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**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS INC  
(ACSSO)**

# **POLICY**

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ACSSO  
PO Box 323 Curtin ACT 2605  
Ph: (02) 6282 5150 Fax: (02) 6285 1351 Email: [acssso@acssso.org.au](mailto:acssso@acssso.org.au)

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## AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS INC (ACSSO)

Founded in 1947

ACSSO is the national organisation representing the interests of parents, citizens and students associated with government schools throughout Australia. ACSSO is non-party political and non-sectarian.

ACSSO is committed to access, equality, equity of outcomes, excellence and participatory democracy.

**The principle of access** means a public education system available to all, irrespective of their age, capacity to pay, class, culture, gender, level of ability, location, religion/belief, or sexual orientation.

**Equality** is dependent on recognition that all children have a capacity to learn. Learning is the construction of meaning from experience. School practices must acknowledge and build on the culture and experiences children bring to school. Children have a right to develop their skills, knowledge and aptitudes in challenging but personally successful and fulfilling ways.

**Equity in educational outcomes** means all social groups should, as a result of schooling, have comparable distributions of educational outcomes.

**Excellence** means that the public school system must provide the highest quality education for all.

**Participatory democracy** means a partnership of students, parents and teachers in school and system decision making. It also means that students should, as a result of schooling, have the knowledge, skills and understandings necessary to shape their own lives and to participate effectively in shaping society. This will enable students to learn how to learn throughout their lives for the benefit of themselves and others. Public education must develop among all students a sense of justice as well as respect and concern for others.

ACSSO believes that public education must remain secular and be fully funded by government.

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS POLICY

*For the purpose of this document, the word “parent” encompasses anyone who has the responsibility of caring for the educational well-being of a student.*

## CONTENTS

<b>SECTION A - PUBLIC EDUCATION</b>	<b>1</b>
A.1 THE NATURE AND ROLE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	1
A.2 EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL	3
A.3 IMPORTANCE AND PRIORITY OF EDUCATION	4
A.4 ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	5
A.5 COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	6
A.6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	7
A.7 EDUCATION RESEARCH	8
A.8 ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION	9
<b>SECTION B - FINANCING</b>	<b>11</b>
B.1 GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF SCHOOLS	11
B.2 COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY RELATIONS	14
B.3 RESOURCE SHARING	16
B.4 SCHOOL LEVIES	17
B.5 COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP AND LINKS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES	18
B.6 TAXATION	20
<b>SECTION C - PARENTS/GUARDIANS</b>	<b>21</b>
C.1 PARENTS/GUARDIANS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATION	21
<b>SECTION D - STUDENTS</b>	<b>25</b>
D.1 THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN	25
D.2 STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATION	27
D.3 STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING	28
D.4 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS	29
D.5 STUDENTS AT RISK	30
D.6 SCHOOL UNIFORM	31
D.7 STUDENTS	32
D.8 YOUTH POLICY	35
D.9 SENIOR STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL	36
D.10 BEYOND SCHOOL	37
D.11 CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS	38
D.12 EDUCATION FOR HOSPITALISED STUDENTS	39
<b>SECTION E – SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION</b>	<b>41</b>
E.1 SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION	41
E.2 EDUCATION OF STUDENTS OF LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS	42
E.3 EDUCATION FOR A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY	43
E.4 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	44
E.5 CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES	46
E.6 GENDER EQUITY	47
E.7 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN STUDIES FOR ALL AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS	48
E.8 THE EDUCATION PROCESS FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS	49
E.9 INDIGENOUS PARENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	50
E.10 EDUCATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS	51
E.11 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	52

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<b>SECTION F - COMMUNITY</b>	<b>53</b>
F.1 THE COMMUNITY AND ITS SCHOOLS	53
F.2 COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES	54
F.3 SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	55
<b>SECTION G - SCHOOL DECISION MAKING</b>	<b>57</b>
G.1 SCHOOL BASED DECISION MAKING	57
G.2 SCHOOL COUNCILS	58
G.3 ACCOUNTABILITY	60
G.4 PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING	61
G.5 PARENT ASSOCIATIONS/CLUBS	62
<b>SECTION H - SCHOOLS</b>	<b>63</b>
H.1 NEW SCHOOLS	63
H.2 CLASS SIZES	64
H.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	65
H.4 SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT	67
H.5 PROGRESSION THROUGH SCHOOL	68
H.6 THE EARLY YEARS OF SCHOOLING	69
H.7 RURAL EDUCATION	70
H.8 SCHOOL CLOSURES	72
H.9 REORGANISATION OF SCHOOLS	73
H.10 MANAGEMENT OF ENROLMENT DECLINE	74
H.11 DIVERSITY AND CHOICE	75
H.12 SCHOOL LIBRARIES	76
H.13 PLANNING, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS	77
H.14 CHARTER OR GRANT MAINTAINED SCHOOLS	79
<b>SECTION J - EVALUATION AND REPORTING</b>	<b>81</b>
J.1 ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF STUDENTS	81
J.2 REPORTING TO PARENTS	83
J.3 SCHOOL EVALUATION AND CURRICULUM PLANNING	85
J.4 PUBLIC COMPARISONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS	86
J.5 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE RANKINGS AND LEAGUE TABLES	87
<b>SECTION K - STAFFING</b>	<b>89</b>
K.1 TEACHERS AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY	89
K.2 THE PROFESSION OF TEACHING	90
K.3 ADMISSION TO TEACHING	91
K.4 THE RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS	92
K.5 THE PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS	93
K.6 TEACHERS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION	95
K.7 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS	96
K.8 PROMOTION IN TEACHING	97
K.9 PART TIME TEACHING	98
K.10 THE PROFESSIONAL STAFFING OF SCHOOLS	99
K.11 ANCILLARY STAFFING	100
K.12 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN STAFFING NUMBERS	101
<b>SECTION L - CURRICULUM</b>	<b>103</b>
L.1 CURRICULUM	103
L.2 CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK	105
L.3 CORE CURRICULUM	107
L.4 LITERACY AND NUMERACY	108
L.5 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS' LANGUAGES	109
L.6 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)	110
L.7 CONTINUING EDUCATION	112
L.8 CAREERS EDUCATION	113
L.9 TECHNOLOGY STUDIES	114
L.10 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	115

L.11	HEALTH EDUCATION	116
L.12	PEACE EDUCATION	117
L.13	ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION	118
L.14	STUDIES OF ASIA	119
<b>SECTION M - STUDENT WELLBEING</b>		<b>121</b>
M.1	STUDENT WELFARE	121
M.2	DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE SCHOOL	122
M.3	CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	123
M.4	SCHOOL RULES	124
<b>SECTION N - HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>		<b>125</b>
N.1	LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	125
N.2	HEALTH CARE	126
N.3	DRUG EDUCATION	128
N.4	VACCINATION/IMMUNISATION PROCEDURES	129
N.5	SAFETY	131
N.6	SCHOOL BIKE AND ROAD USE	132
N.7	BUS SAFETY	133
N.8	SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS	134
<b>SECTION O - THE MEDIA</b>		<b>134</b>
O.1	THE MEDIA	134
<b>INDEX</b>		<b>137</b>

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### A.1 THE NATURE AND ROLE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

#### PREMISE

1. The interests of the Australian nation, its diverse communities, and the educational needs of Australian children, are best served through the maintenance of a strong public education system.
2. A strong and viable government school system is vital for the nation's future. Australian society and its distinctive values depend on the practical expression of tolerance, fairness, egalitarianism and equality of opportunity that public schools provide.
3. A public education system must be designed and resourced to ensure that all young people develop the skills and understandings necessary to shape their own lives and to contribute constructively to the social, political, ecological and economic future of the community and the country.
4. All parents and parent organisations should be encouraged to actively promote the public education system and its schools.

#### A.1 POLICY

A.1.1 A public education system should:

- (a) be inclusive, in that it is available, accessible and attractive to all, irrespective of race, religion, culture, socio-economic status, gender, disability or geographic location;
- (b) be fully funded by Federal and State/Territory governments at a level that enables the optimum provision; access to high quality education should not be dependent on capacity or willingness to make a financial contribution;
- (c) be secular and should promote the values necessary for the maintenance of a democratic society;
- (d) practise democratic processes, involving the whole school community;
- (e) empower students to become adults who fully participate in the Australian community;
- (f) help break down the barriers between Australians and contribute to a greater sense of cohesiveness in Australian society;
- (g) be one in which full time attendance is required by law during the years of compulsory schooling so that participation is independent of the willingness either of individuals to attend or of others to allow them to do so;
- (h) recognise changing social and economic patterns and facilitate the return of students to school after a period away from school;
- (i) be based on a commitment to the provision of a full secondary education for all;
- (j) be based on a commitment to the neighbourhood school;
- (k) ensure that the provision of schooling for country students is provided as near as possible to their homes;
- (l) be based on curricula and educational processes in schools which, whilst they acknowledge and build on the cultures and experience of local children, are inclusive of the experience of all children and encourage a critical approach to all knowledge;
- (m) be built on an open, public and democratic participatory process in which parents, students, teachers and other educational professionals work together at all levels within the system on

the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, curriculum and practice;

- (n) establish system-wide policies and broad guidelines, developed and agreed to through participatory processes within which all schools are required to operate;
- (o) provide systematic and appropriate support to school communities to develop their own policies, programs and practices within the framework of the agreed system-wide policies and broad guidelines;
- (p) ensure that all children participate in a broad general curriculum which is both challenging and satisfying;
- (q) provide the resources necessary to ensure that the objectives to which the system is committed are achieved for all children and that inequalities are neither generated nor perpetuated.

