

Below is a summary of the key talking points of the year 3/4 Composite class information night held on Wednesday 9th October. For the purpose of this document points have been expanded to provide a deeper understanding. What we haven't been able to capture are all of the in depth conversations, questions asked and answers that took place on the night.

School Funding Model Explained

- School funding is determined by two factors - Student Enrolments (90%) and Equity Funding (10%)
- Williamstown Primary receives very little equity funding due to the school having a high
- Student Family Occupation and Education (SFOE),
- The Student Resource Package (SRP) is received as credit (staffing) and cash (resources)
- Family Voluntary contributions are in addition to the cash received from the department and enhance the school's ability to purchase key educational resources and maintain key physical assets.
- Schools are advised to not use locally raised funds for staffing.
- Targeted staff (credit) funding is received for staffing in the following areas:
 - Disability and Inclusion
 - Individual student Disability and Inclusion
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Tutor Learning Initiative
- Target staff (credit) expenditure
 - Classroom Teachers
 - Education Support Staff
 - Administration Staff
 - Learning Support
 - Wellbeing Support
 - Specialist Teachers
 - School Leadership
- Schools must manage their staffing budgets, with any financial surplus being able to be carried over to the following year. Note: The Department has policies that restrict the amount that can be carried over ensuring schools spend the large portion of staffing funds each school year.
- Staffing models change yearly as staff move up pay scales, more experienced staff are replaced by graduate staff due to retirement or changing schools.
- Schools must implement long term staffing plans to ensure school's don't move into a deficit.

Williamstown Primary - Current Position

Enrolments

- WPS must take any student from within our zone.
- WPS can take students from outside the school zone if it has the capacity to do so.
- WPS must work with the Area Director, SEIL and other local schools when there are enrolment pressures and complexities.
- The four local schools have seen a decline of 30-40% in prep enrolments.
- These enrolment declines have led to Department/Regional intervention.
- WPS continues to have strong enrolment interest from outside of our zone.
- There are no applications to other local schools from families in the WPS zone.
- Due to the above challenges WPS hasn't been able to simply enrol any student who applies from outside our zone.
- Previously 4 x prep classes of 20 students (80 students) have enabled the school to create 3 x classes of 26 in years 3 & 4. Ensuring a financially sustainable model.
- Recent smaller prep enrolments of approx 3 classes x 22 (66 students) has impacted the sustainability of the previous model.

Note: The school is in a good strong financial position and these changes to the school structure are a means to ensure we stay in that position.

Class Structure - Decision Making Process

Consultation Process

The decision to move to 3/4 composite classes has been an 18 month process and has been discussed at length with the following

- School Leadership Team
- School Council
- School Staff Consultative Committee (*Union Based group that consults on the work and work conditions of staff at the school and is made up of elected WPS staff*)
- Network School Education Improvement Leader
- Department of Education - Workforce Planning Coordinator
- Department of Education - School Financial Management Advisor

Options with average of 60-65 students per cohort

- Straight Grades, 3 x 20.8 (Not financially Viable)
- Straight Grades, 2 x 31.25 (Class sizes are too large)
- Mixture of straight and composite 5 x 25 (Major Class placement and collaboration challenges)
- Composite Grades, 5 x 25

Composite Classes in Years 3-6 ensures the following:

- Medium class sizes in year 3/4 (financially viable)
- Straight grades in years Prep - 2
- Smaller class sizes in years Prep - 2
- Continued out of class support in
 - Learning/Intervention
 - Wellbeing
 - Curriculum Planning & Implementation
 - Staff Professional Development
- Strong teacher collaboration and support

School History with the model

- Mid 1990's - 2019 WPS operated composite year 3/4 classes.
- 2020-2024 - WPS ran straight grade 3 and 4 classes.
- WPS has run successful composite 5/6 classes for 30 years.
- Most of the current WPS teaching staff have experience teaching in a composite class.

Research and Data

Professor John Hattie (World Leader in Education Research) research into the effect sizes of factors that influence achievement

Show:

- Composite classes make no difference to the academic outcomes of students learning.
- Additionally, research concluded that composite classes can actually enhance development; students becoming more confident and assertive and learning to operate as part of a group while bolstering independent learning skills
- The factor that has the largest influence by a very large margin is teacher quality.

Source: John Hattie's book - Visible Learning

Williamstown Primary Analysis

- Teacher judgement data for grade 3 students - Performed higher during the years the school operated composite 3/4 classes compared with straight grades.
- It was noted that students transitioning to year 5 had a smoother transition when they had been in composite 3/4 grades.
- Grade 4 students have a greater sense of leadership, mentoring year 3 students.
- Grade 3 students have clear mentors and role models that enhance their achievement and social connections.

Curriculum Planning

When comparing the Year 2 Curriculum to the Year 3 & 4 Curriculum the

- Achievement statements for Year 2 are isolated within the single year level.
- Achievement statements for Year 3 & 4 are combined across a two year period.

This means the curriculum is spread over a two year period in years 3 & 4.

At WPS curriculum Planning in all year levels accommodates individual student points of need. This means that regardless of a student's year level they will receive explicit instruction and learning tasks that are at their current academic level.

At WPS all curriculum planning across the school is supported by the:

- Head of Curriculum (Steven Puhar)
- Head of Teaching and Learning (Rebecca Givogue)

Both of these staff members will be part of the year 3/4 team next year as part of their in class teaching fraction.

The following supports and resources will continue or be implemented to support year 3/4 students

Intervention Support

- In class differentiated explicit teaching and learning tasks.
- Tutor program continues in 2025, students who meet the requirements will continue to have access to this program.

Extension Support

- In class differentiated explicit teaching and learning tasks.
- Changes in the specialist timetable will support external extension opportunities.

Teaching Team

- All staff are experienced in teaching in year 3 & 4, with most having experience teaching in a 3/4 composite setting.
- Strong school leadership presence within the teaching team.

The following transition supports will be in place to support all 2025 3 & 4 students:

- Grade 2 and 3 classes undertaking shared activities to build social connections.
- Extra planned step up days.
- Class placement policy - Learning Buddies.
- Student handover day.
- 2025 3/4 Team planning day. (Towards the end of term 4, 2024).

We ask all families to continue to have positive conversations at home.