NEW SOUTH WALES SECONDARY PRINCIPALS’ COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO QUALITY MATTERS

ATTENTION Mr Bruce Mowbray
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The team whose names appear below prepared this paper. It was based on consultation with
district secondary principals meetings from across the state and from the Secondary Principals’
Council’s (SPC) Reference Groups.

Quality Matters Interest Group:

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Please note:
1. The words appearing in italics in the text are SPC policy as identified in Preferred
   Futures for Public Secondary Education. They are included to indicate policy positions
   held by the SPC that relate to QM.
2. The recommendations included in this paper are made at this time and may be revised in
   light of further consultation with Principals and other stakeholders as the process of
   implementation proceeds.
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<th>KEY RESPONSES</th>
<th>EXPANSION</th>
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| Any conceptualisation of teacher quality must be made in the context of the needs of learners and teachers in the 21C. | Throughout the SPC *Preferred Futures for Public Secondary Education in NSW*, the issue of quality in learning and teaching is addressed. There is alignment with Quality Matters in a number of the beliefs and strategic options in *Preferred Futures*.  
- *This will mean teachers have an understanding of and the skills to use the learning tools of the future in student learning, curriculum delivery, assessment and reporting (p 18).*  
- *Teachers and teaching will benefit from the articulation of explicit professional teaching standards (p19).*  
- *Teachers will be supported by the government and the DET in bringing about changes for the future (p19).*  
- *All teachers will be competent users of technology for learning as training in the use of technology in teaching, learning and administration will be integral to the professional development of all staff (p23).* |

**Recommendation 1:** SPC will support strategies that recognise and include the need to reconceptualise the nature of curriculum, “schools”, learning and teaching for the 21C.

| There is overall support for the development of teaching standards *by the profession and for the profession*. | There was strong “in-principle” support for the development of teaching standards, reflecting a need to seriously articulate what teachers do and what is expected of them.  
*Preferred Futures: Strategic option 4.3.2 (p19) Identify, monitor and ensure maintenance of professional teaching standards required now and in the future.*  
Some districts, such as Mt Druitt, where there are large numbers of beginning teachers, believe it would be relatively straightforward to identify the standards for beginning teachers. Standards for accomplished teachers and leaders were seen as more problematic, including the challenge of setting flexible and meaningful benchmarks.  
It was suggested that, if the statements were framed as “continuous development statements”, accreditation and assessment would be more meaningful. “Quality performance matrix” models could address this. There have been some attempts to produce standards’ statements, such as those developed by ACE (see DET website). While these might be used to inform the debate, the process by which the standards’ statements were developed by ACE was not seen as a positive development for teachers in public schools. |
There is also concern that the standards might say more about minimum levels of competency than quality and this needs to be addressed for the standards to achieve the desired ends. In fact, there is a real need for there to be a debate to define the “quality” that is required for the teaching profession.

In the QM report, Information Technology skills, child protection understandings and skills in behaviour management were highlighted. There is support for these skills being developed before employment in teaching, although the SPC would have liked to see more emphasis on other critical learning and teaching skills as well. In recent years, there has been a strong concentration on the development of curriculum, sometimes at the expense of pedagogy.

Specifically, in relation to students with severe behaviour problems, there was concern that training and accreditation should not negate the role of DET to provide adequate support to teachers in working with these students.

Finally, the setting of standards was seen as important in positioning the quality of teachers in public education.

**Recommendation 2:** That there be further discussion about the term “quality” as it is applied to school, TAFE and possibly university teaching.

**Recommendation 3:** Those differences in qualifications, pedagogy and accountability between schoolteachers, TAFE teachers and private providers be carefully explored and acknowledged.

**Recommendation 4:** That the current academic qualifications for schoolteachers be maintained in any new system of accreditation.

There is support for linking the assessment and accreditation of teachers to standards (criteria) with some reservations.

*Preferred Futures:* Strategic option 4.3.2 (p19) *Identify, monitor and ensure maintenance of professional teaching standards required now and in the future.*

Responses to the SPC consultation suggested there is more support for using standards for accreditation than for assessment. Concerns were expressed about “league table” models, inspectorial models and the use of aggregated performance data to the disadvantage of those in difficult schools. The manner of assessment needs further clarification and definite proposals need to be made.