## **A.2 EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL**

### **PREMISE**

1. Australia is a multicultural and democratic society in which every individual has the right to achieve personal fulfillment while respecting the rights of others and developing cooperative relationships essential to living in society.
2. Education is integral to both the development of the individual and the development of society.
3. Education both reflects and exercises an influence on the values, attitudes and practices of society.
4. The aim of education is to help the individual to develop fully as a person and as a member of society.
5. A high quality education, therefore, is in the interests of a society as a whole and is the right of every individual.
6. Education is a life long process which neither begins nor ends with formal schooling or formal education, although the role of the school is crucial in the development of individuals, and through them society.

A high quality education will enable individuals to:

- (a) become independent and self-directed learners;
- (b) develop fully their own talents, values and interests;
- (c) develop a sense of identity and respect for self, for community and the environment;
- (d) meet challenges;
- (e) participate in decision making at various levels.

A high quality education will contribute to the development of a just society by ensuring that all Australians acquire skills and understanding to empower them to actively participate in and shape the society in which they live.

### **A.3 IMPORTANCE AND PRIORITY OF EDUCATION**

#### **A.3 POLICY**

A.3.1 The Australian nation should give the highest priority to the maintenance of public education systems which give importance to:

- (a) equality of social, political and economic opportunity for all Australians;
- (b) personal development and the fulfilment of the aspirations of individuals;
- (c) appreciation of the values and viewpoints of others;
- (d) the development and survival of Australia as a nation, in terms of technology, security and environment;
- (e) proper participation in world citizenship;
- (f) the development of sustainable resources for the benefit of Australia and other nations;
- (g) Australian participation in global understanding and the removal of national, religious, and racial intolerance.

## **A.4 ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

### **A.4 POLICY**

A.4.1 Federal and State/Territory governments should actively support public education by:

- (a) providing as a priority adequate resources for public education of the highest standard;
- (b) working collaboratively with government school parents and teachers and their organisations to promote the public system above any other system, emphasising the value of public education and the good features of our schools;
- (c) defending government schools, their students and teachers, from unjustified and inaccurate criticism in the media;
- (d) working towards the abolition of discriminatory and selective admission and expulsion practices in all schools.

## **A.5 COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

### **A.5 POLICY**

- A.5.1 ACSSO rejects the application of the theory and practice of markets to education.
- A.5.2 Market choice totally fails to provide equitable and appropriate diversity or to address the individual needs of students. Market competition between government schools works against the interests of all students and their parents.
- A.5.3 The individual needs of students must be addressed by:
- (a) the application of the principles of equity;
  - (b) the participation and empowerment of parents and students;
  - (c) the active partnership of informed parents, professional teachers and confident students;
  - (d) cooperation between schools and school communities in locally identified drawing areas or clusters to provide the widest possible subject choices and other appropriate diversities.
- A.5.4 The Federal, state and territory governments must:
- (a) abandon completely the competitive market model of school and system organisation;
  - (b) enhance the ability of public education systems to provide for the individual needs of students by:
    - (i) encouraging participation and representation by parents and students;
    - (ii) fostering partnerships between parents and teachers throughout the community.
- A.5.5 Differences between public schools must not be used competitively to attract students away from other public schools, but must be planned in consultation with neighbouring schools so as to extend and complement what is locally accessible for the benefit of all students.

## **A.6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

### **A.6 POLICY**

- A.6.1 ACSSO believes that schools have a responsibility to meet the educational needs of individual students and the communities they serve, and therefore expects that there will be differences between schools. Schools and systems must be responsive to the wishes of school communities as expressed through their democratic forums. Schools should be encouraged to develop their own identity, ethos and culture, which reflects, in the most inclusive way, the collective identity, ethos and culture of the school community.
- A.6.2 ACSSO rejects the notion of school autonomy. The right of school communities to have their wishes met is held in the context of the duty of the public systems to provide for the needs of all children in their care. The rights and interests of parents and students depend on negotiated system-wide guarantees that are observed by all for the benefit of all.
- A.6.3 ACSSO rejects the notion of "community standards" insofar as that notion implies that individual schools can punish or exclude children for behaviours which are condemned by a majority of that school's community, but not by the law and custom of Australia or by the system-wide policies of the government school system.
- A.6.4 Wherever possible, schools should be locality based so that the communities they serve are connected by common territory and experience. The fundamental right of every child to be enrolled in a local school is only lost where it is demonstrated by fair, just and appealable procedures that the school is an inappropriate setting for the child's education.
- A.6.5 Those types of school, and those methods of education delivery, that are not locality based, for example special schools, distance education, selective schools and specialist schools, should not be expanded in size or number unless it can be demonstrated by validated research both that the educational outcomes of the students that will attend or use them will be increased, and that the outcomes of those who do not, will not be diminished.
- A.6.6 Where existing senior colleges and selective and specialist schools are affecting the ethos, image and enrolment patterns of neighbouring schools, systems must immediately institute measures to ensure the viability of the local school and the educational rights and outcomes of those who attend them. These measures should include funding of promotions and upgrades of physical resources and the setting up of structures to enable the sharing of resources and expertise and the integration of programs across the cluster for the benefit of all students.

## **A.7 EDUCATION RESEARCH**

### **PREMISE**

1. Education needs to be put into the context of society as a whole. It cannot be analysed in isolation from the purposes and patterns of society itself. Research, therefore, into any aspect of education cannot ignore the related sociology of the family or the effects of government budgetary policy, industrial and employment policies and developments.
2. Constant ongoing research is necessary to facilitate the adequate monitoring of societal change.
3. Information resulting from surveys, questionnaires and statistically valid samples of the target population is an essential tool for development of government policy and social codes or aims.
4. Complementary to adequate statistical information are the insights and implications provided by smaller scale and often more subjective approaches to research, such as longitudinal studies of various kinds.
5. The results of research programs must be disseminated to:
  - (a) the community as a whole;
  - (b) particular interest groups, eg teachers, parents, educational administrators and employers;
  - (c) policy and decision makers throughout the community - eg school level, government departments, local government, both state/territory and federal. It is imperative that research topics, information and findings be brought together with the needs of policy and decision makers.

### **A.7 POLICY**

- A.7.1 A coordinating agency should be established to keep accurate records of all research being undertaken in education in Australia, draw up a comprehensive list of projects to provide information in needed areas, and encourage, or, where necessary, commission research in those areas.
- A.7.2 Priorities for education research should be directed towards solving practical problems related to the school, the classroom and teacher training.
- A.7.3 Whenever possible, research findings should be translated into statements for policy development and practical propositions so that more effective use can be made of them.
- A.7.4 Federal and state/territory governments should ensure more effective coordination in education research so that research programs refine and implement current policy requirements and produce recommendations in forms that have practical application. Accordingly, the process of coordination must involve not only researchers and policy makers but also in an appropriate way the classroom teachers, parent organisations and teacher training institutions.
- A.7.5 ACSSO maintains its right to recommend to such a national education research institute or any other appropriate institute, commission or authority, specific areas on which data should be collected, or research should be undertaken.
- A.7.6 All statistical data and research findings should be made available, on request, to members of the public, other research institutions, universities and professional organisations and industry organisations.

## **A.8 ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

- 1 The structures established for the administration of education need to be examined from time to time.

### **A.8 POLICY**

#### **A.8.1 Structure of education ministry/departments**

- (a) Any evaluation of current structure(s), development of plans for subsequent structures and implementation of these plans must ensure that.
- (i) the school is the focus of the system;
  - (ii) decision making is devolved to the parents, teachers and students at those schools;
  - (iii) the rights of parents, teachers and students to participate in the determination of state/territory-wide policy is guaranteed;
  - (iv) education regions operate as support mechanisms for schools;
  - (v) policy decisions and resource allocation decisions are tied to each other;
  - (vi) adequate resources are provided by government to realise the plans;
  - (vii) the social justice issues affecting all children in the system are central considerations of the present and future administration of education;
  - (viii) the form(s) of accountability adopted give priority to identifying the support needed by schools to achieve their educational objectives.

#### **A.8.2 Regional structure**

- (a) For administrative functions inappropriate to school or central level, regional structures may be established. Regional structures and/or the central Department should perform functions which cannot be carried out efficiently and economically at the local level.
- (b) Any regional structure should consist of nominees from school boards/councils/committees, representatives of government authorities, teachers, student and representative parent bodies and elected representatives of the community at large. No individual group should constitute a majority.

