

Q: Why disrupt pupils and staff from four schools while the construction of a new school goes ahead? Why not just move everyone from Shepp High as the time frame for construction will always be blown out from what is proposed. The Department of Education could move portables onto the other three sites if necessary for the construction period. They can always find them when disasters occur so that should not be a problem

A: The development of Greater Shepparton College (interim name), specifically the necessary closure of Shepparton High School to allow construction of the new school, will cause some short-term pain. We've done a great deal of planning to minimise disruption throughout the building phase, while bringing forward the benefits for students of the one-school model.

We are staging the transition to the new school over the next two years, so we can begin developing the new school's culture from day one of 2020. This will mean our teachers can begin to share best practice with their peers right from the start of Term one, to improve outcomes for all students in Greater Shepparton.

Having senior secondary students consolidated on two campuses in 2020 during the transition will give our senior secondary students access to more pathways and subject choices, and study options. Students won't need to travel out of Shepparton, or attend virtual classes, to study subjects of their choice as currently happens.

Q: Why not build a senior school and have three feeder schools leading up to specialised teaching in years 11 and 12?

A: Based on the outcome of two phases of public consultation in 2017, the single school model was identified as the best way forward for secondary education in Greater Shepparton. More than 1880 individual comments, received through an online survey, community workshops, and focus group discussions, were analysed as part of phase two of the consultation, which focused specifically on future options for secondary education in Greater Shepparton.

Retaining the four existing local secondary schools was an option discussed as part of the consultation, as was a feeder school model. However, there was overwhelming sense that we needed to do something different – and much more than simply improving each individual school's infrastructure – to transform secondary education in Greater Shepparton.

Q: What is going to happen to the existing school sites? Will they be sold? Will the special school move into one of the sites? It has currently outgrown its current site. Will one be made over and modified into housing for the homeless?

A: We've received a number of education-focused ideas through community consultation on how our existing school sites can be used to support future educational needs. We're currently working through these ideas so that the future use of these sites best meet the needs of our community.

Q: Are you aware that staff have to apply for their jobs and specify the areas they want to teach?

A: We have asked staff to nominate the campus they would prefer to work at during the transition period, and are currently working through our campus staffing arrangements. We want our staff to not only begin to share excellent practice with their peers but also to follow their current students if they are changing campus, so students have a recognisable, friendly face they are familiar with.

Q: Has any consideration been given to purchasing a very large site non the north or south or east side of the city where transport would be easier and expansion could be arranged?

A: Following the site selection process, completed by independent consultants, the Department chose the Shepparton High School site as it is the most central location for young people in Greater Shepparton.

It is located within walking distance to Latrobe University and the Goulburn Ovens institute of TAFE, so our students can grow links with tertiary education providers, and close to local businesses, so our students can build relationships for work experience and job pathways.

The Shepparton High School site is also big enough for us to design and build a new school with the contemporary teaching and learning spaces that will support student achievement, wellbeing and success.

This means the site can host extensive sporting facilities, including two indoor courts and a number of outdoor courts, as well as the existing oval, so students can play their choice of sport, an innovation hub for students to gain practical experience in science and robotics, and a state-of-the-art performing arts centre so performing arts students can display their talents.

Q: Why must the uniforms be the same colour as other super schools: Why not a 'solar' touch in the solar city?

A: Our soon-to-be-released uniform will reflect our new school's own identity and brand. Our students dressing in their new uniform is an important way for them to come together within one school.

Q: Planners in Shepparton have a history of not planning for the future – the airport has been built all around, SPC was another example, the emergency services needed to be relocated, the post office was moved and still isn't right. Surely they can get the school right?

A: The Victorian School Building Authority is working with a consulting firm to undertake a traffic management study of movements within the new school precinct, including the requirement for bus services, parent drop-off zones, and parking needs.

We'll continue to work with Greater Shepparton City Council on the traffic management strategy and we're working with Public Transport Victoria on having new bus routes and timetables in place that meet the needs of students.

The Education Minister announced free travel assistance for students attending the new school until it opens on a single campus.

All existing students who use the school bus program, along with those who are new to the program during the transition period, will be given free travel until the school opens, while government secondary school students travelling on public transport will have ticket costs fully reimbursed through the Conveyance Allowance Program.

Q: Is there any plan for an alternative site for the pupils not coping? There will be a lot of bullying and fighting. If the powers that be don't think that will happen they are delusional and need to get out of their ivory towers and live in the real world for a change.

A: Our new school will not tolerate any bullying, racism and discrimination, and we will deal with it in line with our anti-bullying policy. We will implement school-wide positive behaviour strategies, and teach all students these expectations.

We will also implement the successful 'house' model to create a sense of belonging among students. As part of this, each student will be assigned a learning mentor from Year 7, who will be the first point of contact for parents and care-givers to discuss any concerns, including about their child's health and wellbeing, throughout their time at our school.

Q: If the Naplan test results are so bad in secondary schools does this apply to primary schools as well? What is being done to help the primary schools?

A: While the Shepparton Education Plan is first transforming secondary education, it will look at all stages of education, including early years and primary education. Achievement and engagement in education starts even before children start school, which is why the Shepparton Education Plan is also building a new Integrated Early Learning Centre at Mooroopna Primary School