Even in negative responses to this statement, there were suggestions that the use of benchmarks for teachers would assist in the identification of professional development needs. Further clarification of the role of the Principal and executive
| Recommendation 5: Models of assessment and accreditation need to be manageable and transparent. |
| Recommendation 6: There needs to be further negotiation on the models of assessment and accreditation to be used. |

Although there is support for both, there was more support for linking rewards to standards than linking incentives to standards.

Preferred Futures: Strategic option 4.3.5 9p19) Recognise the individual contexts of schools, reward quality teaching and acknowledge co-curricular activities in pay structures and working conditions.

Preferred futures: Strategic option 4.3.11 (p20) Make teaching more attractive as a career for people at different life and career stages.

There are suggestions that DET already has an informal way of rewarding good teachers by promoting them but this is seen as a limited view. Incentive-based systems do not seem to be working at present to attract quality teachers in areas of shortage (location and subject); there is little confidence they will work in the future.

There is also a view expressed that all public school teachers should be registered, that the standards should be linked to registration and that registration should be requirement for employment in public schools. Ideally the SPC wants to see registration of all teachers in schools receiving government funding. (See below in response on teacher registration)

Teaching has been described as a vocation but, as one principal pointed out, teachers do not take a vow of poverty. To be able to link standards to rewards, there needs to be a complete re-think of the use of rewards to increase the status of teaching and hence to attract top quality graduates to enter teaching, particularly in public schools. (See below in response to teacher supply and waiting lists.)

Recommendation 7: There should be a concerted effort to increase the rewards to teachers aimed at increasing the status of the profession in recognition of the demands of teaching in the 21C and forecasts of critical teacher shortages.

Recommendation 8: The re-introduction of bonded scholarships should be explored. Consideration should be given to differentiated training allowances for those subjects where there is a shortage of teachers (mathematics, science and TAS).

There was support for an... The structure and powers of an Institute are seen as critical to...
Institute of Teachers (or similar title) if it leads to increased status and salaries for teachers.

There is strong support for teacher registration for all teachers, with leadership for registration to come from public schools.

*Preferred Futures: Strategic option 4.3.3 (p19)* Set in place frameworks to ensure the maintenance and improvement of ongoing teacher development at both an individual and systems level.

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<th>Its success as was the importance of keeping such an organisation in the hands of the profession. It is seen as important that the “Institute” be independent of the employing body, particularly in the representatives appointed (elected) to manage it.</th>
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<td>It is strongly recommended that all teachers be able to join the Institute and that, in the case of public school teachers, membership be compulsory for employment. To ensure this, it is further recommended that DET include the cost of membership in the next salaries agreement as a payment before tax for all teachers currently employed in public schools who meet the requirements for registration.</td>
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<td>Suggestions ranged from the establishment of a statutory body to an organisation resembling a “professional organisation”. Issues such as ethics and codes of behaviour were addressed by those in support of an “Institute”.</td>
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<td>Its leadership was more strongly articulated. The balance of the membership should be with practising professionals, who are seconded from schools with limited tenure (as in the Queensland Leadership Unit). Election of officers, as in other professional associations, was also canvassed in some responses.</td>
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<td>Those opposed to the Institute wanted the role of the “Institute” to be limited to leadership of the standards’ process, the role of the NSWTF clarified and standards written into a new Education Act. There was some concern that an Institute could be manipulated by government and employers to create a “watchdog” or inspectorial model.</td>
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<td>There is strong support for ‘teacher registration’ in all schools that accept state government funding. There is a strong belief that there should be a specific process and registration to become a teacher in NSW, no matter where qualifications were achieved. This support acknowledges the difficulties that the NSWTF would have with registration but recommends a renewed effort in this direction.</td>
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<td>The proposition that registration and accreditation of all teachers should be used to promote the quality and status of teachers in public education was strongly endorsed. Teacher registration could be earned by para-professionals (with appropriate academic qualifications) working in schools, as currently exists with AEAs.</td>
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Deregistration is accepted as a feature of any system of
registration. Clarification and negotiation will be required on rights of appeal, efficiency procedures and a code of conduct.

If the Teacher’s Certificate, currently the only formal accreditation process for new teachers, is to be retained, there needs to be an alignment between the standards and the requirements of the Teacher’s Certificate. Over time, this qualification could be replaced by teacher registration. To date, the strong culture of public schools has maintained a reasonable consistency in its award, although there have been anomalies in the past.