#### **A.8.3 The image of public education**

- (a) Governments should encourage public system administrators and schools to take responsibility for the image the system and the schools present and promote in the community.
- (b) Any regional structure should take a responsibility for the image they, and their schools present in their community.
- (c) Governments should provide sufficient resources, and devote enough time and energy to ensure that educational administrators constantly address and cultivate the image the public school system presents to the community.
- (d) Any regional structure should establish sufficient resources and devote enough time and energy to ensure that they constantly address and cultivate the image their school system presents to their communities.



**B.1 GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF SCHOOLS****PREMISE**

1. Education is a right. All levels of government must invest in public schooling to fully resource the National Goals for Schooling, taking Australia to the forefront of developed countries; and to distribute resources equitably to achieve a just society. It is the responsibility of government to finance completely a free, universal and public system of education, of the highest standard, which:
  - [a] ensures the same range of educational outcomes across all groups of students regardless of race, culture, class, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location, intellectual capacity or physical ability;
  - [b] enables all students to have a high quality, challenging, successful and satisfying school experience;
  - [c] encourages diversity within and among government schools where this is needed to meet the educational needs of students.
2. Such funding of public education must be recognised by all governments as their first priority.

**B.1 POLICY****B.1.1 Public and private education**

It is not the responsibility of governments to fund private schools or persons using private schools; that responsibility rests with the private individual or the private institution.

**B.1.2 Conditions of funding**

However, when governments do fund non-government schools, that aid should only be granted on the following conditions:

- (a) funding is based on the criteria of need and not on a per capita basis which is inequitable and unfair to children;
- (b) needs are established by an independent statutory authority on which government school parents and teachers have representation proportional to the numbers of students in public education systems;
- (c) this needs-based funding should not allow per-capita resources in the non-government sector from all sources to exceed average per capita funding in the government school system;
- (d) the school agrees to fulfill the obligations incumbent on government schools in the public system;
- (e) public funds are not used for any religious or political indoctrination;
- (f) funds at the school level are administered by a school council, elected by and from the school community of parents, staff and, where appropriate, students, and representatives from the wider community;
- (g) the school has an open enrolment policy – students cannot be refused entry or excluded on the basis of race, religion, financial status or ability;
- (h) the school accepts responsibility for meeting the full range of educational needs of students;

- (i) school facilities are available through the school council for community use;
- (j) the school council is publicly accountable to its community and to the appropriate government body for its use of public funds.

#### B.1.3 Accountability

- (a) ACSSO considers that strict accountability to Parliament, to an independent statutory body, and to the school community, is essential to ensure that funds provided for education by governments are used in the interests of children within the public system.
- (b) ACSSO objects to the increasing amount of public funds being granted to private schools which fail to meet the above conditions and reiterates its strong belief that:
  - (i) all schools receiving public money must demonstrate that their operation is consistent with the conditions outlined above, that their use of resources is economic and in the public interest;
  - (ii) Ministers of Education must insist that non-government schools which receive over 40% of the standard government school running costs from public funds accept the above conditions of public openness, participation and accountability or have their funding terminated;
  - (iii) the federal government should introduce legislation which protects public equity in all school buildings funded from public resources.

#### B.1.4 New schools

- (a) Governments should cease assisting the establishment and funding of new non-government schools, and additional pupil places in existing non-government schools, where:
  - (i) it represents an uneconomic use of public monies because sufficient pupil places already exist in neighbourhood schools;
  - (ii) the new school or additional places would adversely effect the capacity of neighbourhood schools to provide quality curriculum;
- (b) No new non-government school should be established unless the combination of its private resources and income, as determined by an independent statutory body, enables it to operate, from the beginning, at government school resource standards.

#### B.1.5 Competition

- (a) The application of principles drawn from free market theory and market competition to the provision of education in our society produces inefficiencies and increases inequalities;
- (b) The use, as organising principles, of concepts such as choice, efficiency, incentive and especially competition between government schools is antithetical to the nature of the government school system.

#### B.1.6 Choice

- (a) Parent and community participation at a school contributes more to the successful outcomes of education for all students than the use of choice as an organising principle;
- (b) Choice of school for some has the potential to disadvantage other students.

#### B.1.7 Vouchers

ACSSO rejects the application of economic market place theory to education, in particular the voucher system, which falsely assumes that arrangements which may be considered appropriate to the consumption of goods and services can apply to the educational development of individuals,

groups and society. Therefore ACSSO believes that the voucher system is inappropriate to the provision and maintenance of an equitable system of public education.

#### B.1.8 National commission

The federal government should develop and maintain a representative independent statutory body which is responsible for:

- (a) collecting information on the standards, organisation and needs of schools in Australia;
- (b) acting as an agent for national overview of the development of schools;
- (c) stating in public reports and occasional papers the priorities, rationale and strategies for federal government funding of schools;
- (d) ensuring that the federal government and the Australian people are regularly informed of the work of ACSSO and the information on which its conclusions are based.

## **B.2 COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY RELATIONS**

### **B.2 POLICY**

#### **B.2.1 The role of the Commonwealth**

Nationally consistent approaches and processes are required in school education. The federal government should show leadership by:

- (a) allocating funds to a plan for Australian school education, which includes collaboratively developed objectives, compiled after receiving advice from an independent statutory authority which has consulted widely with parents, teachers and students to ascertain needs and priorities;
- (b) establishing and developing specific purpose programs to address educational disadvantages and encouraging innovation to meet identified needs;
- (c) allocating funds to schools on a triennial basis so that forward planning, action for improvement, evaluation and consolidation occur at all levels;
- (d) providing general recurrent funding on the basis of public resource agreements negotiated between the national government and state/territory governments in line with the plan and processes outlined above;
- (e) ensuring that all agreements and contracts between the states/territories and Commonwealth include clauses which mandate the representative participation of parents at school level and representatives of parents/school community organisations at all other levels of decision making as prerequisites for allocation of funds.

#### **B.2.2 The role of states/territories**

The role of the states/territories is to:

- (a) develop state/territory priorities by a collaborative process, involving parents, teachers, students and system administrators as the basis for negotiating resource agreements;
- (b) act as distributors of funds to area and school level and not as decision makers once resource agreements are in place;
- (c) make payment in the following manner:
  - (i) where a school has a governing body composed of parents, teachers and the wider community, funds should be paid to that body in accordance with proposals consistent with program objectives;
  - (ii) where such a body does not exist, funds should be paid to the school upon proof that the programs are supported by teachers and parents and that the funds will be controlled by a representative group of people who undertake to implement and support the program.

#### **B.2.3 Program guidelines**

Guidelines should be public documents which set out structures and membership for decision making and the requirements for accountability. In particular the guidelines should:

- (a) contain funding procedures which provide maximum flexibility to school communities in confronting and resolving the educational problems faced by their students;
- (b) locate decisions about the distribution of funds as close as possible to the schools;
- (c) specify the composition and method of selection for all members of program committees, school, state/territory, area and national, providing that:

- (i) all committees are representative;
  - (ii) parents are members of all committees;
  - (iii) parent representatives are either elected by all parents or nominated by the appropriate state/territory or national body;
  - (iv) government school parents are included on all decision making bodies when government school students are to be involved in programs;
  - (v) committees also include representatives of parent and school council organisations, teacher unions and community groups at all levels beyond the school;
- (d) require that all committees are publicly accountable for their decisions.

#### B.2.4 Specific programs to address educational disadvantage

- (a) The federal and state/territory governments must show commitment to pursuing equality of outcomes through schooling by funding programs in schools serving communities with a concentration of socioeconomic disadvantages.
- (b) A specific purpose program is the best vehicle for redressing unequal outcomes from schooling.
- (c) The Disadvantaged Schools Program which operated under national auspices from 1973 to 1997 demonstrated that it was an effective program for redressing educational disadvantage. A replacement program of similar character is needed.
- (d) National and state/territory governments and education authorities should cooperate to ensure the continuing viability of programs which redress disadvantage.
- (e) An agreed socioeconomic index, using the latest available census data, should be used to distribute funds to each state/territory.
- (f) Each state/territory should identify the individual schools serving the highest concentration of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.
- (g) Funding should be on the basis of implementing quality programs rather than by notional per capita grants to eligible schools.
- (h) Professional support services are essential to program development and should be readily available free of charge on an equitable basis to all school decision making bodies and their constituent parts.
- (i) Coordination with other community agencies should occur, where appropriate.

### **B.3 RESOURCE SHARING**

#### **B.3 POLICY**

B.3.1 The full range of services and facilities should be provided for all students in government schools. This should not be dependent on funding arrangements involving other school sectors.

B.3.2 School/TAFE/university enterprises must:

- (a) maintain the principle of free education;
- (b) ensure that the pattern of study and curriculum are balanced, open and create opportunities for change for all students;
- (c) ensure the functions and purposes of schooling are not subjugated to the interests of the university or vocational education sectors;
- (d) ensure the values of the government school direct the activities and contributions of the other sectors;
- (e) ensure governance by a democratically elected council which is representative of parents, students, teachers and the wider community.

## **B.4 SCHOOL LEVIES**

### **B.4 POLICY**

B.4.1 Governments and schools have no right to charge compulsory school fees against parents especially as a means of supplementing the provision of a public school system.

