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Esther Hill (Director of Djoowak: The Beyond Boundaries Institute)

Family cries foul as education system holds daughter back

■ **Bethany Hlatt**
Education Editor

A parent claims WA education authorities discriminated against his daughter by not allowing her to credit results from a Year 11 music course towards her WA Certificate of Education because she was in Year 9 when she did the work.

The parent has submitted a complaint to the Equal Opportunities Commission with the support of the student's school, All

Saints' College. According to School Curriculum and Standards Authority policy, students below Year 10 are not eligible to enrol in or study senior secondary courses.

The parent of the now-Year 12 student said Victoria and NSW allowed students to do courses quicker to get a head start on their secondary studies.

"The impact of this discriminatory policy is . . . felt throughout the system," the submission said. "It is very important that

this discrimination is addressed at a personal and systemic level as not only does it lead to students not being accelerated at the pace at which they need to move and that is educationally recommended, it influences school policy in holding students back and not encouraging them to learn at an appropriate pace."

An Education Department spokeswoman said the curriculum for pre-primary to Year 10 was designed with the flexibility to cater for the needs of all stu-

dents, including those who were gifted and talented.

"In certain circumstances, principals may seek permission from the authority for Year 10 students to be enrolled in ATAR units and have their achievement contribute towards meeting the WACE requirements," she said. "There are criteria which need to be met. Schools are well aware of the application process required."

All Saints' College dean of teaching and learning Esther

Hill said the school had many students working above the curriculum set for their level.

She said the college backed the family's complaint because schools needed to have the ability to support personalised pathways for students to keep them engaged "rather than having them feeling constrained and frustrated because the system dictates to them what should be learned and at what rate".

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