

- How best can students be supported to successfully complete and achieve by the end of Year 12?
- What are the top 2 or 3 priorities or changes you believe are needed so all Tasmanian young people can complete Year 12 or an equivalent?
- What are the most important ways to support choice for students?

I personally advocate for the abolishment of colleges, and for college sites to become 7-12 campuses. Topping up high schools with a couple of mediocre 11/12 courses has not been a success. In fact, the extension of high schools to Year 12 a story that is close to dystopian. Urban high schools who offer Year 11/12 programs are encouraged (or coerced) not to 'compete' with colleges that are part of their network or collective. I am not sure where this narrative comes from, whether it is the colleges themselves or leaders in DECYP, but it means that high schools end up offering small, highly niche subjects so as not to offend the local college. Working at Rose Bay High School a few years ago, the only students who stayed connected to the high school were a small handful of students too anxious to enroll at Rosny College due to its size. This program was difficult to staff and maintain due to small numbers. What students need is the capacity to reach their educational goals at any high school.

Some colleges might argue that a 7-10 high school would not get the student numbers to offer the range of courses offered at a college. This is easily resolved by allowing capable Year 10 students to enroll in Level 2 courses which significantly expands the pool of offerings. The 9-12 framework, if it ever gets off the ground in any meaningful way, would also allow for more vertical learning such as this. For example, I know that at my school (Hobart City High School), we would not be able to have a discrete Level 2 or Level 3 Japanese class. But we would be able to run a 9-12 Japanese class where students are grouped and explicitly taught in a rotation. We could even work together with another school like Montrose or Elizabeth College to offer some more niche subjects and have Year 11 and 12 students move across school, or be explicitly taught via Teams, for some of their learning. The solutions are numerous and often simple, but somebody just needs to make the call that all school **authentically** offer a 11/12 program.

Even if all high schools held onto students to Year 12, a key barrier to a more seamless transition from Year 10 to Year 11 is TASC. As a regulatory body, TASC only ensure the quality of courses offered to Year 11, 12 and 13 students. This means the courses are rigid and follow a specific model approved by TASC. For many teachers, the concept that students from Year 9 could begin engaging in learning that would contribute to their final TCE through micro-credentialling or some similar system was a dream come true! Student engagement would soar and there would be weight and value to the courses offered in Year 9, a point where so many children disengage. But this vision cannot occur so long as TASC block almost all attempts to engage students in courses or learning that contributes to TCE below Year 11. My recommendation to the Government would be to fold TASC into DECYP so they can regulate and audit learning programs from Prep to Year 12 and ensure high quality content is being delivered to our students, rather than have an unusually strict and antiquated approach to regulating learning in Years 11 and 12.

The content being delivered in Years 11 and 12 isn't the only issue – the teaching is also very monotonous. I recently spoke to a first-year teacher at my school who was given the opportunity to visit Elizabeth College for an afternoon. The purpose of this visit was to see some instructional practices and pedagogy in action. After visiting almost every classroom in the school, he did not witness a single instance of active teaching. Instead, what he saw were classes of students independently completing work while teachers sat at the front of the room in front of a computer. This mode of teaching is a huge barrier to so many of our students who struggle to engage in

sustained tasks and need well scaffolded learning opportunities. They need evidence-based pedagogy such as ongoing questioning and gradual release.

As I see it, the solution to the state's completely abysmal (and embarrassing) attainment and retention problem is to abolish the college system as it currently exists and turn all college campuses into 7-12 learning environments. I know this will not happen because the decision is political. We will never make this change in Tasmania because it is political suicide. The community members who went to college and reminisce fondly on their final year of high school are the community who are highly educated, highly articulate and have enough social capital to make politicians stop and listen. Tasmanians who dropped out of school and struggled to gain meaningful employment are likely too busy worrying about how they afford Christmas presents this year. They are not likely going to stop and reflect on the state of education in Tasmania. I advocate for the Tasmanians who do not have time to stop and share their anecdotes of how isolating college life was, or how a teacher kicked them out because they couldn't sit silently for 100-minute stretches which led to them quitting school.

Overall, my immediate responses to the issue of low engagement, attendance and attainment at the college level are as follows:

- Fold TASC into DECYP and expand the quality assurance of course delivery down to at least Year 9. This will require additional staffing.
- The college system must be abolished immediately. Change college campuses to 7-12 campuses as soon as is practical!
- Refocus efforts on building and embedding the 9-12 framework initially proposed. It is a good solution to a range of issues that state face.