

# The consolidation of Armidale High School and Duval High School

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why amalgamate Armidale High School and Duval High School?

The projected Year 7 to 12 enrolments at Armidale High School and Duval High School show only moderate growth over the next fifteen years. Consolidating the schools onto one school site will allow for the delivery of an expanded curriculum by specialist teachers with enhanced transition pathways for students in further education and employment.

The new school will include classrooms and specialised facilities that support personalised, integrated and connected learning experiences for all students. The new accommodation will include flexible, open and modern learning spaces that are suitable for a range of teaching and learning methods.

The new school will be an important part of the Armidale community. It will provide an opportunity to increase community engagement and create long-term community partnerships that are mutually beneficial. The new school will provide the community with access to regionally significant performance, cultural and sporting facilities.

### 2. Is the Department of Education amalgamating the schools to save money?

No. The new school will be staffed and funded in line with the same staffing and funding procedures that apply to all public schools in NSW. The department will not save money, instead there will be opportunities for more effective use of resourcing, wider choice of curriculum offerings for students and the ability to improve specialist facilities to support student learning opportunities within the new school.

Over the longer term, a \$65 million investment in a brand new school is a more strategic use of government funding than maintaining two aging facilities.

### 3. When will the new school be built?

Construction of the new school is planned to begin in 2019 and it will be ready for occupancy in 2020 or early 2021. During 2019, students will temporarily relocate to the Duval High School site.

#### **4. Will class sizes increase?**

Class sizes are determined by the agreement between the Department and the NSW Teachers Federation and as a result, class sizes from Year 7 to Year 10 will remain at 30 students or less. Preliminary and Higher School Certificate class sizes may experience some variation depending upon student subject choice. However, these are expected to average around 15 to 20 students.

#### **5. How will the schools support Year 12 students in 2019 when the two schools combine into one at DHS?**

Supporting Year 12 students in 2019 will be a very high priority. The students' teachers will remain the same prior to and after the move onto the new site. While the details are yet to be determined, there is likely to be a transition process where senior students from both schools will study and socialise together at Duval High School, prior to the move. It will be essential that all the students know each other and are familiar with the new learning environment.

Where classes are small in each school, there may be an opportunities to combine the classes so that there will be two teachers available to deliver the course and support the students in a team-teaching model.

#### **6. How will students, with special needs, be supported when they move from Armidale High School to the Duval High School site in 2019?**

Supporting the smooth transition of students with special needs onto the Duval High School site will be a very high priority. While details are yet to be negotiated, there is likely to be a transition process in which students will be taken regularly to Duval High School where they will meet staff, meet Duval High School students and become familiar with their new surroundings. This would commence some months prior to all students moving onto the one campus.

#### **7. How will Duval High School cope with the influx of students in 2019?**

Additional temporary classrooms, staff rooms and bathroom facilities will be installed at the Duval High School campus to accommodate the additional students and staff from mid-2018. These buildings will be placed in locations that minimise the loss of playground space.

The movement of students from the Armidale High School site to the Duval High School site may be managed in a transitional manner, allowing for some

year groups to move onto the site at the most supportive and appropriate time. For example, all Year 11 students may commence on the Duval High School site from the beginning of Term 4, 2018, when their HSC studies commence. All other year groups may commence as a consolidated student body on Day 1, Term 1, 2019.

**8. Will all the staff and students move onto the Duval High School site in 2019 at the same time?**

Not necessarily. Construction of the new school is planned to begin in 2019 and it will be ready for occupancy in 2020 or early 2021. During 2019, students will temporarily relocate to the Duval High School site.

**9. Will the new school be environmentally friendly?**

Yes, this will be a major consideration in the planning process.

**10. Is there job security for the teachers in both schools?**

Yes, no permanent teacher will lose their job as a result of the consolidation process. A special staffing agreement will be developed between the Department and the NSW Teachers Federation that ensures job security in these circumstances.

**11. Are office staff, general assistant and farm assistant positions secure?**

Yes. No permanent non-teaching staff member will lose their job as a result of the consolidation.

**12. How will the traditions and heritage of each school be preserved?**

This is a very important aspect of the planning process and the project team is committed to ensuring that the heritage and legacy of both schools are honoured through careful planning and consideration. Suitable recognition of each school's history, while engaging with school representatives, will be an important step in the planning process. Current and past students, staff and parents will be invited to work together to identify aspects of each of the school's traditions that need to be incorporated into the new school.