B.4.2 When governments fail to provide adequate resources to fund a quality education program, ACSSO concedes the need for schools to request donations from parents, but stipulates that such requests must be governed by the following guidelines:

- (a) requests for any monies must be in writing and described as voluntary;
- (b) requests for donations must be related to the school policy and plans, made only after consultation with the school community and by decision of:
  - (i) the school council; or
  - (ii) the legally constituted parent organisation where a school council does not exist; or
  - (iii) the appropriate school authority where neither a council or organisation exists;
- (c) non-payment of requests for monies must not result in children being denied access to any schools programs or activities or in parents being harassed;
- (d) government grants to schools are to be spent on the purposes for which they were intended eg government text book allowances must be spent on text books;
- (e) where requests for parent contributions are made, a clear written statement must be published and distributed to all parents detailing:
  - (i) the use of relevant government grants;
  - (ii) the use to which the voluntary donations will be put;
- (f) time payment or credit payment arrangements must not be used as a means of pressuring parents into payment;
- (g) no request for donation should exceed the average per capita government grant paid to the school for pupil requisites.

## **B.5 COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP AND LINKS WITH EXTERNAL BODIES**

### **PREMISE**

1. Any links between schools and bodies external to the school education system should be designed to improve the education provided within government school systems and the understanding of education by external bodies.
2. Curriculum content and school policies must not be determined by the interests of external bodies, nor must external bodies obtain undue influence on a school or the system as a result of sponsorship or other links.
3. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that no government school becomes dependent on the external body for funds for its operations, and that the distribution of resources between government schools is just.

### **B.5 POLICY**

B.5.1 While recognising that schools have benefited in many ways from resources provided by industry and service clubs, as well as by individuals, teacher/industry exchange programs, assistance with work experience programs for students, and the provision of awards for students and schools, ACSSO insists that all governments must ensure that schools do not become dependent on sponsors for any part of their curriculum or educational functions.

B.5.2 ACSSO does not support:

- (a) the linking of schools with commercial enterprises in a way which would undermine the principles of public education;
- (b) activities which would cause tensions in a community because of the school's identification with a particular commercial interest;
- (c) sponsored activities which promote competition between students or schools for resources;
- (d) naming of sporting events after a commercial organisation or sponsor.

B.5.3 ACSSO strongly opposes:

- (a) acceptance by schools of resources which may have the effects of compromising the school's policies, programs and strategies;
- (b) the changing of a name of any government school to incorporate the name of a sponsor;
- (c) the inclusion of the name of a commercial enterprise on school stationery or the sign indicating the name of the school;
- (d) the use of school buildings and grounds for advertising purposes;
- (e) the use of the school and its students to promote a particular product or service and in particular, the use of advertising on uniforms;
- (f) activities which involve students in commercial promotions;
- (g) sponsorship which would lead to unacceptable differences in resource levels between schools in public education systems.

B.5.4 ACSSO would accept public acknowledgment of sponsors, for example on speech days and in newsletters or at sports events.

B.5.5 It is the responsibility of school councils and parent organisations to:

- (a) critically consider all proposals for school/industry links;

- (b) authorise activities and/or linkages which fall within these guidelines and are consistent with school policy when they are in the interests of students.

B.5.6 It is the responsibility of government systems to develop guidelines for systems and schools which incorporate the principles and practices outlined above.

## **B.6 TAXATION**

### **B.6 POLICY**

#### **B.6.1 Income tax**

B.6.1.1 The principle of education expenses being allowed as a concessional deduction from gross income for taxation purposes is contrary to the basic principle of taxation as a means of redistribution of resources for economic or social benefit.

#### **B.6.2 Other taxes**

B.6.2.1 All public school requisites should be free of all taxes.

#### **B.6.3 Goods and services tax**

##### **PREMISE**

1. Any action which would have the effect of imposing an increased financial burden on schools, students or parents via the application of a goods and services tax to education resources and services is unacceptable.

##### **B.6.3 POLICY**

B.6.3.1 A goods and services tax must not be applied to educational resources and services.

B.6.3.2 The GST exemption for school parent organisations should be no less than \$200,000 and regularly reviewed by the Australian Taxation Office.

**C.1 PARENTS/GUARDIANS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATION****PREMISE**

1. Parents have a fundamental right to send their child to a government school system which is open, free, secular and appropriate to the child's needs.
2. Parents have responsibilities to protect and utilise these rights in relation to their own children and to students generally.
3. Parents have the right to participate in decision-making of the school that affects their children's learning.
4. Students learn best in an environment where the school program recognises and values the cultural and social background of both parents and students. The reasons being:
  - (a) parents have a unique knowledge and understanding of their children;
  - (b) parents are the first and most significant educators;
  - (c) parents have talents, interests and skills which can enrich and diversify the life and programs of schools.

**C.1 POLICY****C.1.1 Parents/guardians have the right to:**

- (a) Participation
  - (i) to be members of a productive partnership with educators and other parents/guardians to promote and support quality learning for all young people;
  - (ii) to be educated about the school's programs, principles and aims, so that they can be supported and enriched (including the external provision of remediation and tutoring);
  - (iii) to consultation before changes are made which affect the school climate;
  - (iv) to participate in evaluation procedures affecting their child's programs;
  - (v) to participate in the formulation of school policy and goals;
  - (vi) to participate in decision-making at all levels;
  - (vii) to be involved at the earliest opportunity in the event their child is to be suspended or excluded from school. The student has the right to "due process", and parents/guardians and students have the right to be heard;
  - (viii) to negotiate with teachers a settlement of disputed areas in the best interests of the child, recognising that neither the school nor parents/guardians have absolute rights in the determination of the content and processes of schooling.
- (b) Information
  - (i) to be provided with comprehensive information about the policies, programs and resources of the school before enrolment;
  - (ii) to be provided with ongoing information about the policies, programs and resources of the school to promote confidence and/or initiate the need for change through participatory processes;

- (iii) to share information about student programs and achievement as outlined in ACSSO policy on reporting to parents;
  - (iv) to have access to, and professional interpretation of, records and files;
  - (v) to have records and files treated confidentially so that privacy of parents/guardians and students is respected;
  - (vi) to request removal of inaccurate data from records and files and where a dispute over accuracy occurs, access to impartial arbitration;
  - (vii) to obtain information about a program in which their child is engaged, the rationale for the program, the evaluation methods used, and the credentials and teaching methods of those implementing the program;
  - (viii) to negotiate access to visit and observe any programs involving their child and to have access to those working with their child (teachers, principals, specialists).
- (c) Be heard
- (i) by the teachers; by the school staff; by regional, state and national education authorities;
  - (ii) when policies are being formulated, when planning is undertaken, when programs are developed, and when evaluation is being undertaken, as individuals and as representative groups;
  - (iii) to make use of the democratic process, including the right to lobby, the right to be represented on decision-making bodies, the right to be consulted by decision-makers and the right to access of information necessary for full participation.
- (d) Safeguards
- (i) to demand that the government school system has certain standards that govern good practice including the provision of a balanced curriculum focused on students' present and future needs;
  - (ii) to expect safeguards which protect their children from physical, intellectual and emotional negligence or abuse;
  - (iii) to receive assurance that their school does not allow unauthorised invasions of their child's privacy or property;
  - (iv) that parental permission is sought before physiological, psychiatric, or medical assessment and/or treatment of the child is undertaken;
  - (v) receive assurance that school/s will not be identified by the media in instances where an actual or suspected crime or misdemeanour occurs at a school;
  - (vi) implementation of a positive program in schools to control bullying/assault.
- (e) Withdrawal
- (i) to withdraw their child from optional curricula activities and be advised of the supervision facilities available and to expect that the child will be provided with an educationally sound alternative during this time.
- (f) Appeal at all levels
- (i) against decisions which they consider unsatisfactory;
  - (ii) to be informed of their lines of appeal to impartial arbitration;

- (iii) to receive a written explanation which responds to their appeal and which they may require in pursuing their grievance.
- (g) Advocacy
  - (i) to an advocate chosen by the parent/guardian to support, plead, speak, read or write on his/her behalf.
- (h) Special provisions
  - (i) to special services for children with limitations, disabilities or exceptional talents, including special transportation to enable their children access to all available facilities;
  - (ii) to consultation regarding programs for children with handicaps, limitations, disabilities or exceptional talents, including the question of segregation;
  - (iii) to special assistance for themselves so that they can understand the situation and be enabled to continue helping their child;
  - (iv) to expect that children resident in corrective or welfare institutions will not be disadvantaged educationally;
  - (v) to expect that the school dental health services will adopt procedures whereby:
    - (1) parents/guardians are advised of the date and time of an examination in sufficient time to allow a parent to be present if they so wish;
    - (2) a report of any recommended treatment be given to the parent and not to the child.
- (i) Staff/facilities
  - (i) to expect that government schools are provided with sufficient competent, experienced teachers, ancillary and support staff, who receive effective in-service training and that promotions are based on merit;
  - (ii) to expect that there is stability of effective staff in all government schools;
  - (iii) to expect that the class size will be adjusted to suit specific learning needs and that sufficient facilities are provided to ensure a positive and safe learning environment for students.
  - (iv) All teaching/non-teaching staff appointments are based upon that person meeting all specified criteria and that merit selection process will be abided by.

