that decision about the consultation. As I said, that is why we need people who are not directly involved in

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the sector but who are divorced from it. We need people of experience within the education sector and with that experience they will appreciate and understand the necessity to engage and have dialogue and communicate with those very sectors I mentioned earlier. It will be things such as the syllabus committees or anyone in the VET sector or industry or whomever else it might be.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Just to push this a bit further, can I be a bit more precise? At the end of the day, who is accountable for the implementation of the new curriculum that has been decided by the curriculum committee? Is the committee or the authority above it accountable?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Ultimately, the minister is accountable.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Just to continue a little on the standards side, if we see a NAPLAN result that is lower, let us say, than our contemporaries in the other states, who becomes accountable for trying to correct that and how is that done by this authority?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Ultimate responsibility rests with the minister under the School Education Act; that is where the responsibility lies. If there are issues with NAPLAN, a minister will take responsibility for that. The minister has ministerial responsibility to do something about it. There would be communication with the board to ensure that standards were being met and that the message that improvements were needed was being articulated through the education system. We have national testing to ensure that any form of improvement that is necessary is quite vividly and transparently made clear. If the minister is sitting there and there are obviously issues with NAPLAN testing in year 3 and year 5 et cetera, something would need to be done. There would need to be dialogue and discussions with the chair and the board to ensure those improvements were made.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** I understand that now. We know that the Standards Committee will measure the academic performance of students. Is there any inference that non-academic aspects associated with education, which I know are a lot harder to measure, will be measured by the Standards Committee?

**Hon Peter Collier:** Is the member talking about pastoral responsibility?

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Yes, I am talking about learning for life issues.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I understand where the member is coming from. Ultimately, yes, it could. Without a shadow of a doubt, I am sure that as we become a much more complex society, we will find that the board's responsibilities will extend. The education system is becoming much more than putting students in a classroom with chalk and talk or whatever the educative process might be now. Yes, ultimately, the board may find that it will need to branch out and become more extensive in the responsibilities it bestows upon itself.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Is that explanation constrained anywhere in the current draft of the bill?

**Hon Peter Collier:** No, it is not.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I have only one question, which I was hoping other members may have asked. I have been keenly listening to consideration of clause 1. I acknowledge that I had to leave the chamber very briefly, so if this question has been covered, the minister will no doubt direct me accordingly and I will read the uncorrected *Hansard* in the morning. My question relates to the Curriculum and Assessment Committee. The second reading speech refers to one member being a member of the board, and that will obviously be the chair of that particular committee. Naturally, I have no difficulties with that whatsoever. My question relates to the composition of the other 12 members of the committee who, according to the second reading speech —

... will be appointed for their qualifications, experience and expertise in the development and implementation of courses in schools, and in the options for employment and further study available to students leaving secondary school.

It then goes on —

This committee will advise the board about what ought to be included in accredited courses and syllabuses and how student learning in them is best assessed.

I well appreciate the second of those aspects; that is, how eminently qualified and experienced experts can contribute to how student learning in them is best assessed. I have no question whatsoever on that aspect. My question is about the first of those aspects; that is, what ought to be included? Specifically, is there any mechanism in place to ensure that one or more of the 12 members will be able to contribute in that area of values?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** No, there is no prerequisite that someone will have particular expertise in values, but we have to assume that the 12 members, all of whom will have had educational experience, will have had experience in values. Values education now is a key component of any educational delivery. If the people on the

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committee, therefore, are directly involved in education, we can safely assume that they would have a fair amount of experience in the values area.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I will ask my last question on this issue. Taken to its extreme, if for some reason values are not properly addressed by that committee, I take it in answers the minister has previously given this evening that ultimate responsibility and accountability for that would be with the minister.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 2 and 3 put and passed.**

**Clause 4: Long title replaced —**

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Clause 4, which will replace the long title, is an all-encompassing clause, if members like, that pretty much outlines the functions the bill will serve. I am interested in the database. The comment was made earlier that a database is already in existence. I imagine there would be some additional pressure on that database. I am interested in whether the upgrade of the database will come out of the ballpark figure of \$12.5 million. I am also interested in the reference to “related purposes”. I will put that into context. The long title in clause 4 now states that this is —

**An Act to establish a State agency with functions relating to the development and accreditation of courses and the standards, assessment and certification of student achievement, to provide for a database relating to the participation in education, training or employment by students during their school years, and for related purposes.**

I note that Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm also asked a question about some of the other things, and we came up with participation over and above assessment. I am wondering what other foreseeable things might go on that database.

