

John Carter

Committee Secretary

Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee

Department of the Senate

PO Box 6100

Canberra ACT 2600

Email: eewr.sen@aph.gov.au

RE: Senate Inquiry into Schools Assistance Bill 2008-10-29

Dear Mr Carter,

As a parent interested in the direction of schooling in Australia, I have grave concerns over the introduction of a National Curriculum. I believe children are individuals and have individual needs and interests. To attempt to apply a single curriculum across all schools in our diverse and multicultural country is, I believe, not in the best interests of the children. Yes, I believe that children in our society require adequate levels of literacy and numeracy, as well as many other skills in order to function successfully in the wider society after school. But I don't believe a National curriculum is the way to go.

The United Kingdom implemented a National Curriculum and evidence is showing that, while the students are becoming better at passing exams, basic standards are falling and students are not receiving the skills required to function in the wider society. National Curriculum means standardisation and teachers teaching requirements which are set by outside forces rather than what each individual child needs or wants to learn.

A National Curriculum means a stronger educational focus on outcomes as opposed to individual children's needs. Singapore is another example of a country that went down the track of a Standardised Curriculum and outcomes focused education. Now, Singapore is producing students who can retain a lot of facts but who have trouble applying these facts and using their initiative. As a consequence, a lot of Singapore's top level management are not from Singapore but are expatriates. Is this really the avenue we want Australia to go down? In order to solve many of the issues currently confronting our world we need free, innovative thinkers who can think outside the square. A National Curriculum will not help to produce the kind of children and adults we need for a sustainable future, or indeed any future at all.

thankyou,

Jo Skuse

Hurstbridge, Victoria