

UNLOCK YOUR SCHOOL'S FUTURE

Independent Public Schools

The creation of Independent Public Schools from 2010 is a new development in Western Australian public education.

One of the WA Government's major pre-election policies for education was to empower school communities, giving them greater capacity to shape the ethos, priorities and direction of their school.

Independent Public Schools will be freed from many central controls and have greater flexibility to respond to their communities. They will create more diversity in our public school system and provide a real choice for school communities.

■ How can schools take part?

Principals can only nominate to become an Independent Public School with the support of the School Council. An independent selection panel will recommend schools to the Director General.

■ What are the timelines?

To express an interest in becoming an Independent Public School, the principal – in collaboration with staff and the school community – needs to submit a short written application by Monday 7 September 2009.

■ What if my school is selected to become an Independent Public School in 2010?

Your school will be notified at the end of Term 3, 2009. During Term 4 a comprehensive induction program will be provided for school leaders, registrars, business managers and School Councils.

■ What if my school applies but is not accepted in the first intake?

There will be a phased introduction of schools, with an initial intake for the 2010 school year. Subsequent intakes will follow. Schools not included in the first intake will be provided with feedback and supported to become an Independent Public School in subsequent intakes.

■ What kinds of schools will be selected?

A range of schools will be selected in each intake including primary, secondary, district high and education support schools, metropolitan and regional schools, schools from low and high socioeconomic status communities, and clusters of schools.

■ What happens to schools which choose not to become Independent Public Schools?

These schools will continue to operate as normal. Over time, all schools will be given more authority to make decisions and be freed from unnecessary bureaucracy.

■ How will my school change if it becomes an Independent Public School?

Your school will change according to the needs and expectations of your community. There will be more freedom and flexibility for the school community to make decisions about important matters that impact on your child's education such as curriculum, student support, staff recruitment, financial management, governance and accountability.

■ What will it mean for my School Council?

The School Council will become the School Board. Strong community and industry representation will be encouraged to ensure School Councils (Boards) make a significant contribution to the development of the school. Induction will be provided for new and existing School Council (Board) members.

■ Can Independent Public Schools select their own staff?

Yes, they will select all staff and have greater control over the types of positions in the school. This will allow the school to select those staff who best meet the needs of that school. The School Council (Board) will play a significant role in selecting the principal.

■ **Can Independent Public Schools exclude disruptive students?**

As is the case for all public schools, Independent Public Schools can only exclude students for reasons permitted under the *School Education Act*.

■ **Will enrolment procedures change?**

Enrolment procedures will not change and Independent Public Schools will continue to provide education to students in the local intake area. Enrolment procedures for the system Gifted and Talented programs remain the same.

■ **What are the Independent Public School charges?**

Independent Public Schools are bound by the *School Education Act* and *School Education Act Regulations*. The structure for contributions, fees and charges remain the same as all public schools.

■ **What are the uniform requirements of an Independent Public School?**

The uniform requirements will be determined by the School Council (Board) in consultation with the school community.

■ **What will be taught in Independent Public Schools?**

Independent Public Schools are bound by the *Curriculum Council Act* and Curriculum Framework. They must meet these requirements and future curriculum requirements of the Australian Government.

■ **How will Independent Public Schools be held accountable?**

Independent Public Schools must comply with all legislation and industrial agreements and will be subject to financial audits. A Delivery and Performance Agreement will be signed by the principal, Director General and chair of the School Council (Board). The school will be independently reviewed in the final year of the agreement (up to five years) and the report will be made public. The school will also produce an annual report, business plan and strategic plan signed off by the School Council (Board).

■ **What will it mean for my Parents and Citizens' Association?**

The important role and functions of Parents and Citizens' Associations will not change.