**Hon Peter Collier:** Number one and number two.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** What else might be recorded on such a database?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The funding will come from the Department of Education. We cannot give any figures or take it on notice. It will depend on the implementation phase and how rapidly that takes place. With regard to what else might be on the database, it will be potentially things such as participation, for example, and community service that students do in years 11 and 12, which may have been a key component of graduation. I am suggesting physical education is a possible aspect and whether they do that physical component of the mandated component of the course. They are two potentials.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** The legislation already refers to participation, achievement of students and records of assessment. I am wondering whether it might record things such as school attendance or information about whether a child has an illness that perhaps the education system should be alerted to or the school should know about. I am wondering whether it is a broader function than just being curriculum related.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is meant to be just student related. As I said, community service is one potential. It is possible to have school attendance figures on the database but that is not intended at this stage.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 5 to 8 put and passed.**

**Clause 9: Sections 5 and 6 replaced and section 7A and Part 2 Division 2 inserted —**

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Why is there such a big difference in the sizes of the committees? The Standards Committee will comprise five members and the Curriculum Assessment Committee will comprise 13.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** The member is talking about the national standards. We will adhere to those standards, of course, whereas, with the Curriculum Assessment Committee the breadth of curriculum is much broader.

**Hon Alison Xamon:** Is that why there is so much margin?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** An observation was made to me about proposed sections 9(1)(o) and (p), which relate basically to university. I want to describe a situation and would appreciate if the minister can comment on it, but if it is not relevant, please say so. The concern expressed to me is that the current Curriculum

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Council needs to liaise better with the universities. The suggestion is that undesirable practices are occurring, especially in relation to the university entrance process such as the calculation of scaled scores and the Australian tertiary admissions rank by use of instruments like average-mark scaling. The suggestion is that there appear to be undesirable side effects impacting on counselling and course selection affecting participation rates at the higher levels in schools. Does that issue hold any credence with the minister? Is it an issue that could be addressed in this bill, and if so, how?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is a good point. The member would know that the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre is fundamentally responsible for university entry scores et cetera and the determination of those students' entry into university. The authority will be responsible for the standards within the schools. That liaison will continue between the two. I think what the member may be alluding to, and he can nod or shake his head if it is case or not, is what is starting to develop at the second level in particular, that more and more students are choosing stage 1 for their course —

**Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm:** It is almost a dumbing-down process.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is dumbing down; that is right.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** Teachers are encouraging that dumbing down.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is spot-on.

**Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm:** That is the concern, this apparent dumbing-down process.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** That is right, more and more students are choosing stage 1 through which they can avoid exams and the harder options. There has been talk, and I say talk, that some schools have been encouraging that process.

**Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM:** Is there a role for the authority to play in this sort of set up or is there any need to rectify this? Is it a significant issue?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** There most definitely is a role for the authority to do that, and one of the first roles of the minister will be to ensure that they can identify whether that is a practice that is becoming more common, and if it is, they can do something about it.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 10 to 13 put and passed.**

**Clause 14: Sections 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 replaced —**

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Proposed section 9(1)(m) states —

to provide, at the times and in the manner determined by the Authority, the results of, and reports on, the assessment of student achievement made, caused to be made or recognised by the Authority to governing bodies, principals of schools, students and parents of students; ...

I interpret this to be about making the assessments public. There has been some debate about what these assessments will be used for. Can those assessments be given to any others apart from those listed in this provision? Will the reports on these assessments be made public through a public website or will the information be restricted in some way; and if so, why?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** No-one else has access to that information and it is not intended to put that information on the website or make it publicly available.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** There was some debate about whether this information should be made public. Clearly, the final determination was that it should not be. Can the minister inform the chamber why that may well be the case?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is okay to have the aggregated data for the various schools but not the individual school, for personal welfare reasons more than anything. Some people do not want that information readily available, but the aggregated data will be available.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 15 to 22 put and passed.**

**Clause 23: Section 19J amended —**

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**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I was picking up on the issue of parents being able to access student records and wondered what, if any, safeguards would be in place to ensure that parents who perhaps should not have access to their children's records are prevented from doing so. If there are circumstances involving domestic violence or the like, what safeguards will be in place to ensure that those parents will not be able to access those records?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** This may not satisfy the member but the bill states —

**parent**, of a student, means a person who at law has responsibility for the day to day care, welfare and development of the student;

If there are issues with regard to the law or access of that parent to the child, that parent would not have access to the information.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I read that clause to mean that unless very specific legal provisions are put in place to prevent a parent accessing those records, in effect, any parent can access those records.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is the same situation that currently exists in public education at the moment.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** The difference is that we are looking at records of significantly younger children, rather than much older children, so that does potentially raise different scenarios. Is it envisaged that policy guidelines may be created around this provision?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I will clarify that parents can still access details of information of students at primary school. They can do that right now, so that is not going to change.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 24 to 39 put and passed.**

**Clause 40: Schedule 1 clause 1 amended —**

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Why was the decision made to change the period of appointment for board members from three to four years, and to five years in the case of the chair?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** It is not to exceed those time frames, which will ensure there is a staggering of the board so we do not get the napalming of the board in one year.

**Clause put and passed.**

**Clauses 41 to 59 put and passed.**

**Title put and passed.**

*Report*

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

*Third Reading*

Bill read a third time, on motion by **Hon Peter Collier (Minister for Energy)**, and passed.