26 May 2011

Ms Keryn Riseley  
Executive Officer  
Education and Training Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE 3002

Dear Ms Riseley

Parliamentary Inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented Students

Thank you for the opportunity for the Serpell Parents' Supporting Intellectual Potential Partnership to express its views. A brief history of the pSIP group is provided to contextualise its current form for comment on:

Opportunities and strategies for enhancing support for gifted and talented students, their parents and carers, teachers and school leaders and Opportunities for improved educational offerings for gifted and talented students through collaboration across all school sectors and with community, business and industry, as per the terms of reference for the Inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented students, with specific reference to Relevant projects currently under way specific to the Education of Gifted and Talented students.

The pSIP (Parents Supporting Intellectual Potential group) at Serpell Primary started in 2001 as a parent support group to share challenges and find solutions as well as to develop an understanding of their gifted and talented children. It provided a forum to meet and an opportunity to connect with others, to share and in addition to be advocates on behalf of their children.

Monthly meetings were often supported by expert presenters and evening community events with high profile speakers were arranged for the Serpell parent community. Resources (games, videos, CD’s and books) were purchased for the Serpell community to borrow. A pSIP group parent has managed the mobile library at Serpell up until the end of 2010.

By 2008, pSIP membership had diminished considerably and in 2009 the group ceased in its original form.

The pSIP group has transformed into a model, with a partnership of parents in specifically skilled fields, working together with Serpell to provide opportunities for students by sharing their expertise voluntarily in workshop and seminar situations in Serpell’s Infinite Possibilities Enrichment Program.

Sessions such as; The Human Eye, Infectious Diseases, Microbiology, Solar Energy, The Science of Chocolate, The Science of Laughter and The Five senses are a few examples. A retired geologist has also worked with students at Serpell as part of the Scientists in Schools Project. Parents continue to have access to a range of resources through the school.
Students attending the workshops are selected by teachers, using data from testing, results from competitions such as ICAS, NAPLAN, external assessments and reports and/or by an expression of interest from the student concerned.

In addition to our parent-partnership initiative, we also offer withdrawal programs for high potential students across a diverse range of areas.

Yours sincerely

Trish Manicom
Assistant Principal
Serpell Primary School