C.1.2 Parents/guardians have responsibility to:

- (a) recognise and protect the rights of children;
- (b) promote the health and wellbeing of children;
- (c) provide a safe and supportive home environment;
- (d) seek to resolve conflict in a fair and non-violent way;
- (e) seek information as needed and exercise the right to participate in education at home and at school whenever possible;
- (f) assist the school to establish shared values and expectations;
- (g) support the implementation of school policies;

- (h) respect the right of all students, staff and school community members to learn and work in an environment free from aggression.

**D.1 THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN****PREMISE**

1. All children have a right to education. This right is vested in the child.
2. No child should be denied access to appropriate education and training.
3. Education must be directed to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
4. Education must prepare the child for the responsibility of living in a free society, in the spirit of peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins.
5. Education must recognise the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age and needs of the child.
6. Educational settings must be free from all forms of violence and the threat of violence.
7. Education systems must ensure respect for the child's parents, their cultural identity, languages and values. These systems must maintain and develop in the child an understanding of and respect for these family values and for those of cultures other than their own.
8. Children must be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.
9. No child shall be subjected to the arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, property or correspondence nor to unlawful attack on their honour or reputation.
10. Children must be protected from all forms of exploitation, including economic exploitation.
11. All children should enjoy life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self reliance and facilitate active participation in the community.

**D.1 POLICY**

- D.1.1 All children have the right through education to attain dignity, success and competence. This right must be recognised through legislation.
- D.1.2 This legislation should reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and should include the right of the child to an education which:
- (a) is free of charge and of the highest quality, provided by governments through a public education system until the age of eighteen;
  - (b) is physically safe and emotionally secure in an environment free from all forms of violence and the threat of violence;
  - (c) offers participation in educational decision making and progressive responsibility for those decisions at a classroom, school and system level;
  - (d) has the trained teachers, teaching resources and educational facilities necessary to meet all educational needs;
  - (e) sees education settings organised in ways which encourage adults to respect the child as a person, intrinsic in their own worth;
  - (f) has teaching programs which individualise education, promote learning, empower the child and which will enable the child to develop competencies in literacy, numeracy and thinking skills;

- (g) has educational programs and support services which maximise the personal, social, emotional and educational growth of the individual child;
- (h) offers complete information about the intended outcomes of the teaching and learning programs of the educational setting, what is expected of the child and why;
- (i) includes career guidance, counselling and work experience programs integrated within the total curriculum, at least from the beginning of secondary education;
- (j) ensures opportunities for re-entry for all who apply;
- (k) recognises the culture, language and history of Indigenous Australian peoples and their special place as Australia's first inhabitants;
- (l) develops an understanding of ecological principles, respect for the environment and emphasises responsibility to maintain Australia's still very high level of biological diversity;
- (m) respects the multicultural nature of modern Australia by recognising the language, culture and history of all our people.

## **D.2 STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. Students have fundamental rights and responsibilities in relation to the quality of education provided in government schools.

### **D.2 POLICY**

D.2.1 All students have the right to institutional understanding of and specific support for special needs, cultural practice, economic disadvantage, gender, aboriginality, academic ability and other recognition of individual diversity. Students have the right to access the highest standards of education.

D.2.2 Students, as individuals and as representative groups and collectively have the right to:

(a) Safety

- (i) Experience education free from harm or the threat of harm in an environment that is supportive and provides continuity and safety.

(b) Esteem

- (i) be treated with honesty, respect and dignity by other students, parents, teachers and the community so that they may grow in self esteem and develop their own identity;
- (ii) proceed with the learning process without interference or disruption;
- (iii) an education free from any form of physical or mental abuse;
- (iv) be given equal opportunity in a non-threatening environment and to have the right to be heard;
- (v) freedom from all forms of discrimination.

(b) Participation

- (i) To be involved in decision-making at all levels.

(c) Quality learning.

D.2.2 Students, as individuals and as representative groups, are responsible for:

- (a) contributing to the development of a happy and effective learning environment;
- (b) having pride in themselves, their endeavours and their peers;
- (c) treating all persons and property with respect;
- (d) recognising the rights of others, both in respect to their persons and property;
- (e) cooperating in their own physical, intellectual and social development.

### **D.3 STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING**

#### **PREMISE**

1. In a democratic society, the public education system has the important function of empowering future citizens so that they are able to participate fully in the life of the community and contribute to the shaping of the environment in which they live. This empowerment must extend through all levels of educational decision making from the classroom to national educational policy making bodies. Students need to see evidence of this positive contribution in action.
2. Student participation and representation encouraging engagement with the community, respect and understanding for democracy, citizenship, tolerance and civic responsibility are an important part of empowering young people and addressing social disadvantage.

#### **D.3 POLICY**

- D.3.1 Student representative participation must be encouraged and properly resourced.
- D.3.2 Students should gain an understanding of decision making processes from the school curriculum.
- D.3.3 Student participation is most often expressed through Student Representative Councils (SRC) but must go beyond formal structures. Students should be encouraged in matters that concern them in conjunction with but not limited to SRC structures.
- D.3.4 To this end, structures for decision making in education should model democratic processes.
- D.3.5 The formation, funding and maintenance of student networks at school, regional and state/territory levels are vital.
- D.3.6 Primary schools should encourage students from their earliest years at school, to progressively become involved in decision making.

#### **D.4 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

#### **D.4 POLICY**

- D.4.1 Greater emphasis should be placed on courses aimed at the emotional and social development of students. In particular, ACSSO endorses the wider use, at all stages of schooling, of courses based on discussion groups which provide students with a facilitated environment in which they can acquire confidence in themselves, their values and their personal relationships and through which they attain greater stability, adaptability and a positive attitude to others.
- D.4.2 All personal development, physical education and health programs should include a component to counter homophobia as a step toward eliminating hatred and violence.

## **D.5 STUDENTS AT RISK**

### **PREMISE**

1. Students dislike, disengage from and leave school for a variety of reasons, at different stages in their schooling, with different attitudes towards education and different prospects for future careers.

### **D.5 POLICY**

- D.5.1 All students have the right of access to learning. It is the responsibility of the school to provide curriculum and a safe and supportive learning environment, which are directed towards success and equity of outcomes for all students.
- D.5.2 Education systems and schools have an obligation to provide a variety of curriculum options and teaching methods which will enable students at risk to experience success and a sense of belonging and usefulness, and that will enable them to have a real choice of satisfying educational pathways, employment and lifestyles.
- D.5.3 Education systems and schools have an obligation to provide support for pregnant and parenting students throughout their pregnancy and post natal allowing them to continue with their studies in a nurturing environment at a school of their choice where they feel comfortable, valued and secure.

**D.6 SCHOOL UNIFORM**

**D.6 POLICY**

D.6.1 Only the school parent association(s), or in the absence of a school parent association, the school council or other forum, in conjunction with students and other members of the local school community, should have the responsibility:

- (a) to decide whether there should be a school uniform or code of dress;
- (b) if so, the composition of that uniform or code of dress;
- (c) to encourage the voluntary wearing of that uniform or code of dress.

D.6.2 No child should be barred from school activities or punished in any other way for being out of school uniform unless health or safety requirements are ignored.

## **D.7 STUDENTS**

### **PREMISE**

1. Accessibility, economic and cultural disadvantage have the capacity to prevent students from continuing education. Governments have an obligation to ensure equitable access and participation for all students regardless of background, ethnicity, gender, religion or class.

### **D.7 POLICY**

- D.7.1 Federal, state and territory governments must provide adequate grants and allowances to students or their families to enable all students to complete their senior secondary schooling.

D.7.2 Secondary student allowances

- (a) The Commonwealth must encourage all students to continue and complete their school education by providing adequate and timely information about student allowances.
- (b) Allowances should be indexed and sufficient to adequately maintain a student until the completion of secondary education.
- (c) Eligibility requirements of the means test should be targeted so as to make the allowances available on a basis of need.
- (d) All or part of the allowance should be paid directly to students where this is necessary.
- (e) All secondary students, regardless of their age, who are independent of their families should receive a full allowance. Parental means test should not apply in situations where students are independent by necessity.
- (f) The Commonwealth must ensure that when eligibility for assistance is assessed:
  - (i) the number of students in one family undertaking full-time study is taken into account;
  - (ii) parents do not suffer a subsequent reduction in any social services payment or tax benefit they may receive;
  - (iii) assets such as machinery and/or land which are necessary to produce the major source of yearly income should not be included.
- (g) Government must ensure that disadvantaged students have equal access to high quality education. As well as appropriate support for students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, indigenous and special needs students, programs should be put in place to support pregnant and parenting students. All such students should participate in a nurturing environment at a school of their choice where they feel comfortable, valued and secure.

D.7.3 Encouragement to continue

All governments shall:

- (a) ensure that adequate counselling and careers guidance services are available to students and parents to enable them to evaluate the desirability of continuing secondary education up to and/or beyond the statutory leaving age;
- (b) provide multilingual information sheets and application forms to assist migrant families' applications;
- (c) provide emergency grants for students where family circumstances temporarily threaten the chances of a student continuing with education;
- (d) provide adequate benefits to students and families with dependent children above the age of 15. For low income families the cost of supporting young people rises as they progress through senior levels of schooling. The Commonwealth should take immediate action to

prevent youth allowance and the family tax benefit from falling in the later years of schooling which contributes to teenage poverty and impacts negatively on school retention rates.

