Dear Parents,

For over 20 years the Enrichment and Extension Program has been delivering an academic and creative alternative for targeted students of the Bush School. The program has been strongly supported by the school, the P&C and community.

While all educators agree that catering for individual student need (including at the high end of achievement) is at the core of our profession, I strongly believe that changes to the current Enrichment and Extension program are necessary in order to achieve the aims of the NSW Education Act (section 8) and the Department of Education’s Gifted and Talented Education policy; and to align more obviously with Goal 1 of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008.

Mrs Hilary Hutchinson, the school’s long-time Enrichment and Extension Coordinator, has worked closely with me in the development of a refined model of support for both students and teachers. Together, we believe that this is a positive and necessary evolution of our practices, and we are proud that this is an initiative that she and I bilaterally support.

In 2016 and beyond, the model of support for all students at Wahroonga Public School will echo the Department’s flagship Every Student Every School initiative which recognises that each individual student possesses a unique cognitive ability and that teachers within all mainstream classrooms are responsible for the academic goal setting and growth of each of their individual students. Classes no longer operate in a manner where teachers provide one task with one set of instructions and one expectation at one time. This mode of teaching disadvantages both students who experience difficulty and those who require increased challenge. The Department of Education supports a model of classroom differentiation:

“The key ingredient in the success of any gifted program is the provision of developmentally appropriate opportunities by differentiating the curriculum.”

Therefore, the school’s Enrichment and Extension Program, from 2016, will focus on classroom differentiation and operate in a manner similar to the school’s approach in catering for student needs at the other end of the academic spectrum where the predominant mode of support is within the regular classroom setting. However, just as some students require more intensive remedial work in the form of withdrawal from class, some students will also be provided with opportunities to work at an advanced level outside the classroom. This will be limited.

To oversee learning support programs for students in need of greater assistance, the Department of Education provides a Learning and Support Teacher (LaST) for three days each week. At Wahroonga Public School, our LaST is Mrs Karen Hetherington. The Department does not provide an entitlement for Enrichment and Extension Teachers, but such is the demand in our high-achieving community, it is appropriate to locally employ our own Enrichment and Extension Teacher for three days each week to match the support provided by Mrs Hetherington. In 2016 the school will employ Mrs Hilary Hutchinson as
the Enrichment and Extension Teacher. As no funding is provided for this initiative by the Department, the school is seeking, through the P&C, financial assistance for a component of Mrs Hutchinson’s salary, and will be passing on a small fee to the limited number of students withdrawn for intensive work outside the classroom. It is important to note that Mrs Hutchinson’s role will be one that oversees gifted and talented education throughout the school. She will be a resource for all classroom teachers to access, providing mentoring and programming assistance to ensure appropriate curriculum adjustments are made in each classroom. Additionally, she will take an active role on the Learning and Support Team, which meets regularly to examine individual student needs.

Answers to some anticipated questions are provided below.

**What is curriculum differentiation?**

Differentiation ranges from slight to major modifications of the curriculum through adjustments to content, processes and skills. It provides a planned, documented and challenging curriculum that matches the ability of gifted students to learn at faster rates; find, solve and act on problems more readily; manipulate abstract ideas and make connections to an advanced degree.


**How many students will be withdrawn for intensive Enrichment and Extension classes and how often?**

Recognising that only a small percentage of students are gifted and talented and that the usual classroom setting is the most appropriate place for the large majority of students, the number of students withdrawn for specific Enrichment and Extension classes will be limited to 20 in each stage group. That means only 20 students in Years 1 & 2 will be withdrawn, 20 students in Years 3 & 4 will be withdrawn and 20 students in Years 5 & 6 will be withdrawn. The withdrawal groups that will be formed are only suitable for students who would otherwise be disengaged from learning in their regular classroom environment. Groups will be withdrawn for one session (approximately 90 minutes) each week.

**How will students be identified for participation in Enrichment and Extension withdrawal classes?**

In stage groups, teams of teachers will consider every student based on merit as evidenced by their application to learning and performances in class and assessment tasks. Parents will also be asked to nominate their children for participation in withdrawal groups. Based on teacher recommendation and parent referral, the Executive Staff and Learning and Support Team will determine students whose participation in withdrawal groups is likely to best yield positive outcomes and offer places on this criterion.

