

**REPORT TO THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND
WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

THE EDUCATION OF BOYS

St. Leonard's College



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The Secretary
Mr. James Rees
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Employment, Education and Workplace Relations
"The Education of Boys"
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr. Rees,

**RE: SUBMISSION ON THE EDUCATION OF BOYS FROM ST. LEONARD'S
COLLEGE**

Attached is our report to the committee on our experiences on the education and welfare of boys at St. Leonard's College.

The report is divided into three sections. The first section is an introduction giving an overview of St. Leonard's College. The second section outlines how the school caters to the educational and welfare needs of the boys. The final section details aspects that reflect similarities to occurrences across the nation in relation to the education and welfare of boys.

We hope you find our report satisfactory and of use for your inquiry. We welcome any correspondence from the committee.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Robert Cavalin
Convenor

Mr. Mark Byrne
Curriculum Co-ordinator

Dr. Roger Hayward
Principal

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

St. Leonard's College is a school of the Uniting Church located in East Brighton, Victoria. It is a co-educational school, comprising of approximately 1500 students from Kindergarten to Year 12. St. Leonard's College offers the Victorian Certificate of Education as well as the International Baccalaureate. *The purpose of St. Leonard's is to provide education of excellence to the end that, in co-operation with the family, those skills, attitudes, capacities and values needed for the fullest possible enjoyment of life and service to the community are nurtured in the individual student.*¹

The socioeconomic status of the students attending St. Leonard's College would predominantly be middle to upper middle class. Despite this the school desires that its students view themselves in relation to the global community and offer a variety of subjects and extra curricula activities promoting diversity.

St. Leonard's College decided to become a co-educational institution in 1972. The reason for this was based on philosophical beliefs. *St. Leonard's College was the first all-girls' school in Australia to become co-educational, and did so some two decades before the present trend to co-education. The decision to become a co-educational school was based on a clear conviction that the interaction of boys and girls in a school environment promotes academic achievement together with social development.*²

For further information pertaining to the organisation, history, curriculum offering and philosophy of St. Leonard's College, please visit the web site on www.stleonards.vic.edu.au.

¹ St. Leonard's College website www.stleonards.vic.edu.au

² Ibid

SECTION 2

CATERING FOR THE EDUCATIONAL AND WELFARE NEEDS OF BOYS

Within St. Leonard's College philosophy towards co-education, members of the school community acknowledge that education and welfare of male students are areas that require attention.

There are no specific programs, subjects or activities targeted for boys only. Below is a range of activities and structures that exist in the college (not a complete list), which are non-gender specific, however, have a positive impact and influence upon male students according to research on the education of boys.³

Academic

- SLAM (Support in Language And Maths) is offered to students in Year 8 and 9. Students requiring assistance are identified through poor performance and receive extra tuition in English and Mathematics. Their workload is reduced as they study only one language instead of two.
- English workshop at Year 10. This is an elective subject that particular students are encouraged to select. In undertaking this subject students forgo studying another subject, which reduces their workload. As a consequence they receive extra assistance. The desired outcomes are to assist in the development in organisational skills, skills for learning (e.g. research skills) and specific English skills (e.g. grammar and literacy).
- In mathematics and science in Years 7 – 9, particular teachers have implemented a multiple assessment model. The content taught is homogenous to all students, however, the students can select their preferred method of assessment (Refer to appendix 1). This method of differentiated assessment caters for all students according to ability, gender, interest and multiple intelligence.
- Reading recovery is offered to primary school students.

An aspect where St. Leonard's College is atypical to the national trend is in our Year 12 results at the top end. Combined Year 12 results in VCE and IB revealed that the top ten students for 1998 and 1999 were six girls and four boys and five girls and five boys respectively.

Further, an in-house public speaking competition is held at the college for students from Year 7 to Year 12. Five out of six winners this year were boys. Also this year, boys

³ Boys in schools Rollo Browne

received the first three places for the Upper School (Year 10 – 12) in-house college poetry competition.