#### D.7.4 Open secondary education

- (a) To encourage young people to complete secondary education the federal government should extend the independent provision of student allowances to enable people who re-enter secondary education after one year of proven independence, to receive the allowance irrespective of parental income;
- (b) To further the re-entry of early school leavers, the federal government should encourage the states/territories to provide facilities appropriate for the variety of aspirations the re-entrants will have by:
  - (i) a survey of the reasons why secondary students leave school, emphasising the economic and cultural aspects, as well as the influence of the nature of the school system;
  - (ii) funding in conjunction with state/territory government programs within schools and TAFE, teacher training and support for re-entering students .

#### D.7.5 Tertiary education

In respect to tertiary education:

- (a) Government should fund universities to a level that ensures world's best practice. Staff student ratios must be reduced, resource issues addressed, more academic staff employed, disadvantaged regional institutions must be better supported and the number of available places expanded.
- (b) places should be fully funded by the federal government, and none should be offered to Australian students as a result of payment of fees. All full-fee paying places for overseas students should be offered on a full-cost rather than marginal-cost recovery basis;
- (c) where Government does not provide free tertiary education, the HECS repayment threshold must be indexed to average male weekly earnings and the contribution of students capped at 10% of the cost of their degree. Youth Allowance and Austudy payments should also be increased to allow full time tertiary students a liveable income and balance between work and study.
- (d) where there are insufficient places in courses to meet demand, tertiary admission policies should:
  - (i) avoid selecting students on the basis of small, statistically and practically insignificant differences in tertiary entrance scores, by replacing current ranking systems with the release of scores as broad bands;
  - (ii) value student's specific skills, abilities and aptitudes relevant to particular higher education courses;
  - (iii) value a variety of intelligences including those in the creative and imaginative domain;
  - (iv) value the wide range of learning and assessment modes used in schools;
  - (v) provide equal access to students applying from any Australian state or territory;
  - (vi) increase the use of performance, portfolios and interviews, and other forms of personal assessment. Explicit public processes and criteria for interviews and personal assessments, including community input to and representation on interview committees, must be an integral part of these processes;
  - (vii) increase the number of places available to previously under-represented groups who are known to be educationally disadvantaged;

- (c) bridging courses should be provided for those whose earlier education program did not provide adequate preparation for their subsequent choice of study. Such courses should cater for full and part-time students, external students and those in full time employment;
- (d) recognising that, for many students, the experience and added maturity gained from a period away from full time education before entry to a tertiary course is of great benefit, students who have made this choice should not suffer any disadvantages as a result;
- (e) intensive counselling should be available to all students seeking places in tertiary institutions, so that they enter courses in which they have a reasonable chance of success;
- (f) in accepting this responsibility, tertiary institutions must ensure that procedures for choice are coordinated and rationalised in the best interest of students and society;
- (g) the federal government should ensure that it provides the funds necessary, with a minimum of delay, to enable the number of tertiary places available to be increased to meet the entry demands of all Australian students;
- (h) tertiary institutions are requested to make public the entrance criteria for students from all states and territories;
- (i) tertiary institutions should exercise positive discrimination in entrance requirements together with appropriate support structures in favour of students who are identified as educationally disadvantaged.

## **D.8 YOUTH POLICY**

### **PREMISE**

1. The youth of Australia is entitled to the benefits of an educational system and a society which prepares them for the responsibilities and rights of adulthood and provides them with the skills, attitudes and knowledge which will enable them to live meaningful and productive lives in a democratic society according to their individual aptitudes values and tastes.  
  
(By 'youth' is meant the 15 -19 year age group).
2. Youth policy must aim at a balance which emphasises the integrated relationships between education, work, leisure and participation within the community. Government and society have an obligation to ensure young people are ready, willing and able to take an active and informed role in Australian society. Community attitudes toward youth must focus on encouragement and assistance. Parents, families, educational institutions and workplaces have responsibility to ensure that young people have the ability to cope with choice of vocation and pressures involved with achieving life goals.
3. Increases in the level of technological sophistication of society and the pace of technological change mean that all young people require a higher level of education to ensure that they can fully participate in the life of Australian society, and that they have the capacity for life-long learning.
4. The senior years of secondary school have thus become a crucial extension period of further education which young people need to develop the knowledge and skills they require for their future lives and to acquire the additional maturity to make informed decisions about the choices they have to make.
5. Beyond schooling, a social framework should exist which will enable every young Australian to:
  - (a) achieve a lifestyle which will provide sustenance, occupation, identity and satisfaction;
  - (b) live effectively as a responsible member of the community;
  - (c) obtain training or further education as the need arises without suffering undue economic penalty;
  - (d) obtain a living wage / allowance.
6. It is the responsibility of governments to pursue and implement policies and provide the resources necessary to achieve these aims.

### **D.8 POLICY**

#### **D.8.1 ACSSO advocates:**

- (a) a guarantee of either work, education, or training, or a combination of the three for all young people 15-19 years old;
- (b) payment of a living wage / allowance to the young people involved and to those who, on exemption, legally leave school prior to the age of 15 years;
- (c) provision of a decentralised organisational framework to administer the policy in order to encourage community participation, including youth, and the collaboration of all interested agencies.
- (d) broad leadership programs should be implemented to enhance young people's esteem and skills. Extra-curricular activities such as sport, peer-to-peer programs, community work and creative expression are essential. The relevant Federal Government departments responsible for families and education should work with relevant State bodies to ensure the full range of such programs are available to all young people Australia wide.
- (e) Governments in particular, and society in general, should give high priority to reducing youth unemployment, particularly in country areas, and to dealing positively with the consequences of youth unemployment.

## **D.9 SENIOR STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

### **D.9 POLICY**

- D.9.1 All Australian young people are entitled to complete a free comprehensive secondary education, as full-time students in government schools.
- D.9.2 The educational goal of government school systems should be to ensure that all students satisfactorily complete all the years of secondary schooling within a framework of a broad general education.
- D.9.3 School systems should be structured to enable young people to enjoy successful learning experiences which will encourage them to remain longer and gain maximum benefits from formal education. This will require specific attention to the early development of literacy and numeracy to prevent students being effectively excluded from the educational system, and the offering of a broad curriculum in which all studies are valued and make use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies to enable the integration of theory and practice.
- D.9.4 The curriculum for senior secondary students should value all studies, should be based on sound principles of teaching and learning, should be intrinsically interesting, and should develop qualities which will assist young people in any one, or any combination of post-school destinations. To this end, the curriculum should integrate theory and practice in all areas of learning, offering a truly general education which combines the academic and the vocational.
- D.9.5 Schools should:
- (a) maximise opportunities for cooperative decision making by students, staff, parents and others with interests in the school;
  - (b) develop and maintain links between school, parents and community to establish direct relationships between curriculum, community activities and adults of all ages.
- D.9.6 The emphasis in senior secondary years must be on provision of a broad general education for all students as the best way to keep open as many options as possible for students to the end of secondary school.
- D.9.7 In addition to the generic vocational components of a broad general education which combines the vocational and the academic, students, if they so desire, must be allowed to pursue special interests which have a particular vocational focus within the framework of that broad general education. Provision of this form of curriculum diversity may often be best ensured by articulation between secondary schools and colleges and by articulation with TAFE institutes, rather than by duplication of facilities. Apart from the provision of a limited amount of vocation-specific training integrated into broad general pathways within secondary schools and colleges, specific vocational training should be provided in the workplace and tertiary institutions.
- D.9.8 ACSSO supports the development of coherent pathways and credit transfer arrangements between schools and post-school education and training, but believes that these arrangements should be structured so that they encourage students to stay at school, rather than providing pathways out of the school system.
- D.9.9 It is recognised that TAFE is primarily responsible for providing general education programs for adults returning to study. Schools should however retain their capacity to enrol adult students where that is the personal choice of the student, or there is no access to TAFE facilities. Adult students in government schools should be funded by further education authorities.
- D.9.10 Career education should be oriented towards encouraging young people to complete their senior secondary studies. In addition, schools should be given the resources to develop comprehensive work-experience programs for all students, and to develop programs aimed at students at risk of failing to complete their studies.

**D.10 BEYOND SCHOOL**

**D.10 POLICY**

- D.10.1 Positive incentives should be provided for employer, trade union and other community organisations to provide training positions which will encourage youth to participate actively.
- D.10.2 Government, employers and trade unions should take youth into consideration when formulating wage structure, job retention and job creation strategies.
- D.10.3 All community organisations should be encouraged to willingly accept young people into their activities to break down the cultural isolation of youth.
- D.10.3 A national framework for establishing functional liveable apprenticeship wages should be established. On the job training for young people is an essential part of the transition from education to the work place.

## **D.11 CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS**

### **D.11 POLICY**

D.11.1 Children resident in corrective or welfare institutions should not be disadvantaged educationally and it is the responsibility of governments to ensure that the educational opportunities available to those children are of the highest standard.