**What will be taught/learnt in Enrichment and Extension withdrawal groups?**

Mrs Hutchinson will work closely with each stage group to ensure her programs are aligned to the same syllabus outcomes being taught within each classroom. Two separate groups for each stage will operate. For each stage, a group of students will be withdrawn for literacy based work and a group of students will be withdrawn for numeracy based work.
My child has been in the Enrichment program in the past. If he/she is not in a withdrawal group next year how will his/her needs be met?

Withdrawal groups in 2016 will not allow for the same number of students to participate. This is deliberate. For the very large majority of students, the best place to receive differentiated higher-level instruction is within the mainstream classroom. Mrs Hutchinson will support all teachers in her role as the Enrichment and Extension Teacher to appropriately modify the curriculum and their instruction in such a way that engages and challenges each student. Parents are encouraged to positively reflect on this change with their children in cases where students may experience disappointment from not being part of a withdrawal group.

How will I know if my child’s placement in a withdrawal group has been successful?

Mrs Hutchinson will collect pre and post assessment information and be available for interviews with parents in the same way that a regular classroom teacher would. Her ongoing assessment will be fed back to classroom teachers who will be able to incorporate the information into the school’s systematic reporting to parents processes.

How much will I have to pay for my child to be in a withdrawal group?

As the Department of Education does not contribute funding towards the employment of an Enrichment and Extension Teacher, a small percentage of the overall cost to run the program will be passed on to parents. This will be detailed at the beginning of the new school year. As always, parents who experience difficulty in meeting school contributions, including this particular levy, can talk confidentially with me to make alternative arrangements.

What about the art program?

The art enrichment program that was introduced in 2015 was received quite positively. Unfortunately, it is neither economical nor part of the school’s current strategic directions to continue this program. Creative Arts remains one of six Key Learning Areas in the primary school, and all students should be participating in approximately 90 minutes of Creative Arts each week, of which Visual Arts is a component.

On the pages to follow, I have created and sourced some pieces that hopefully will combine to explain how and why the school caters for individual student learning needs the way that it does.

Sincerely,

T. Moth

Tom Moth

PRINCIPAL
WAHROONGA PUBLIC SCHOOL
thomas.moth@det.nsw.edu.au
11 November 2015
DoE Gifted and Talented Education Policy

The NSW Government aims to identify gifted and talented students and to maximise their learning outcomes in all public schools. School communities have a responsibility to develop effective and equitable identification procedures and developmentally appropriate programs.

1. Objectives - Policy Statement

1.1 School communities have a responsibility to identify their gifted and talented students.

1.2 School communities have a responsibility to foster collaborative home–school partnerships to support gifted and talented students.

1.3 School communities have a responsibility to provide a range of opportunities and to monitor and evaluate programs for their gifted and talented students.

1.4 Teachers, with support, have a responsibility to identify the gifted and talented students in their classes.

1.5 Teachers have a responsibility to select and implement a variety of teaching strategies for inclusion in programs for the range of gifted and talented students in their classes.

1.6 Regions and schools have a responsibility to co-ordinate school provisions for gifted and talented students when it is feasible for more than one school to share this responsibility.

1.7 Regions and schools have a responsibility to provide opportunities for staff development in the education of gifted and talented students for principals, teachers and other appropriate personnel.

1.8 The Director-General has a responsibility to account for the implementation of Government policy and to report on the outcomes of schooling for gifted and talented students in NSW.

2. Audience and Applicability

2.1 This policy applies to all staff employed in State Office, regions, NSW public schools, their school communities and all students who attend public schools.

3. Context

3.1 Gifted and talented students are found in all communities regardless of their ethnic, cultural or socio-economic characteristics. The gifted population includes students who are underachieving and who have disabilities.

3.2 Giftedness refers to potential distinctly beyond the average for the student’s age and encompasses a broad range of abilities in the intellectual, creative, socio-emotional and physical domains. Talent denotes achievement distinctly beyond the average for a student’s age as a result of application to training and practice.

3.3 Educational practices promoted in the field of gifted and talented education draw on information about:

- the nature, identification and development of giftedness and talents in the school population
- the implementation of effective curriculum and instruction for gifted and talented students.