Cross-age tutoring

- The primary school has a “Buddy program”. This is where older children are paired up with younger children as their buddy. It can involve assistance with their school work but it is also designed to assist the younger child’s emotional and social development. The Grade 4 children are “buddies” to Grade Prep, Grade 5 to Grade 1 and Grade 6 to Grade 2.
- Year 11 students assist Grade 2 students to write English stories.
- The Association of Independent Schools of Victoria funds a program called SCOPE. SCOPE is an acronym for Student Consultants Offering Peer Encouragement. Students who volunteer for the program are trained in problem solving, listening skills and adolescent coping. It is a multi-age program and can occur both inside and outside the classroom. Sometimes SCOPE leaders are deliberately paired up with “troubled” students.
- Peer Support operates with the Year 11 and Year 7 students. This occurs in the classroom, and aims to develop cross-age connections within the school.
- A “Bully Busters” program exists at the primary school.

St. Leonard's College also possesses an effective pastoral care team comprising of counsellors, Year Level Co-ordinators, Section Deputy Heads and Heads, and a Reverend.

Other

- Year 9 and 10 students participate in an Outdoor Education program, refer to Appendix 2.
- The college has a campsite Camp Ibis, where students from Grade 5 to Year 8 attend every year. Programs such as sailing, canoeing, bush walking and orienteering are undertaken.
- Every student participates in sport.
- The students have opportunities to be involved in musicals, drama productions and play a musical instrument.

The above list in no way accounts for every activity that occurs at St. Leonard's College. The range of activities referred to in this list is in accord with much of the literature concerning boy’s education. That literature often refers to a variety of activities being offered and a support structure within the school if problems arise.

The college also places an important emphasis on role modeling. *There are teachers of both sexes at St. Leonard's in mathematics, sciences, information technology and in humanities. Thus, students have role models in the so-called "non-sex-stereotypic" subject areas. Likewise, in the School administration there are both male and female authority figures. It has been argued that there are more female administrators in all girls' schools than in mixed schools. However, these women have authority in an all female environment. How much better to have both females and males in positions of authority in a "mixed" environment.*⁴ The primary section of the school also may assign a male teacher to a boy who has no father as a role model.

There are examples within the college where the focus is only on one gender.

In 1999 CAB (Care About Boys) was established at St. Leonard's College. The group aimed to create awareness about boys in education amongst the teaching staff, develop strategies to engage boys in their learning and broaden the boy's perception of masculinity. This is the only group within the college that is specifically designed to concentrate upon one gender. The group in no way wishes to undermine the educational and welfare advancements achieved for female students over the last two decades.

Throughout 2000 CAB has convened twice each term planning and clarifying its goals in the education and welfare of boys. In 2000 the general staff have been inserviced by members of CAB on educating boys. The inservice aimed to raise awareness on differences existing within society between girls and boys. These differences are manifested in the classroom, which have implications on us as teachers.

In conjunction with the Parents Association, CAB organised a night for fathers and sons in the Year 9 and 10 level. The focus of the evening was to discuss scenarios that boys of this age group are likely to encounter and the importance of the boys having a positive role model.

In 2001 CAB aims to consolidate itself within the college. Further inservicing of staff is proposed as well as social and informative nights where the fathers are especially invited.

There is a charitable organisation, which has been supporting initiatives in the education of girls in co-educational schools, including St. Leonard's College. The Invergowrie Foundation has given grants to the college for over a decade.

⁴ St. Leonard's College website: www.stleonards.vic.edu.au

SECTION 3

SIMILAR OBSERVATIONS

Despite the effort the college has expended to accommodate both genders, observations have been made regarding the lack of achievement by male students.

Observations have been listed into similar categories as those in section 2.

Academic

- The Student Services faculty test all students in English, mathematics and general aptitude who are either currently enrolled at St. Leonard's College or entering Year 7 the following year. The testing is conducted when the students are in Grade 6. English has been assessed using two means and results will not be included in this report. In mathematics the PAT Maths test was used and for general aptitude the OLSAT. The PAT Maths (Progressive Achievement Tests in Maths) is used in Australian schools to provide information to teachers regarding the level of achievement attained by their students in the skill and understanding of mathematics. The OLSAT (Otis-Lennon School Ability Test) is a group administered test of general ability. It is used because of high correlation with academic achievement. It aims to measure abstract thinking and reasoning ability, therefore will give some guide as to how well students will cope with school learning tasks. Appendices 3 and 4 show the front covers of the tests. The table below illustrates the results for the PAT and OLSAT tests.

