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BANKSTOWN GIRLS HIGH NAMED AS A CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE

The State Member for Bankstown, Tony Stewart, has announced Bankstown Girls High School will become a Centre for Excellence from next year. Mr Stewart said Bankstown Girls High was one of 22 new centres announced across the state as part of an initiative by the Commonwealth and NSW Government to improve teacher quality.

“This is a major win for the local community. Centres for Excellence are credited with achieving significant improvements and have been recognised across the state as a pioneering model of best practice,” Mr Stewart said.

“I would like to congratulate the Principal of Bankstown Girls High, Ms Betty Harper, along with her amazing teaching staff, fantastic students and great parents who have all

worked in partnership to make this great achievement possible.”

“The school will receive a Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) who will be responsible for driving the initiative, as well as start up funding under the joint Commonwealth and State National Partnerships Program.”

Under National Partnerships more than \$1 billion dollars in new Commonwealth and State funding is flowing into NSW schools over the next five years.

“Each Centre will form the hub for a cluster of schools which will extend the benefits to a further 200 classrooms across the state through Connected Classroom Technology.

“The HATs will work with their fellow teachers to improve the quality of teaching and support beginning teach-

ers. They will ensure our students are receiving the highest possible quality of education,” Mr Stewart said.

The Minister for Education and Training, Verity Firth said the 22 schools would join the first tranche of 13 Centres for Excellence first established at the start of this year.

“We know that teacher quality is the single greatest in-school influence on student learning outcomes and engagement. The National Partnerships continue to deliver substantial new funding to schools in need, with a particular focus on ensuring quality teaching in every classroom.”

“This is part of the NSW Government's commitment to improve the quality of teaching, support our workforce and ensure a high quality education for NSW students,” she added.

AUSTRALIAN HELLENIC EDUCATOR'S ASSOCIATION

RE: Saturday School of Community Languages (SSCL)

The Hon. Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

The Australian Hellenic Educators' Association (NSW-ACT-QLD) is the representative organisation of education professionals of Hellenic descent in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland. Our members teach Classical and Modern Greek, as well as the range of History courses in primary and secondary schools across our state and beyond. The AHEA is a member of the Australian Hellenic Council (NSW), contributing to the shaping of the AHC's education policies.

The AHEA understands that the position of Principal SSCL is currently under review and questions the wisdom of the DET in axing the Senior Curriculum Adviser's role. The purported abolition of the SEO2, Senior Curriculum Adviser (SCA) position of the SSCL has caused apprehension and alarm amongst all Languages teachers (including our membership, many of whom currently teach at the sixteen established SSCL Centres around the state.

The Senior Curriculum Adviser's role is pivotal to the operation of the SSCL. The SCA leads a team of 32 executive staff (sixteen Assistant Supervisors and sixteen Curriculum Co-ordinators). The SCA provides Languages Curriculum leadership, professional learning and is responsible for Languages curriculum implementation within the SSCL. The SCA is responsible for the coordination of a number of enrichment activi-

ties and projects from year to year. It is our firm view that the role of Senior Curriculum Adviser has contributed significantly to the increased learning outcomes and the high quality of professional learning that has gained the SSCL the reputation of leader in Languages learning. The impressive Modern Greek and other languages in the HSC outcomes since 1996 correlate to the introduction of this position and the dedicated professional learning that was led by this position. Over the last decade, graduates of the SSCL have regularly finished First in State in a range of different language courses.

The Curriculum Coordinators and Assistant Supervisors at individual Centres regularly consult with the SCA on significant matters of languages' delivery and Quality Teaching often beyond Saturday School operating hours. The SCA has a specific role working with the Principal of the SSCL and the Executive staff of all SSCL Centres. The SCA position cannot be substituted by any other personnel.

The Senior Curriculum Adviser's position is equivalent to the Deputy Principal of any other school. Removing this position in such a large and complex school as the SSCL would diminish the school's capacity to deliver the Languages Curriculum in accordance with DET and Board of Studies guidelines and policies. Financial constraints are already being set on the SSCL; however to lose such a leading and pivotal role for Languages Education at the SSCL will have far reaching negative consequences on all people concerned, staff, students and communities.

The AHEA expresses the serious concern of its membership over the intended restructure of the DET Languages Unit. In the view of our Association, the

proposed restructure will constitute a downgrading of support for Languages Education in NSW. This will amount to an important loss of professional and educational leadership and support for our members and affiliates, as well as for educators in other languages currently taught through the DET.

Any downgrading of support will certainly affect the value and integrity of Hellenic language studies (in Modern and Classical forms), as well as the other 23 languages offered through the SSCL, with more than 4,300 enrolments from Years 7 to 12.

It is certain that teaching staff, students and the community at large will suffer with any potential and intended loss of the position.

The AHEA seeks the clarification of the Minister on this serious matter and also requests a meeting with the Minister to discuss this and other matters of concern regarding primary and secondary education to the Australian Hellenic community.

The AHEA supports the retention of the SCA position within the Saturday School of Community Languages, an institution which provides significant opportunities to students and educators alike to cultivate languages learning in a multilingual world.

The ongoing development of the Australian Curriculum - Languages will be negatively affected by the loss of the SCA. With such change sweeping through languages education in Australia at this time, the loss of the SCA would mean the loss of invaluable confidence and experience.

Yours sincerely

per

Dr Panayiotis Diamadis
President

Mr Dimitrios Kametopoulos
Vice-President