4. Responsibilities and Delegations

4.1 The Principal is responsible for implementing the gifted and talented education policy.

4.2 The Director-General will nominate a senior officer at state level to have responsibility for policy on the education of gifted and talented students.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

5.1 Senior Curriculum Policy Officer, Gifted and Talented will monitor the implementation of this policy and will report, as required, to the Director, NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre.
A framework for learning and support

We need to find better ways to meet the additional learning and support needs of every student. Establishing a strong framework for learning and support in every school will provide an important foundation for the delivery of educational services into the future.

The framework for learning and support in every school

Teaching and learning
Having high expectations for every student and providing adjustments to support the individual's learning needs.

Teacher quality
Sustaining high quality professional learning and support for teachers and their school community to understand and address the diverse learning needs of students.

Curriculum
Working towards high quality outcomes through rigorous, meaningful and dignified learning for every student.

Accountability
Meeting our obligations under the Disability Standards for Education.

Collaboration
Personalised learning and support plans developed and implemented in full collaboration with the student and/or their parents and carers.

Five key elements provide the foundations for improved learning and support for every student with additional needs. These five elements, shown in this diagram, provide a framework for achieving high quality learning and support for every student with additional needs and the teachers and support staff who work with them.
Role of the Learning and Support Teacher

The Learning and Support Teacher will, through the school’s learning and support team, provide direct and timely specialist assistance to students in regular classes with additional learning and support needs and their teachers. Many of these students come from diverse cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 provides the context for the role and activities of the Learning and Support Teacher.

Emphasis in the role will reflect the needs of individual students and school priorities and programs that support students with additional learning and support needs.

The role will be underpinned by a collaborative and consultative approach so that the student and/or their parent or carer are actively involved in the student’s education.

The Learning and Support Teacher will:

- work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to support assessment for learning of their students with additional educational needs and identify specific learning and support needs
- plan, implement, model, monitor and evaluate teaching programs for students with additional learning and support needs in conjunction with regular classroom teachers
- plan, implement, model, monitor and evaluate personalised adjustments for learning where required, with the classroom teacher, student and/or parent or carer
- model exemplary classroom practice when tailoring adjusted learning programs for students with additional learning needs
- provide direct support for students with additional learning and support needs through a range of strategies (including direct instruction, delivery of adjusted learning programs, assessment and monitoring of progress) including the areas of social integration, language and communication, literacy, numeracy and behaviour. This may include students with confirmed disabilities.
- provide professional specialist advice, support and mentoring to classroom teachers on:
  - how best to cater for the diverse learning needs in their classrooms, and
  - how to effectively work in partnership with families to maximise learning opportunities for students at school and at home
- provide professional specialist advice and assistance about students with additional learning needs to the school’s learning and support team
- assist with professional learning for class teachers and school learning support officers within their school and local network of schools where appropriate.

In undertaking their work the Learning and Support Teacher will not be used to provide relief for teachers/executive or to establish a separate class.
Curriculum Support & Differentiation at Wahroonga Public School

The images below represent how support for students and teachers in curriculum differentiation is provided at Wahroonga Public School. It is the classroom teacher’s responsibility to deliver an academic curriculum at the appropriate level of challenge for each student. This is a complex task, which is why the expertise of both Learning & Support and Enrichment & Extension teachers is critical. While only very few students will be taught explicitly by specialist teachers, the image depicts how all teachers and students benefit from specialist teachers at the school. Student capacity varies in different areas of the curriculum. In the images, some individual students have been coloured differently to show that students receiving support in one area of the curriculum may not require it in other areas of the curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills &amp; Understanding</td>
<td>Lower ←---------------------------→ Higher</td>
<td>Lower ←---------------------------→ Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit Teaching</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher &amp; Learning and Support Teacher</td>
<td>Classroom Teacher &amp; Enrichment and Extension Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time with class teacher</td>
<td>Time with specialist teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Classroom Teacher</td>
<td>←-------- Learning and Support Teacher --------→</td>
<td>←-------- Enrichment and Extension Teacher --------→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>←-------- School Learning &amp; Support Officers --------→</td>
<td>Stage Supervisor, Colleagues, Professional Learning &amp; Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage Supervisor, Colleagues, Professional Learning &amp; Development</td>
<td>Stage Supervisor, Colleagues, Professional Learning &amp; Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>