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**MOUNT ALBERT GRAMMAR SCHOOL**  
**COMMERCE DEPARTMENT**

**Response to the 2006 draft for consultation of The New Zealand Curriculum.**

The initial response of all staff of this department and of many others throughout the country, with whom we are in daily contact using the web-based email network, the Economics Forum was:

- Where do we fit in ?
- Why is accounting not even mentioned?
- Why are we not valued by draft writers when we know our subjects are in high demand from students, parents, government and the community? (About 800 students learned from our Commerce courses in 2006)

Our second reaction after school-based professional development sessions and a departmental study of the document was:

- The draft shows clear signs of distortion and bias, with the handprints of several interest groups, some of whom appear to have been ignorant of other disciplines, and to have had a limited overview of the broader curriculum. This impression was also gained by the Art and Music Departments, shown by their response in school-wide discussion. Patch protection and patronising attitudes are evident, for example by the addition of a Languages area distinct from English - or is it vice-versa or both?
- Core competencies are sensibly expressed, but they and their modelling are far from new ideas. They have been at the heart of voluntary leadership training for 100 years, and have been clearly understood and developed by good teachers for most of that time. Perhaps a new generation of teachers needs reminding.
- It was agreed by Commerce staff that we should prepare a case and a draft text for a Business Education learning area.

A third response, after calmer reflection and careful re-reading of the whole document is:

- There is no need for yet another new learning area (English and Languages should be re-combined) because minor modification to the Social Sciences and Technology

areas can easily describe the ongoing role of business education in New Zealand schools. Suggested modifications follow.

### **Modification to the Social Sciences statement:**

In the **Economic World** strand, students learn about the ways in which people participate in economic activities and about the consumption, production and distribution of goods and services. They use this knowledge to understand their place in the economic world, as well as the role, nature and systems of business in today's highly interdependent communities.

.....

- At levels 6-8, ..... Achievement objectives are provided for accounting, business studies, economics, geography, history and social studies but the range of possible social science disciplines in schools is much broader, including, for example, classical studies, legal studies, management, leadership, psychology and sociology.

### **Modification to the Technology statement:**

*As an additional bullet point at the end of the present statement:*

● **Nature of Technology.** ..... This involves an understanding of:

- historical ..... (no change)
- the ways ..... (no change)
- the characteristics .... (no change)
- the integration ..... (no change)
- the development, modification and use of information systems, manual and electronic, for processing, storage, retrieval and use of data in a range of contexts, such as accounting, business,

librarianship, planning and web-based activity. Such systems and tools have applications across all areas of learning.

### **Summary - what conceptual basis will the curriculum have?**

- 1. Learning areas or subjects?** The overall designers need to decide what the framework of the curriculum is. At present it is a mish-mash of both, with many subjects in the traditional sense omitted. Maths and English drafters appear to have designed their areas to exclude other subjects and be subject-specific.
- 2. If it is Learning Areas** - English and Languages should be re-combined in a way that meets the needs of students as well as recognising the disciplinary needs of English, Te Reo and other languages. Business education should be provided for by the modifications to the Social Sciences and Technology areas suggested above.
- 3. If it is Subjects** - the result could well become a conceptual nightmare and be too prescriptive for the needs of young people in a rapidly changing society.
- 4. If it is to remain a mish-mash** - We would support the addition of a further learning area called Business Education, as submitted by the Wellington Branch of CETA (They label it Commerce. In Australia, the term Business Education is used and we believe this is more appropriate, particularly to the ways in which it can be, and often is, addressed in primary schools.)
- 5. Core competencies** - Reference to these competencies and the need for teachers to model them as new and innovative should be

removed because it is just not true, it highlights the limited experience of some drafters and therefore detracts from the value of their promotion. Yes, they should be promoted again.

**The submitters:**

  
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