D.11.2 All governments shall:

- (a) ensure that the education of children in such institutions be the responsibility of education authorities and integrated into the overall education department structure;
- (b) provide that teaching staff of such institutions are part of the professional staffing structure of the education department with the same salary scales, promotional opportunities and assessment procedures as other teachers with equivalent qualifications, including the ability to transfer freely to and from other schools in the system;
- (c) set a pupil/teacher ratio in such institutions commensurate with the needs of the students;
- (d) supply to such institutions specialist ancillary staff as necessary to cope with the particular needs of the students.
- (e) make funds available for equity programs, remedial programs and extra curricular activities to education providers working within state departments of corrective services.

## **D.12 EDUCATION FOR HOSPITALISED STUDENTS**

### **PREMISE**

- 1 All students have the right to an appropriate educational service which will:
- (a) facilitate continuity of educational experiences;
  - (b) contribute to a student's well being, treatment and recovery in a caring supportive environment;
  - (c) be responsive to information from hospital teams, parents/caregivers, home schools, other agencies and the student;
  - (d) facilitate the transition process;
  - (e) ensure that students (short stay, recurrently ill and long stay) do not suffer educational disadvantage due to hospitalisation.

### **D.12 POLICY**

D.12.1 Staffing of these services should:

- (a) be preserved and increased depending on the special needs of individual hospitals
- (b) require teachers to have special skills and talents appropriate to a variety of teaching environments;
- (c) require teachers be part of multi-disciplinary teams while students are hospitalised.

D12.2 Facilities should:

- (a) be available to all students within the hospital regardless of their medical condition or duration of stay;
- (b) be available to families requiring to stay in metropolitan centres for long periods and may have siblings of patients that need ongoing education for the duration of care;
- (c) be designed in consultation with the educational staff of the school service and any advisory group the school may have;
- (d) be maintained and any alteration to conditions be done with the full involvement of school staff and any advisory group the school may have;
- (e) be provided with the same equipment allowances that schools are entitled to;
- (f) house a resource centre.



## **SECTION E – SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION**

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### **E.1 SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION**

#### **PREMISE**

1. Social justice in education will be achieved when there are no significant differences in educational outcomes associated with demographic characteristics such as socio-economic status, cultural background, disability, gender, indigenous background, geographic location or any other variable irrelevant to educational achievement.

#### **E.1 POLICY**

- E.1.1 All students must have access to and be able to participate in a high quality education. To this end, each student has a right to a free education within the government system and the opportunity to learn and progress to the maximum extent of his/her ability.
- E.1.2 The provision of education must reflect the diverse needs and contributions of all students regardless of ability, social and cultural backgrounds.
- E.1.3 All students must be given the opportunity to fully develop their abilities, talents, and interests and be encouraged to assume responsibility for their lives.
- E.1.4 All students and their parents must receive relevant information to enable them to make informed educational decisions and choices, and to have access to those choices.
- E.1.5 All students must be able to participate in enriching curriculum, free from bias, within a supportive school environment.
- E.1.6 The different capacities and backgrounds of students must be welcomed and valued for the positive contribution they can make to a diverse and complex society.
- E.1.7 All students must have opportunities to develop an understanding of the nature, origins and consequences of inequalities in society and be empowered to advocate for change to redress these inequities.
- E.1.8 Programs which redress the educational disadvantages of students must be devised, developed and supported by governments, departments of education and the community. These programs will be effective only where parents, students and teachers participate as equal partners in decision-making.

## **E.2 EDUCATION OF STUDENTS OF LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

### **PREMISE**

1. Socio-economic status is a most significant indicator of education and future life outcomes.
2. While schools by themselves cannot bring about social justice, they are an integral part of society and therefore should attempt to counter, rather than reinforce, social inequalities.
3. Affirmative action may be necessary in order to work towards more equitable outcomes for all groups currently disadvantaged in education.

### **E.2 POLICY**

- E.2.1 Low socio-economic status of school communities must be included as a significant criterion for distribution of resources within systems.
- E.2.2 Federal, state and territory departments must work with other agencies such as health, welfare, housing and other community services in consultation with the whole school community in seeking to redress the effects of socio-economic disadvantage on outcomes in education.
- E.2.3 Pre-service teacher education and teacher professional development should provide an understanding of educational disadvantages which may arise from poverty and its intersection with other aspects of disadvantage.
- E.2.4 All students should have opportunities to develop an understanding of the nature, origins and consequences of social inequality.

### **E.3 EDUCATION FOR A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

#### **PREMISE**

1. Schools ought not only reflect the diversity of Australia's population, but also be sensitive to the needs and values of different groups, their similarities and differences.
2. Racism is a term for discriminatory practices, unequal relationships and structures of power, negative beliefs and attitudes that lead to some groups in society having poorly paid jobs, poorer health, housing, education and life chances. These practices are perpetuated by relationships and structures in the community which disadvantage certain groups on racial grounds and are often expressed in the harassment of individuals and groups.
3. It is usual that all citizens should become proficient in the use of English for the purpose of communication with and participation in Australian society.
4. All children should be provided with the opportunity to learn community languages and value the heritage of our different communities.
5. Overseas experience suggests that children who attend a school where another language is used will learn faster if bilingual programs are created. Bilingual programs for English speaking students also have benefits in promoting an appreciation of ethnic diversity.

#### **E.3 POLICY**

- E.3.1 The development of school programs designed to promote understanding in our multicultural society must include participation of parents and community members. These programs should comprise the following basic interrelated components:
- (a) teaching English as a second language to all those children and adults who need such instruction;
  - (b) teaching community languages to those who want to learn them. These are languages other than English, which are used in Australia;
  - (c) schools should develop a multicultural perspective in their curriculum;
  - (d) where students can benefit, education authorities should, with the cooperation of parents and students, adopt bilingual programs;
  - (e) all citizens should have the opportunity to study the customs, traditions and values of various cultures, and the contributions these have made to Australia's society;
  - (f) the federal government should provide major additional resources to finance such action and programs.
- E.3.2 ACSSO rejects racism in all its forms, direct and indirect, racial vilification and harassment.
- E.3.3 Schools should play an important role in the transmission of social values (culture) and school authorities have an obligation to practice and promote the ideal of racial equality and harmony.
- E.3.4 Professional development should be conducted to heighten the awareness and sensitivity of teachers and administrators to the needs of students with different cultural backgrounds.
- E.3.5 Communication, oral and written, between school and home, should be provided in a language that parents can understand.
- E.3.6 Advice on future careers, assessment and counselling of the student and parents should be in their first language.
- E.3.7 Curriculum and resource materials must be free from institutional racism and racist perspectives.
- E.3.8 Teaching assistants with the appropriate cultural background and language skills should be employed to assist class teachers with a high proportion of students from differing cultural backgrounds.

## **E.4 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **PREMISE**

1. All people have equal and inalienable rights of human dignity and freedom and rights to education and training to enable development of their abilities to their fullest potential.

### **E.4 POLICY**

#### **E.4.1 ACSSO asserts:**

- (a) the right of every child with physical, intellectual or social disability to the education, treatment and care required by his/her health needs and to attend the educational setting of his/her choice.
- (b) Governments have an obligation to provide free education in government schools for all children. All children have the right to schooling which enables them to recognise and develop their aptitudes and abilities. They should learn the skills needed to use their talents, and helped and encouraged to find ways to apply their talents and skills in personally fulfilling ways.
- (c) The individual needs of students with disabilities must be met by a range of different services expressed through appropriate and well planned curricula, programs and environments with well trained supportive personnel in conjunction with parents and families. All people working in the field of Special Education must have an understanding of, and commitment to, the concept that every individual's role in society is valued.

#### **E.4.2 With respect to inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream settings, ACSSO asserts that:**

- (a) government funding must be increased proportionally with the increasing demand for this service and that this funding should then be maintained for as long as required, ie for the duration of the student's enrolment, unless it can be demonstrated that such support is no longer needed, and that this funding follow the student wherever that students enrolls.
- (b) parents have the right to enrol their children at their local school with the aim of placing them in the least restrictive and most advantageous environment. This choice must be based on having been given full information about available options.
- (c) parents have the right to be equal partners in decisions about additional educational requirements to support the inclusion process, and to be involved at all stages on an equal basis in decisions about curriculum planning and evaluation when enrolling students or determining individual education plans.
- (d) before a student is referred for assessment, parents must be notified and their permission sought for an evaluation. A multi-disciplinary assessment team, including the parents and/or their advocate, should make the evaluation.
- (e) inclusion must be planned ie the mainstream school environment – including physical and other resources, teachers, parents and students (both those with disabilities to be included and their non-disabled peers) should be prepared by careful planning and resourcing to ensure that successful inclusion takes place.
- (f) parents and students must be fully informed of their child's progress regularly and must be given the choice to withdraw their child from any inclusion program if the parents are concerned about the wellbeing and educational outcomes of their child.
- (g) support services must be provided for students, parents and teachers, and all students and classes with special needs in a mainstream school must be an integral part of that school.

