

Modernising the Education System Bill 2023

A Bill for an Act to modernise the Victorian education system. This modernisation will enable diverse learning modes, times and technologies for high school students to access. It will widen the range of secondary education, professional training and life skill development. Finally, it will target unsafe student behaviours to facilitate a safe learning environment.

This Bill aims to address poor secondary student educational outcomes by recognising and extending pandemic-inspired learning adjustments and existing legislation around vocational pathways. These outcomes are driven by a lack of career-relevant subjects, lack of access to and integration of technologies in the classroom, and antisocial student behaviour which threatens teacher safety and inhibits learning. Introducing flexible learning adjustments to scheduling, modes, and assessment practices will empower student learning and progression into personalised career pathways.

Bill for an Act relating to Modernising the Education System.

To be enacted by the Y's Victorian Youth Parliament.

PART I—Preliminary

Clause 1 Purpose

The main purposes of this Act are to;

- (a) Increase the variety of learning modes to enhance students' learning productivity;
- (b) Enhance the access of modern resources to help students identify and develop future occupations;
- (c) Empower staff and students to contribute to a safe learning environment.

Clause 2 Commencement

This Bill shall commence upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

Clause 3 Definitions

In this Bill;

- (a) **Learning technologies** means appropriate devices that assist teachers and students in teaching and learning, such as tablets and laptops;
- (b) **Assessment** means set work completed by a student and provided to their school to contribute to their academic reporting, such as exams, essays, and reports;
- (c) **Alternative demonstrations of learning** are assessments that evaluate performance, proficiency, and skill sets;
- (d) **Government-funded high school** means any institution that provides educational programs or services, including schools, universities, colleges, and other institutions offering vocational, tertiary, or further education funded by the Government (if stated otherwise);
- (e) **Department** means the Department of Education and Training;

- (f) ***Individualised instruction*** involves tailoring instruction to meet the specific needs of each student, based on their strengths, weaknesses, and learning style;
- (g) ***Adaptive learning technologies*** means digital tools and platforms that can adapt to a student's learning needs and progress, providing customised instruction, feedback, and support;
- (h) The ***Digital Learning Taskforce (DLT)*** is a proposed agency to be operated by the Department of Education to oversee the use and development of technology within government-funded educational institutions;
- (i) ***Tertiary extension program*** means courses provided by tertiary educational institutions and co-delivered with secondary schools within a student's regular timetabled learning activities.

PART II—Establishment

Clause 4 Flexibility of School Hours and Learning Modes

- 4.1 Secondary schools shall introduce flexible scheduling options, such as;
- (a) Block scheduling;
 - (b) Hybrid schedules which combine in-person and online learning;
 - (c) Part-time enrolment.
- 4.2 Secondary schools shall introduce flexible start and end times;
- (a) Students shall start and end their school day at different times which shall reduce congestion during peak hours;
 - (i) Start and end times should be no more than 6 hours apart;
 - (ii) Learning activities should start no earlier than 7 a.m;
 - (iii) Learning activities should end no later than 7 p.m.
- 4.3 Secondary schools shall provide access to learning activities through online delivery systems;
- (a) Teachers shall live-stream and record lessons when delivered for later viewing;
 - (b) Secondary schools shall provide appropriate supplemental online resources such as;
 - (i) Databases;
 - (ii) Websites;
 - (iii) Videos.
- 4.4 Secondary schools shall implement individualised instruction options for small groups of students.
- 4.5 Schools shall implement adaptive learning technologies, such as digital simulations.

Clause 5 Implementation of Alternative Learning Demonstration

- 5.1 Secondary schools shall implement alternative modes of learning, which shall encompass;
- (a) Project-based learning;
 - (b) Performance assessments;
 - (c) Exhibition;
 - (d) Simulations;
 - (e) Debates;
 - (f) Portfolios.
- 5.2 Secondary schools shall adopt alternative methods for student evaluation;
- (a) Traditional assessments shall be supplemented with alternative teaching assessments;
 - (b) Secondary schools shall give students flexibility with submission times of assignments within a school term;
 - (c) A list of assessments shall be provided at the beginning of a term;
 - (i) This list shall include recommended submission times which are targets only;
 - (ii) High schools shall enforce specific submissions for presentations or demonstrations to support the operations of the school.
 - (d) Instructors shall be required to provide regular feedback to improve student development.

