



## Public submission made to the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools

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Submitting as a: Teacher  
State: NSW

### Summary

#### Conclusion

1. Students must meet percentage benchmarks to pass a course otherwise they repeat that course if they haven't achieved the required benchmarks.
2. CALM should be made compulsory for all students in year 10 or year 11. Career education, at present, is one hour a week for year 10 students. Clearly, more time is needed for students to develop the necessary skills and knowledge relevant to the 21st Century.
3. Principals have a key responsibility in raising educational standards. In Canada, the schools I visited all had principals who played an active role as educational leaders. The principals were open to change, were informed risk takers and were friendly and approachable. Their leadership was highly influential in the development of a positive school culture. Principals play key roles in providing the conditions where teachers can operate effectively and students can learn. Principals were constantly reminding students, staff and the community that the core purpose of the school is teaching and learning.

### Main submission

#### Engaging Students Aged 15, 16 and 17 In The Classroom

- Mark O'Brien, Port Macquarie High School
- 2012 Exchange Year to Forest Lawn High School, Calgary Alberta, Canada

#### Teaching and Learning Research

#### Description of Current Practice-SMH November 2, 2012 Anna Patty

The NSW Auditor-General Peter Achterstraat has found an increasing number of students are disrupting classmates and wasting teachers' time since the state

government raised the compulsory school leaving age to 17. While many schools are providing careers advice and options such as vocational subjects for the HSC, many students remain disengaged. Some students at school in year 11, who may have otherwise left, were disruptive or truanting.

## Findings

Forest Lawn High School is a senior high school in Calgary, Alberta. In Calgary the schools are divided into junior high schools, years 7 -9 and senior high schools, years 10 -12. Forest Lawn High School has a large multicultural population of over 1600 students in a low socio-economic area of the city. This cultural and ethnic diversity is one of its greatest strengths. The students at the school are engaged in the learning process I believe the following are the reasons why Canadian students are engaged in the learning process;

### I. Students must meet percentage benchmarks to pass

Students must reach a certain mark to pass a course, for example, for a student to pass Career and Life Management (CALM) they need a mark of 50% and for Social Studies 20-2 it is also 50%. In Calgary, there is a culture where students want and need to know what is expected of them in order to stay motivated to work. At the beginning of the year, teachers lay out clear objectives, rules, and expectations of students so that there is no confusion and students have goals to work towards. Students know they must pass otherwise they will repeat the same subject next semester or attend summer school. This motivates them to complete all the assessment requirements.

### II. Leadership

Principals have a key responsibility in raising educational standards. In Canada, the schools I visited all had principals who played an active role as educational leaders. The principals were open to change, were informed risk takers and were friendly and approachable. Their leadership was highly influential in the development of a positive school culture. Principals play key roles in providing the conditions where teachers can operate effectively and students can learn. Principals were constantly reminding students, staff and the community that the core purpose of the school is teaching and learning.

### Career And Life Management (CALM)

CALM is a compulsory course for all students and they must pass the course to graduate high school. The aim of senior high school CALM is to enable students to make well-informed, considered decisions and choices in all aspects of their lives and to develop behaviours and attitudes that

contribute to the well-being and respect of self and others now and in the future. CALM engages students in the learning process due to the holistic nature of its three general outcomes (see diagram below). CALM can be built around students' interests and passions and structured to meet the needs of the students who are no longer engaged in the classroom. During my exchange year I organised numerous guest speakers from the universities, health units and other relevant government and non-government organisations. The students in my CALM classes have been well supported in their learning, well prepared for all assessments and as a consequence they have gained positive end of course results.

### Conclusion

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2. CALM should be made compulsory for all students in year 10 or year 11. Career education, at present, is one hour a week for year 10 students. Clearly, more time is needed for students to develop the necessary skills and knowledge relevant to the 21st Century.