**Recommendation 9:** There should be a system of teacher registration for teachers in all government-funded schools in NSW.

**Recommendation 10:** That any “Institute” should be established as a statutory body, composed of members of the profession appointed for a limited term. There should be legislative safeguards against political interference or manipulation.

**Recommendation 11:** The form and functions of the statutory body should be negotiated with the profession.

**Recommendation 12:** In public schools, “Institute” membership should be compulsory and this should be extended over time to all schools receiving public funds.

There is strong support for the SPC using its influence to improve the quality and provision of teacher education in NSW.

**Preferred Futures: Strategic option 4.3.4 (p19) Collaborate with teacher education providers and government to ensure there are sufficient graduates educated and trained to meet future pedagogical needs, competent in the use of technology in learning and having the knowledge and skills to work with all students.**

The SPC believes that teacher registration is critical in giving employers and an “Institute” the power to negotiate with universities on the standards of graduate teachers. The concept of internship is supported, if it is resourced appropriately for both the intern and the “coach”.

There is a very high level of support for using the influence of the SPC to change the nature of teacher education models in some universities, in partnership with the government and DET as the majority employer in NSW. The failure of students to do any practice teaching in schools in more difficult geographic locations and lower socio-economic communities is seen as a major problem, when the majority of first appointments in public education are to those schools.

In responses there was strong criticism of the reluctance of universities to “fail” students at both graduate and postgraduate levels. Universities need to be more involved with what happens in schools with trainees, particularly in assessing students. Those making decisions should be ‘accredited’ teachers.
Schemes to address this are going into place in some universities. For example, Wollongong University has introduced a scheme that has students do a teaching practicum in schools before the HECS deadline.

The linking of universities and the schools in their geographic area in “learning partnerships” is strongly supported.

Concerns about the induction of new teachers were particularly important to districts in western and southwestern Sydney. Some districts induct up to 200 teachers a year and these districts have expertise in identifying standards for beginning teachers.

Recommendation 13: That the Principals’ associations act in partnership with the government and DET (the majority employer) to influence the provision and outcomes of teacher education programs in universities.

Recommendation 14: That appropriately resourced internships become a feature of teacher education programs in NSW and that DET target funding and sponsorships to universities willing to support programs to place “quality” graduates in public schools.

The SPC has major concerns with the ongoing supply of teachers, the use of ‘waiting lists’ and the effectiveness of current incentive systems.

Teacher quality is inextricably linked to teacher supply. Without a supply of high quality teachers to fill vacancies, there is little point in aiming for quality alone.

*Preferred Futures: Strategic option 4.3.6 (p19) Give school increased responsibility, authority and resources to negotiate change in school organisation and staffing to better suite the changing needs of teachers and learners.*

In discussions Principals have expressed real concerns about the teacher shortage in NSW. This shortage is already being felt in some locations and subject areas. The active recruiting of Australian teachers for the UK and USA exacerbates it. Public schools are at a disadvantage to the private sector in targeting the best quality recruits because many of them are made offers before graduation for positions in private schools. For example, it has been reported that the top 15 graduates in History at Macquarie University in the last three years were employed in private schools on graduation. “Those with get up and go, just get up and go.”

DET waiting lists discourage graduates and, by the time they may have waited 5 - 6 years for a position, their willingness to accept the employment conditions of public secondary schools is often diminished. This is particularly true for those who have not worked in public schools while awaiting employment.

There is also concern that waiting lists are not checked regularly and schools can wait weeks for appointments while offers are made, refused, made and refused.
Option 4.3.8 (p20) gain greater autonomy for schools in deciding their staffing needs, including the use of para-professionals and other support staff.

The fact that graduates often nominate districts (not individual schools) means that some schools in some districts have greater difficulties attracting staff than would be the case if the school itself could be listed. There is considerable anecdotal evidence that teachers who do their practice teaching in a particular school, establish a relationship with that school and are often happy to be appointed there.

Current incentive schemes in NSW (and in other states and countries) are generally viewed as ineffective, unless they are accompanied by a concomitant rise in the overall status of teachers and teaching. Incentives are needed to both encourage staff to take up appointments in hard to staff schools and to stay teaching in these schools beyond the minimum required period.

