

Education and Innovation Committee

From: Zoe Goodman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 May 2013 6:45 PM
To: Education and Innovation Committee
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Senior External Exams

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To whom it may concern,

I am emailing you about the possibility of continuing the Senior External Exams. I went to Hubbard's School in 2012 and did Mathematics A, English, Philosophy and Reason, Modern History and Legal Studies. I achieved an OP 6 and am now at The University of Queensland studying a dual Bachelor of Business Management and Arts. Back in 2011 however I thought this would all be impossible.

Due to a variety of mental issues and bad decisions I decided to drop out of high school. I was halfway through year 11 at [REDACTED] and found it very difficult to focus on the education side of high school with all the girl politics and finding no reason to the classes and struggling with the reality of life as any normal teenage girl does. On top of all of this I have a significant vision impairment. I have Stargardt's Disease; this is a loss of central vision and has left me legally blind. [REDACTED] offered me great support through the teachers and did special arrangements for exams and aided me in the classroom but being at a private girl school was difficult enough when you are quite opinionated and don't get weighed down by their cliquy drama, having the blind label on my name was just another reason to want to leave.

I found after working for six months that I didn't necessarily want to be a retail assistant for the rest of my life. I decided it was time to get my act together and complete high school. By this time though my only option through mainstream schooling was to repeat Year 11. This was not an option for me. Through the mainstream system you generally only associate with people of your own grade and everyone has a reputation. Going from being a not so included girl in my cohort to going to a new cohort where I would have to explain my eye condition over and over to people who have already judged me. Well I would have chosen having a crappy job for the rest of my life than going back to all of that drama. Luckily for me though my parents found out about Hubbard's School. After investigating the school and the external system I decided that this could really work for me. People of all ages attending a common ground to get an education to get on with their lives – this was a learning atmosphere that I wanted.

The Hubbard's staff was welcoming of me and had no problem with my eye condition after they knew I was here to learn and had determination to do so. They implemented a new way of doing some things just to accommodate me, which was so heartwarming and gave me the motivation to study. At Hubbard's you address your teachers by their first name and that breaks down a lot of the barrier between student teacher relationships. It allows you to speak more openly and feel more inclined to actually discuss with them your troubles with the subject or anything you're dealing with. I found the support of all of my teachers absolutely amazing. I think without such fabulous staff that Hubbard's would not be such a success. The support and friendships I built with my teachers and many other staff members got me through the year. There was an infinite amount of lifelines at Hubbard's and I think that's one of the keys to the school's success. They didn't spoon feed you as a student, they allowed you to embrace your own style of accomplishing the task and helped you excel rather than enforce a single way of doing things. They were open to do tutoring, discuss topics irrelevant to your

education and were willing to be there for you whenever you needed. I have never found this in an education system before and I absolutely cherished it.

At Hubbard's there was direction with your education, and that was the finish line, the final exam. The one day and the one chance you had to show what you'd been working on all year. This gave students a timeline to work with. It has given me the ability to make long-term goals and stick to them. Throughout the year there were several checkpoints so to speak to ensure you were getting through enough of the work to be able to pass that exam but have an actual foundation of the subject and understanding beyond that which was required. Found that all of my teachers excelled at achieving this extended knowledge. They also taught us several exam techniques that made the final exams quite easy to complete because we had a strategy.

I have found my transition from Hubbard's to UQ a lot easier than my friends from mainstream schools. I have time management skills that a lot of them haven't acquired yet as they haven't had as much of a need for them. I understand the weighting of certain assessments and criterias a lot more and the freedom side of university is the same as Hubbard's was but a lot less contact hours. I think that if I had only gone through mainstream I would be struggling at university right now. I have found that my peers don't have exam techniques or adequate study methods and that they use me to make the study steps for them.

I loved my time at Hubbard's. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done, it was stressful, challenging and hard but it was worth it. I learnt new things about myself that I was actually determined and if I set my mind to something I could and would do it. I learnt how to study effectively through memory aids, repetition and activities made by the teachers for us. Hubbard's is more than a school it's a community and the fact is that we are all tied together because we all went through the exams together, we sat through the classes and we worked endlessly and tirelessly for our results. You don't get a relationship with peers like this at mainstream school. You don't get the freedom and responsibility that you do at Hubbard's at any other school. It was the best year of my life. I have made lifelong friends with the people at that school, not just the students but staff as well.

Personally I think if the external system is cut that it will have to be replaced within five years. Unemployment rates will sky rocket. We have education systems and avenues in place so that society is more educated so that we can get higher paying jobs and higher qualified jobs to make our economy excel. I think the government has forgotten this. They have also forgotten that at tertiary level and in real life there is more than one pathway to any destination and they should not deprive young adults of their freedom to go through life on their own path and to not strip young adults the chance of a high school education just because they weren't inclined to do so at the prescribed age. When has it become a bad thing to mature at your own speed, to make mistake and learn from them and to grow as a person.

I think that it is a huge testament to anyone who passed their 100% exams. It shows dedication, perseverance and most of all determination. And I think a lot of the people who came to Hubbard's or went through the external system another way have only discovered their true inner strength through doing this. At the end of the day their discovery of this and future drive to their goals in life will be benefiting our country, the world and the government – you. These people are inspirational beyond words along with their teachers and families and friends who got them through their education. They will change the world. Hopefully you decide to not cut the external education system so that this can happen. So that the world can be improved and so that people can have a second chance at an education.

Thank-you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope I have enlightened you to the wondrous things that Hubbard's School has done for me and so many people I know.

Zoe Goodman

