

all opportunities & faculty of community
defined geographical area.
less academically

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO THE MINISTER CONCERNING
PROPOSED CHANGES TOWARDS ALL CO-EDUCATIONAL
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS AND ABOLISHMENT OF
SELECTIVE SEGREGATED SCHOOLS IN THE NEWCASTLE AREA

Best interests would

1. Questions concerning selectivity

STATEMENT

Yes 1.1 Is it policy to eliminate selective high schools in NSW?

1.2 Is it intended to eliminate selective high schools only
No. in Newcastle?

unhealthy situation in primary schools

1.3.1 If the answer to 1.1 is yes, what is the precise basis
of this policy?

Viability inputs for selective schools
1.3.2 How many selective schools will remain in NSW in
coming years; what is the timetable for change?

1.3.3 Would the Minister agree that in selective High
Schools the size of elective classes is largely such
that face to face teaching can be provided; whereas in
comprehensive schools in the senior classes this is
impracticable; some elective classes are not formed
in junior and senior forms due to lack of numbers;
there are increasing pressure on the student due to the
reduced number of subjects from which he or she will
in practice choose? If the Minister does not agree,
why?

1.3.4 Is the bias against selective schools based on
movements towards the elimination of competition
and grading in the educational system? Some members
of P. and C's would strongly dispute the desirability
of this trend in a modern world where the intellectual
armament of the State through the excellence of the
education of its citizens will largely control our
survival and the quality of the life we develop.

1.3.5 Would the Minister agree that the foundations of
the Wyndham scheme are:

1. Streaming of all children in all subjects according
to ability, and
2. The opportunity to pursue elective subjects of
their choosing?

Would the Minister explain how the streaming of
children into schools (selection) differs in principle
from streaming within schools? Is it intended that
the above principles be abandoned? Has the Minister
made, or will the Minister make, a public policy
statement if this is do?

1.3.6 Since the comprehensive schools often have to combine
a greater number of levels to make class sizes are
these children not disadvantaged with respect to those
taught in one level classes? Will this not tend to
encourage the growth of private schools if the state
system tends to supply only "average" education?

- 1.3.7 In particular, these parents are concerned that on a state wide basis, maximum practicable opportunity should be provided so that all children are taught at the level most suited to their abilities. Will the Minister agree that the trend against selection would deny adequate education to the more and the less gifted.
- 1.3.8 If selectivity in secondary education is to be abandoned why are O. C. schools still maintained at the primary level? What are the future avenues for development of students from such classes?
- 1.3.9 In an age where the world communication is, mechanically, becoming simpler it seems strange that the state education authority should be promulgating the growth of comprehensive high schools since one well known feature of these has been a fall in the numbers doing modern languages, due to lack of elective possibilities. Does the Minister consider that special subject classes are desirable? How does he envisage that a broad access to such subjects will be available in a state wide comprehensive school system? In general, how can the introduction of comprehensive schools improve the opportunity for scholastic, sporting or experiential achievement for the student?
- ~~1.3.10 Is the department unduly or almost solely influenced by non-educational factors such as problems in the mobility of specialist teachers, the costs of supplying transport to students etc. rather than of the quality of the service it supplies or of the product it prepares?~~
- 1.4.1 If the answer to question 1.2 is yes -
Will Newcastle students not be at a disadvantage with respect to students from Wollongong, Sydney and NSW private schools which have the numbers for electives and face to face teaching:
- (a) with respect to the quality of the education offered
 - (b) with respect to the attainment they can demonstrate? (This disadvantage is particularly true of entry to selective University faculties where entry can be controlled by the number of high level subjects attempted).
 - (c) In having to rely on the patience, good will and dedication of individual teachers to be able to take particular subjects on an extra curricular basis.
 - (d) In approaching prospective employers since the quality of the school will be unknown?
- 1.4.2 What levels of attainment will be possible in the comprehensive schools and what will policy be concerning electives in senior forms. How can consistency of standards be guaranteed?

- 1.4.3 In a society which is introducing free universities, we believe that there will be a more rigid application of quotas and selectivity for entrance. Will our children not be disadvantaged (see question 1.4.1) by the changes proposed for Newcastle? What positive steps is the Minister taking to ensure that Newcastle students will have equality of opportunity for all forms of tertiary education? (See question 1.4.1).
- 1.4.4 Newcastle is a city similar in range of educational need to the Sydney and Wollongong regions. Why not revise planning at this stage to have more selective schools in the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland area and take full advantage of the facilities and teaching skills available? We protest the entire trend towards colourless uniformity in the teaching available to our children and request that the minister explain why the Newcastle region is being bulldozed into a decision by fiat (where parents have to fight for the opportunity to discuss or debate the decision) to go to comprehensive schools when many parents, particularly those of gifted or less able children, would argue that this step will harm their children and decrease their opportunity for a full educational experience.

2. Questions concerning co-education

- 2.1 Is it policy to convert all schools in the state to Co-educational establishments?"
- 2.2 Or is the elimination of segregated schools taking place only in Newcastle?
- 2.3.1 If answer to 2.1 is yes, what is the precise State timetable? Why should Newcastle be first?
- 2.3.2 What is the capital cost of this policy and over what period is this capital to be spent?
- 2.3.3 What are the precise educational authorities or bases for the department's apparent belief that a change towards co-education is desirable?
- 2.3.4 Three P. and C's have polled parents and there is little conviction that co-education provides educational advantages; we believe that there are more urgent capital needs in the State secondary schools than those required for the conversion of segregated schools for co-educational purposes. What is the financial justification for the apparently wasteful and unnecessary expenditure to be made in order to force co-education?
- 2.4.1 Would the minister please explain whether the creation of new comprehensive high schools, whilst retaining existing girls' and boys' segregated schools has been considered?

2.4.2 Are the proposed changes in the Newcastle area purely an experiment in education with high risk that our children will be disadvantaged, not helped, by it?

2.5 These P. and C's object strongly to the proposed elimination of such well known High Schools with close ties to the history and people of Newcastle. Segregated schools have operated successfully all over the world for centuries. In the light of the foregoing statement is it financially and educationally sound to destroy a tradition that has extended over many years in Newcastle; to eliminate the bases for memorial endowments and trophies built up over generations; and to alienate thousands of ex-students of the school, for what cannot be accepted as a necessary change to co-education?

2.6 If co-educational schools are being forced by the department is it necessary to make them comprehensive also? For example there is a selective co-educational high school at Wollongong. Which is the department's higher priority, selectivity or co-education? Do they have to be grouped?
If so, why?