Clause 6 Establishment of the Digital Learning Taskforce (DLT)

- 6.1 The Department shall establish the Digital Learning Taskforce (DLT) to;
- (a) Oversee the development and implementation of digital technologies in the classroom;
 - (b) Provide function and usage instructions on learning technologies for teachers;

- (c) Inform instructors about changes in provided learning technologies;
 - (d) Conduct yearly audits of digital technologies in Government-funded high schools.
- 6.2 The DLT shall ensure that learning technologies facilitate the training of students in specific fields. These technologies shall;
- (a) Be free of charge;
 - (b) Be provided to all government-funded high schools;
 - (c) Be regularly maintained and updated to ensure optimal performance and security;
 - (i) Maintenance shall be free of charge;
 - (d) Be appropriate for students in specific year levels and relevant to the curriculum being taught;
 - (f) Support accessibility features;
 - (g) Comply with the Third-Party and/or software requirements.
- 6.3 Personal data collected from students or teachers by provided learning technologies shall be protected and handled in accordance with privacy laws.
- 6.4 To assist educational institutions to meet these requirements, the DLT shall;
- (a) Provide professional development programs and resources to trained teachers;
 - (b) Collaborate with industry professionals and stakeholders;
 - (c) Identify areas where digital technologies can enhance teaching and learning;
 - (d) Provide guidance and support to schools and educational institutions on their implementation.
- 6.5 The DLT shall ensure that provided learning technology shall;
- (a) Remain at schools, unless to provide remote learning access;
 - (b) Solely aid teachers and students in education;
 - (c) Not be the exclusive medium for a lesson.

Clause 7 Diversifying Subjects and Courses

- 7.1 Secondary schools shall develop new courses and address skills shortages as identified by the National Skills Commission Skills Priority List;
- (a) Current courses shall include subjects such as;
 - (i) Construction;
 - (ii) Health;
 - (iii) Community services;
 - (iv) Farming.
 - (b) Core subjects shall ensure that both language and literature aspects are included, such as;
 - (i) Creative writing & poetry;
 - (ii) Communication skills;
 - (iii) Debate & rhetoric;
 - (iv) World literature.
 - (c) Secondary schools shall weight specialisations and electives equally to core subjects in VCE results calculations.
- 7.2 Government-funded secondary schools shall implement more internationally-recognised courses for international college entrance, such as;
- (a) Two-year courses (i.e. A-Levels as offered in the United Kingdom);
 - (b) Advanced courses (i.e. Advanced Placement as offered in the United States);
 - (c) International Baccalaureate.
- 7.3 Secondary schools shall partner with universities to allow students to participate in tertiary extension programs;
- (a) These tertiary extension programs shall contribute to a student's VCE result calculation.

Clause 8 Access to Real Life Skills Education in Schools

- 8.1 Schools shall introduce practical life skills and knowledge to further students' abilities across all aspects of personal and professional proficiency;
- (a) These subjects shall;
 - (i) Be predominately practical and not theory or academically based;
 - (ii) Be continuously reviewed to ensure they are relevant.
- 8.2 Life skills courses offered by schools shall include;
- (a) A financial literacy course focusing on skills such as;
 - (i) Creating and managing a budget;
 - (ii) Saving and investing;
 - (iii) Financial planning;
 - (iv) Taxes.
 - (b) An emotional literacy course focusing on skills such as;
 - (i) Effectively managing one's emotions;
 - (ii) Building and maintaining positive relationships;
 - (iii) Social awareness.
 - (c) A career readiness course focusing on skills such as;
 - (i) Exploring different career paths through resources and information;
 - (ii) The principles of entrepreneurship.
- 8.3 Schools shall provide academic planning and advising services;
- (a) Advisors shall guide students to;
 - (i) Set academic goals;
 - (ii) Select courses;
 - (iii) Plan for tertiary education;
 - (iv) Develop career skills.

- (b) Students shall see an advisor upon commencement of year 10, then every year thereafter;
- (c) Course selection and career pathway advice shall be provided by industry professionals through presentations and workshops;
 - (i) These events shall occur before students are expected to choose their courses for Year 11 or 12.

Clause 9 Safe Working Environments for Teachers

- 9.1 Government-funded high schools shall implement programs to support the mental health and well-being of teachers. This shall encompass;
 - (a) Stress-management training, including;
 - (i) Workshops;
 - (ii) Seminars;
 - (iii) Online resources.
 - (b) Resources on work-life balance including;
 - (i) Flexible work arrangements;
 - (ii) Time management strategies;
 - (iii) Tools for managing workload and prioritising tasks.
 - (c) A peer support program to provide a safe space for teachers to share their experiences and receive emotional support;
 - (i) These shall be facilitated by trained mentors or teachers.
- 9.2 Workload limits shall be set in place, including;
 - (a) Methods to ensure teachers have adequate time for lesson planning, grading, and student feedback;
 - (b) Methods to ensure teachers are not assigned more work than they can reasonably handle.

- 9.3 Government-funded secondary schools shall track and report after-hours work conducted by teachers, including;
- (a) Responding to emails;
 - (b) Planning lessons;
 - (c) Grading papers;
 - (d) Attending meetings.