Most respondents oppose the notion of paying more to teachers in subject areas with shortages. They suggested paying HECs, establishing well-funded scholarships, linking prospective teachers to the schools to which they will be appointed and other pre-employment strategies be used instead.

Programs to ensure the appointment of sufficient quality teachers in rural and regional NSW need to be given priority.

**Recommendation 15:** DET should interview university students at least twelve months earlier than at present and link “quality” students to the schools in which they will teach with scholarships and funded internships.

**Recommendation 16:** All public schools should have a percentage of their staffing funding available to be used flexibly in the employment of teachers (and other staff).

**Recommendation 17:** That DET conduct an immediate review and updating of the current “waiting lists” to include more detail that will enable a faster and more effective match between teachers and schools.

**Recommendation 18:** That DET introduces a realistic incentive scheme that both encourages teachers to take appointments in difficult to staff schools and to stay beyond the minimum required time.

There is support for the accreditiation of accomplished teachers and leaders.

**Preferred Futures: Strategic**

Additional accreditation is seen as something that should be voluntary for accomplished and experienced teachers. Multiple pathways for leadership accreditation should also be available. This accreditation should encompass both practical and theoretical aspects of learning and leadership. It should
**option 4.3.10 (p20) Establish frameworks to enable universities, DET and other providers to support ongoing teacher education and development.**

**Preferred Futures: Strategic option 4.3.3 (p19) Set in place frameworks to ensure the maintenance and improvement of ongoing teacher development at both an individual and systems level.**

also recognise both experience and performance.

There was a range of views as to whether accreditation should be mandatory for those seeking promotion, with the majority of responses supporting some form of accreditation. There was endorsement for models that emphasised workplace learning as an integral part of the process.

The establishment of standards for accomplished teachers and leaders was seen as problematic because there is considerable research on teacher career development that indicates that it is difficult to define a hierarchy of skills. Despite this, SPC supports efforts to establish standards for accomplished teachers.

The failure of successive governments (both Federal and state) to maintain a commitment to professional training and development was noted by some respondents. Along with suggestions to embed training & development (T&D) in processes of accreditation, it was also suggested that consideration be given to contracting out more T&D.

One standard for accomplished teachers might be the recognition of their skills in training other teachers.

An “Institute” should be able to register providers for T&D. For example, SPC would be interested in a partnership with the “Institute” to develop leadership programs for principals.

It will be critical to address the issue of the currency of skills of accomplished teachers in pedagogy, IT and other areas on a regular basis. Accomplished teachers and leaders who maintain the currency of their qualifications should be supported via rewards.

However, it is essential that future T&D initiatives avoid the problems associated with the implementation of the HSC. Frankly, were it not for teachers in our public secondary schools, the new HSC would not have happened. These teachers deserved better support in implementing such a major change. They cannot continue to “do more, with nothing”.

Best practice ensures currency, adequate time frames, workshops and discussion, action research and school-centred approaches.

Principals would also like the role of the Principal and
executive staff in the development of leadership and learning skills with accomplished teachers to be clarified.

**Recommendation 19:** That the profession should work to define standards for accomplished teachers and leaders, focussed on high quality student-centred pedagogy.

**Recommendation 20:** That training and development be embedded in all accreditation processes.

**Recommendation 21:** That the “Institute” have a major responsibility for the accreditation of those providing training & development to teachers and that it work in partnership with others (including accomplished teachers) to develop courses for accomplished teachers and leaders.

**Recommendation 22:** That, in light of teacher shortages and demands on teacher time during school hours, DET should investigate paid out-of-hours training & development (instead of providing relief days) as one option for supporting the ongoing training of accomplished teachers and leaders.

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<tr>
<th>The SPC will support the implementation of QM in the state’s secondary public schools if there is a process of continued consultation that focuses on accepting the advice of and addressing the concerns of teachers, students and parents in public schools.</th>
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<td>There is a strong belief that teachers in both the public and private sectors should be subject to the same codes of ethics, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, whatever model is chosen.</td>
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<td>It is recognised that public school teachers will have to (as in all other matters) provide leadership if this is to happen.</td>
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<td>One concern that has been expressed is whether SPC can expect the support of DET and the government in return.</td>
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**Recommendation 23:** That there be an ongoing process of consultation focussed on accepting the advice and addressing the concerns of teachers, students and parents in public schools.