



ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

The parent voice on public education

BSSS YEAR 12 CERTIFICATE REVIEW

The ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations (Council) is the peak body of ACT public school parents and citizens associations. We promote the interests of parents and other school community members. Council thanks the BSSS for the opportunity to comment on the review of the Year 12 Certificate.

It should be noted that this submission should not be read as the 'official view' of Council. It aims to provide the Board with a small range of anecdotal evidence from parents regarding the proposed changes. The information below has been sourced from a number of different P&Cs and Council meetings.

- a) *Number, purpose and types of certificates to be issued at the end of year 12;*
- b) *Number and scope of different packages;*

Parents support the simplification of both the number, purpose and types of certificates and the number and scope of different packages. They recognise the largely administrative nature of these changes which will align the ACT with other systems in Australia.

All students should have the opportunity to attempt the Year 12 Certificate. Parents strongly believe that the education outcomes of all students should be recognised and celebrated, including those of students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities.

- c) *Minimum requirements for certificates/packages, including English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy requirements;*

Flexibility in choice and instruction has been the hallmark of the ACT secondary system for many decades. Notwithstanding the decision made by the Board, this should be retained in one way or another.

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the representative body
for Parent & Citizen Associations in the ACT.

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations | ABN: 53 870 517 949 | 100 Maitland St Hackett ACT
Tel: 02 62415759 | **Email:** contact@actparents.org.au | **Web:** www.actparents.org.au

Council has received much anecdotal evidence which suggests that the flexibility provided by the ACT Year 12 Certificate is unique among Australian jurisdictions and is highly sought after. One parent commented that they had specifically moved to the ACT due to the flexibility provided. Parents in general have noted that the flexibility of the requirements have allowed their child to focus on what they are passionate about and also gain useful skills and qualifications which will serve them well in their chosen field of future employment. For example, one student was able to focus on subjects useful to automotive engineering. Had English been a requirement, one of these relevant subjects would have been dropped.

On the other hand, parents also recognise the need for a highly literate and English proficient workforce and society. English literacy and communication is something that is used every day, no matter what the employment or societal context. Parents support the current provision of different levels of English courses in the ACT system, with varying focus on literacy and literature respectively. It has been suggested that this could be expanded even further if English is made a requirement.

A degree of discretion should always be left with principals and the BSSS to deal with special circumstances that may not allow students to complete certain requirements. This is especially relevant to students with a disability and students requiring additional support.

Additionally, in keeping with the flexible nature of the current system, there may be other ways to fulfil an English 'requirement'. Many students complete language-rich subjects such as History. Several of these types of subjects could be flagged as fulfilling the English requirement.

A distinction could also be made between students seeking an ATAR and those completing the Year 12 Certificate only. As an English subject is a pre-requisite for many NSW Universities (the same can be said about Mathematics in regards to Science courses), those seeking to enter University could be required to complete an English (and/or numeracy/mathematics) subject.

In conclusion, parents are generally supportive of the introduction of an English requirement, with exemptions being available for special cases. Parents strongly believe that no matter what the requirements are for the Year 12 Certificate, transitions counsellors play an extremely important role in providing advice and guidance. These staff must be highly trained and professional. Parents and students have reflected on a range of experiences with these positions- both positive and negative.

In regards to mathematics, many feel that students should be encouraged to study such subjects in years 11 and 12 but that it should not be compulsory. The benefits of compulsory mathematics/numeracy are closely associated with the benefits of English/literacy, however parents were aware that a larger percentage of students elect not to do mathematics.

- d) *Recognition of extra-curricular activities and outside learning towards the requirements for the certificates;*
- e) *Recognition of vocational education and training (VET) towards the requirements for the certificates.*

Parents support the recognition of extra-curricular activities and VET training towards the requirements for the Year 12 Certificate. Parents do recognise that there should be limits on how many of these subjects can count towards the Year 12 Certificate.