YEAR TESTED IN	YEAR LEVEL IN 2000	OLSAT % OF BOYS WHO SCORED LESS THAN STANINE 4 *	PAT MATHS % OF BOYS WHO SCORED LESS THAN STANINE 4 *	% OF BOYS IN SLAM IN 2000
1999	7	29	54	75 [#]
1998	8	36	54	85
1997	9	70	69	88
1996	10	67	57	100 [^]

- *For an explanation on Stanine scores refer to Appendix 5.
- # Students in Year 7 receive individual support in the class.
- ^ No SLAM at Year 10, its called English workshop.

The tests indicate that boys performed better than girls in Year 7 and 8, particularly in the OLSAT, however, a disproportional number of boys are receiving support. Reasons for these results vary and are anecdotal, nevertheless, they confirm the trend that is occurring nation wide.

The validity of these figures is reflected in the Year 10 maths results this year. The maths results showed that students who achieved an A⁺ or A, scored a Stanine 9 for their PAT Maths entrance test.

- The majority of students that are identified as requiring assistance and subsequently in SLAM classes (mentioned in page 4 of this report) are males. Refer to table on page 7.
- In the English workshop at Year 10 in 1999 comprised five boys and two girls and in 2000 there were seven boys and no girls. The teacher responsible for this class reported that the role extended beyond teaching, incorporating counselling, motivating and parenting.
- The Australian Council for Educational Research report on factors influencing educational performance of males and females stated *boys tend to take narrow clusters of subjects, possibly with potential post-school employment pathways directly in mind.*⁵ *Boys' clusters are particularly focused on the mathematico-logical formulaic knowledges and/or hands-on technology knowledges.*⁶ Appendix 6 demonstrates that the above is pertinent to St. Leonard's College. Despite there being a gender balance in many of the students' subject selection in Year12, there are some subjects where the stereotypical subject selection exists.
- Appendix 7 highlights St. Leonard's College course destinations of Year 12 students in 1998 and 1999. It also supports the above research with a gender imbalance occurring in particular areas.
- Although there appears to be an evening out of results and achievements at Year 12 between males and females, the situation is not the case at junior levels.

- The table below shows a gender breakdown Year 11 students enrolled in the International Baccalaureate.

YEAR	GIRLS	BOYS
1999	16	7
2000	21	17
2001	20	8

The table demonstrates that over the last three years more girls than boys have selected to undertake the International Baccalaureate.

⁵ Australian Council for Educational Research website: www.acer.com

⁶ Ibid

Cross-age tutoring

- Although St. Leonard's College offers every student the opportunity to be involved in cross-age tutoring, the majority of participants are girls. Peer Support numbers in 2000 was twenty-eight girls and eleven boys. SCOPE comprised twenty-four girls and five boys.
- The total number of children referred to the primary school counsellor in 2000 was 34 (17 boys and 17 girls). Primary reason for referral is tabled below.

REASON	BOYS	GIRLS
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL	7	9
LEARNING	4	8
BEHAVIOURAL	6	0

- The majority of serious behavioural problems are boys and Friday detention classes, which are held for non-completion of homework, are also mainly boys.

Other

- St. Leonard's College awards its senior students "Full Colours" and "Half Colours". These are non-academic honours, awarded to students who involve themselves in the life of the college. It is based on a points system where students receive points if they participate in sport, music, community services and any other extra-curricula activity. This year eight girls received Full Colours compared to two boys and seven girls received Half Colours compared to two boys.
- The Aerobics team comprised thirty girls and no boys.

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- Ms. J Britten
- Mr. G Morgan
- Ms. D Trengove
- Mr. B Hill
- Ms. S Barrow

Appendix 1 - 7 [not reproduced]