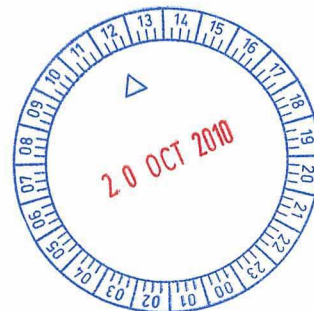


**Minister for Education; Tourism**

28-21886-D10/0606181



Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Ellis

*Brian***Petition No 91- Dampier Primary School- Year 7 Children Relocating to High School**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the petition relating to any proposed relocation of Year 7 children from Dampier into high school.

In your letter you asked specific questions and the answers are as follows:

- No decision has been made to re-locate Year 7 Dampier school children from a primary to a secondary setting.
- The current policy is that the provision of public schooling for Year 7 students remains in primary settings with the exception of those Year 7 students that attend: Atwell College; Ballajura Community College; Dalyellup College; Ellenbrook Secondary College; Gilmore College; and Kinross College. As detailed in the attachment, I have asked the Department of Education to examine whether the existing policy is in the best educational and personal interests of all Year 7 students.
- The current policy regarding the location of Year 7 students is the same for both metropolitan and regional areas.
- Dampier Primary School will not be closed if a decision was taken to transfer the provision of Year 7 students to their local high school. It is unlikely that other primary schools will close if a decision was taken to transfer the provision of Year 7 students to a secondary setting.
- All students from kindergarten to Year 12 attract an allocation of resources. The resources allocated to Year 7 students transfer with the individual child whether they attend an alternative primary school or move to a secondary setting. The resources allocated for the kindergarten to Year 6 students will remain at the primary school if Year 7 students are relocated to a secondary setting.

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The following attachment provides additional information on the current status of determining appropriate education provision for public Year 7 students in Western Australia. I trust that this submission and the attachment clarify the position of the Department of Education.

Thank you for raising these questions with me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Constable', written in a cursive style.

Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION; TOURISM

Att.

18 OCT 2010

PLACEMENT OF PUBLIC YEAR 7 STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In 2007, the previous Minister for Education and Training confirmed that the provision of public schooling for Year 7 students would remain in primary settings. This decision was informed by a study that examined the issues in relation to students' academic achievement, student wellbeing, parents' and community opinion, and the impact on staffing, infrastructure and funding.

Since that decision was taken, there have been some important developments that have a bearing on whether it would be beneficial to consider whether Year 7 students in government schools should move into secondary schools.

When deliberating on the placement of Year 7 students, there are a number of issues and considerations that may have a bearing on the final decision. These include:

- The decision taken by the Catholic Education Office, and many independent schools, to phase in the placement of Year 7 students in secondary schools. This is having an effect on public primary schools, some of which have markedly diminished numbers of Year 7 students. In effect, there is now a dual system of secondary education in Western Australia, with approximately two thirds of non-government Year 7 students in secondary settings.
- It appears from the draft National Curriculum for Year 7 that students may well benefit from some of the more advanced content in mathematics and the sciences being taught by specialist teachers, in specialist facilities, in a high school setting.
- Within a few years, NAPLAN testing in Years 7 and 9 will reflect the content and concepts of the new National Curriculum.
- The vast majority of Year 7 students in Australia are in secondary schools, with Queensland proposing to move their Year 7 to secondary from 2014. When that happens, 14 per cent of Year 7 students will remain in primary schools – those in Western Australia and South Australia.
- Early education is a priority in primary schools. With the increased emphasis on early years learning, primary schools now provide education for students from Kindergarten to Year 7, a nine-year range. It may be beneficial to have a better balance in the distribution of year levels across primary and secondary schooling.
- Year 7 students are on average, six months older, following the raising of the school entry age in this State in 2003. This means half of our Year 7 students turn 13 while in primary school.

In addition, we are now seeing the effects of Year 7 students being on average, six months older, following the raising of the school entry age in this State in 2003. This means half of our Year 7 students turn 13 while in primary school.

In light of the above, I have asked the Department of Education to examine whether the existing policy is in the best educational and personal interests of Year 7 students.