Implementation of the Australian Curriculum 2016

To  PRINCIPALS
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1. Education Ministers have now endorsed Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Australian Curriculum and changes arising from the Review of the Australian Curriculum. This has not been controversial as the Australian Curriculum in its current form has been very well received by those who have closely worked through the latest version. In Primary schools there is particular interest in the opportunities available through the new subject F-6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences.

2. Prior to the recent endorsement by Ministers occurring, schools could have justified only delivering the curriculum content as outlined in Phase 1 subjects. In AISSA’s view, it is now a significant risk for schools to not proceed to full implementation of the Australian Curriculum by the end of 2016, with appropriate evidence and documentation.

3. There are various ways in which schools may be accountable for delivering the Australian Curriculum. These include through application of the Australian Government’s Education Act and school registration requirements.

4. It is likely that eventually the School Registration Board will expect schools to have fully implemented the Australian Curriculum and have appropriate evidence of this.

5. Thus far, the Minister for Education and Child Development has not specified a time by which schools must have rolled out Phase 2 and 3 subjects. However, AISSA understands that both DECD and CESA expect that by the end of 2016 their schools will have implemented the entire curriculum and be assessing and reporting against the achievement standards. Therefore, it is possible that all schools could be expected to comply with the same time frame.

6. Recognising that it takes some time for a school to implement changes in curriculum and prepare appropriate documentation, the AISSA believes that it would be wise for all schools at the beginning of 2016 to review the current status of implementation of the Australian Curriculum and to prepare a plan to complete all activities by the end of 2016. Some decisions will need to be made and documented by each school, including decisions about content in the Australian Curriculum that the school chooses not to implement and how reporting will occur.
7. A priority for AISSA in 2016 will be to provide assistance to schools to undertake this significant task. The AISSA is completing development of a guide that schools may use to assess their current implementation status and evidence. All of AISSA’s Senior Educational Consultants and relevant AISSA Educational Consultants will be available to assist schools to implement the Australian Curriculum.

8. The HASS provides particular positive opportunities for primary schools, and AISSA has already held an information session for school representatives with an expert from ACARA. The implementation of the Australian Curriculum and particularly HASS will be the focus of the AISSA Primary Curriculum Reference Group in 2016.

9. At this stage, teachers would be wise to know, understand and use the Australian Curriculum Learning Areas and their subjects as outlined in Phases 2 and 3. AISSA recommends Version 8 as the most recent thinking in these Learning Areas. The key components are the Year level descriptions, Concepts (HASS), Content Descriptions, Elaborations and the Achievement Standards.

10. Teachers would also be wise to familiarise themselves with the General Capabilities and the Cross-curriculum Priorities (F-10 Curriculum) and look for opportunities to include them in their planning where relevant and appropriate.

For further information, please contact your AISSA Senior Educational Consultant.