Respect will be shown for school archives, honour boards and other significant items and these will be housed in the new school in an appropriate location.

### **13. How will parents and members of the wider community be engaged in planning for the new school?**

From Term 3, 2017 parents and members of the wider community, who would like to have input, will be offered an opportunity to do so via focus groups, online surveys, requested telephone calls and via information booths, positioned within shopping centres.

The information and suggestions gathered over time will be shared regularly on a dedicated website which will be accessible to the entire Armidale community.

### **14. Who do we contact if we have questions?**

Enquiries can be made via either of the two high school principals or the director for the Northern Tablelands network:

- Mr Stafford Cameron, Principal, Duval High School, on 6772 1266
- Ms Carolyn Lasker, Principal, Armidale High School, on 6776 7466
- Mrs Sue Brown, Director, Public Schools NSW, on 6776 4100.

### **15. Will the students be involved in planning the new school?**

Absolutely. Input from students from both high schools as well as the partner primary schools will be a very important aspect of the planning process. The project planning team will include student representation.

### **16. What support will in place to help students manage the change coming?**

Work has already commenced on this in each high school through their Positive Behaviour for Learning programs. Regular formal and informal conversations in each school and in partner primary schools will be supported through student wellbeing programs. Carefully planned activities will provide a safe environment for students to express their concerns and wishes, and these will be managed in a sensitive and timely manner to ensure that students are feeling listened to, informed and well-supported. Some of these activities may be developed and led by student leaders from the high schools with younger high schools students and those from partner primary schools.

## **17. Student wellbeing is so important. How will that be ensured in a new, bigger school?**

Student wellbeing will continue to be a priority for the new school. Comprehensive programs and processes and dedicated staff will ensure responsive and meaningful support for every student every day. Positive Behaviour for Learning will play a key role in preparing students for the consolidation and for managing post-consolidation settling issues and for planning long-term wellbeing systems within the new school. Supervision and management of the playground will be particularly important and where necessary, additional professional learning will be provided to staff to ensure the playground remains a safe place for all.

Research will be conducted on schools of a similar and bigger size, to learn about effective practices. These will be considered and modified to suit the unique context of the new school.

Students with disabilities will benefit from new facilities that better meet their educational, physical and social needs.

Funding will be available to provide a framework of support for wellbeing services, including trained dedicated staff, a full time counsellor and where required, school learning support officers.

Staff will know all students and their families, will have respectful relationships and will have greater flexibility in their work role.

The school will collaborate with external agencies to provide a link for students, parents and carers to provide services that can support their needs.

## **18. Why can't the school be built on a new site, somewhere else in Armidale?**

This was considered and it was determined that there were no sites large enough in a suitable location. The Armidale High School site offers a central location with expansive grounds.

## **19. How will long term-temporary employees be looked after?**

Long-term temporary employee contracts will remain in place during 2017 and as negotiated for 2018. Suitably qualified temporary employees will be in demand during the school planning and construction phase as all permanent positions in both high schools will remain in place for this period. No

permanent positions will be filled through the normal staffing procedures until the new school is operational.

#### **20. What will happen to the school farm at Armidale High School?**

The new school will be constructed on the current school site. As a result, there will be little or no impact on the current land used for agricultural programs.

#### **21. What types of community organisations might the school partner with?**

New partnerships will be created and existing partnerships will be strengthened as learning programs are integrated and connected with real world learning opportunities. This will particularly be the case for vocational education programs. These partnerships will include links with local industry, retail outlets, entertainment venues, tourism and hospitality venues. It is highly likely that the school will also partner with local and regional sporting and cultural and performing arts organisations and that the school facilities will be used by the broader community.

#### **22. What will happen with the Den? Will the existing debt be written off?**

The Den will remain as part of the new school. Further advice will be sought in regard to any outstanding debt.

#### **23. What about students who moved between the two schools to escape bullying at their original school - how will their wellbeing be addressed once the two schools are together?**

Bullying is ongoing intimidation or harassment of one individual by another or a group of others. Bullying will not be tolerated in the new school. The school wellbeing programs will demand high standards of behaviour from all students and swift action will be taken against individuals who engage in bullying behaviours. General student wellbeing will be managed using a range of initiatives under the Positive Behaviour for Learning banner.

#### **24. What uniform will we wear when the two schools come together on the Duval site?**

The new school uniform is most likely to be determined by the current Parents and Citizens Associations in negotiation with students during 2018.