#### **E.4.3 Early education programs must begin as soon as a disability is identified and these should be a continuum of suitable programs throughout the school life of that child. Funding must be provided to develop and implement programs which facilitate the early recognition of all disabilities and the development of appropriate learning programs.**

- E. 4.4 Extra provision of resources should be made to assist parents/caregivers and/or tutors/teachers of students with disabilities living in rural and remote areas.
- E.4.5 It is essential that compulsory units in Special Education be included in all accredited pre-service teacher education courses at early childhood primary and post primary levels. The content of such courses should provide student teachers with:
- (a) basic knowledge of learning difficulties/disabilities which may be encountered by teachers in regular classrooms;
  - (b) assessment and teaching strategies related to learning difficulties/disabilities and the knowledge to access and use support services;
  - (c) the knowledge to observe and implement programs for children with learning difficulties/disabilities and/or behavioural problems;
  - (d) mainstream teachers already in the system must be regularly in-serviced in special education teaching strategies.
- E.4.6 An appropriate allocation of skilled and trained teacher aides should be provided to allow assistance in the classroom where students with disabilities are being taught.
- E.4.7 Inservice Education (as professional development) in Special Education teaching strategies should be available to mainstream teachers.

Appropriate professional development should also be available to-

- (a) Teachers appointed to positions with responsibility for Special Education students.
- (b) Teachers whose teaching responsibilities change, to include students with a physical, intellectual or social disability.

## **E.5 CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONAL ABILITIES**

### **E.5 PREMISE**

- E.5.1 It is the right of every child to be educated and all children should have the opportunity to benefit from a general education to the maximum extent to which they are capable.
- E.5.2 It is the responsibility of governments to provide, within the state/territory systems of education, resources and opportunities to facilitate the development of such children.
- E.5.3 Every school should provide for children with exceptional abilities

### **POLICY**

- E.5.1 Schools and teachers should provide a challenging and enriched curriculum to enable the gifts and talents of all children to emerge, be recognised and be developed within regular classrooms;
- E.5.2 Sufficient resources should be provided to schools and families to enable the identification, encouragement and support of all children with exceptional abilities;
- E.5.3 Enrichment and extension activities in all relevant ability areas should be accessible through both selection and self-nomination;
- E.5.4 Unless it is in the interests of the child, such children should not be segregated from others.

## **E.6 GENDER EQUITY**

### **PREMISE**

1. Gender is a social construct.
2. The capacity to learn is not determined by gender.

### **E.6 POLICY**

- E.6.1 Schools must provide every student with an equal opportunity to develop creative, academic and physical abilities regardless of gender.
- E.6.2 Schools must provide a learning environment that is socially, physically and academically appropriate for all students.
- E.6.4 Schools must be organised and resourced to ensure the capabilities of all students are fully and equally realised regardless of gender factors.
- E.6.5 All levels of government must recognise the need for gender specific education strategies/initiatives commencing at early childhood to ensure gender equity and equality of outcomes in education. These strategies/initiatives should be developed with consideration to such issues as:
- (a) Recognition that neither boys nor girls form a homogenous group. Individuals and groups have specific needs relating to gender and sexuality and the intersections of race, religion, culture, socio-economic status, disability and isolation;
  - (b) The promotion and/or the funding of continuing research into the differing needs as they pertain to male and female;
  - (c) An understanding and acceptance of the construction of gender and gender relationships;
  - (d) Teaching, learning and assessment suited to the different needs of all students
  - (e) Breaking down stereotypes in both female and male roles;
  - (f) Critically analysing gender construction in curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, assessment and reporting as well as in the school's management.
- E.6.6 ACSSO supports collaborative development and implementation of gender equity strategies/initiatives in all aspects and levels of both schooling and community education for parents/carers and others by:
- (a) Promoting awareness of gender equity in education;
  - (b) Promoting the changing roles of men and women in society, in terms of their economic, civic and domestic responsibilities;
  - (c) Understanding gender beyond biological definitions and sex role socialisation and recognising the interweaving of gender with culture, age, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and disability;
  - (d) Challenging and empowering people to explore gender and the continuum of behaviours that are labelled as 'masculine' or 'feminine' in relation to social expectations, pressures, constraints, power and resistances;
  - (e) Promoting equal and respectful relationships between students, among adults and between students and adults, regardless of gender.

## **E.7 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN STUDIES FOR ALL AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS**

### **PREMISE**

1. Known human association with this land began with Indigenous Australians and therefore their culture and history forms part of the heritage of all Australians.
2. Indigenous Australians do not share a single culture – their communities exist within diverse economic, social and geographic circumstances.
3. Inclusive curriculum is essential for all students and will help Indigenous students succeed at school.
4. Non Indigenous students benefit from knowledge of Indigenous cultures and society and interaction with Indigenous teachers.

### **E.7 POLICY**

- E.7.1 Pre-service and inservice education for teachers must include compulsory units which provide knowledge, skills and understandings so that all students and teachers learn about Indigenous Australia.
- E.7.2 All Australian students must acquire an understanding and appreciation of the history, cultural traditions and experience of Indigenous Australians as an integral part of curricula from the first year of school.
- E.7.3 Aboriginal studies courses should be compulsory at all teacher education institutions, both as pre-service and as in-service courses.
- E.7.4 Curriculum materials must present an unbiased and culturally appropriate picture of Indigenous societies, histories and cultures.

## **E.8 THE EDUCATION PROCESS FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS**

### **PREMISE**

1. In acknowledging the unique place in Australia's history and culture of its Indigenous peoples ACSSO believes the education process must:
  - (a) recognise that the cultural background of young Indigenous Australian people provides the starting point for their learning;
  - (b) recognise the diversity of Indigenous communities;
  - (c) acknowledge that the formal education processes in schools involves many diverse elements that affect learning, such as the content of the curriculum, teaching practices and the organisation, management and staffing practices of schools;
  - (d) recognise the importance of resources developed specifically for Indigenous students.

### **E.8 POLICY**

- E.8.1 Ongoing research should be initiated and conducted to establish the basis for the development of a pedagogy (the education process) which embodies understanding of the cultures of Indigenous Australians and the outcome of such research should be integrated into education policy and practice.
- E.8.2 Indigenous Australians should be involved in all aspects of research for the development of pedagogy.

## **E.9 INDIGENOUS PARENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. All parents have the right to participate in educational decision-making, both individually and through their representatives.
2. Policies and practices that are inclusive of the needs of Indigenous students provide an essential foundation for the participation of Indigenous parents and communities in education decision making.
3. For Indigenous students, successful learning is related to the participation of their communities in the learning process.
4. Where Indigenous Australians participate effectively, and provide leadership in the development and implementation of education programs, those programs are more likely to meet the needs of their students.

### **E.9 POLICY**

- E.9.1 Governments and schools should ensure that Indigenous Australians are partners in development, implementation and evaluation of education programs and resources.
- E.9.2 Sufficient resources must be provided to support bilingual and bicultural education programs and services for Indigenous students to enable them to fully participate in Australian society.
- E.9.3 Where money for school-based programs is allocated to schools, school communities must be informed about the funding and program guidelines, including the requirement for Indigenous parent and community participation in their development and implementation and evaluation.

## **E.10 EDUCATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS**

### **PREMISE**

1. A basis for Indigenous self determination is the inherent right of people to express and develop their own identity. In education, self determination for Indigenous Australians requires a positive acknowledgment of their culture by everyone.
2. ACSSO is committed to the provision of a high quality education for all within the government system.

### **E.10 POLICY**

- E 10.1 In all schools with Indigenous Australian students there should be a policy of self-determination. This means that members of the Indigenous community should participate in all decisions about education policy and practices in schools.

## **E.11 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. The choice of people to reside in regional, rural and remote areas should not adversely impact on their students in access to, availability of and attainment of high levels of educational achievement. Students in rural and remote areas should not be disadvantaged by lack of information and/or communication technologies. The quality of education in rural and remote areas must not be affected by lack of resources, limited access to services, climatic conditions, or professional adversity, social and physical isolation.

### **E. 11 POLICY**

- E.11.1 All students, irrespective of geographical location shall have access to high quality education.
- E.11.2 All education authorities shall utilise positive discrimination policies to overcome inequities in provision of education to students in rural and remote areas.
- E.11.3 A wide variety of communication technologies shall be available to facilitate provision of education services to students in rural and remote areas.
- E.11.4 Governments must recognise that additional financial resources will be required to overcome inequities in the areas of communication technologies, provision of personnel and access to specialised services

**F.1 THE COMMUNITY AND ITS SCHOOLS****PREMISE**

1. Schools are a fundamental part of our society and therefore represent a powerful influence on the lives of all young people.
2. Parents, teachers and students working in an equal partnership will ensure genuine participation by, and accountability to, the school community.

**F.1 POLICY**

F.1.1 To ensure that their influence is positive, schools should:

- (a) enable all students to participate in a broad general education;
- (b) develop in all students:
  - (i) an understanding of personal environment and the wider society;
  - (ii) an ability to manage their personal affairs and participate in issues which shape their society;
  - (iii) the skills of constructive and reflective thinking;
  - (iv) the skills of effective communication;
- (c) enable all students to learn to work with other members of the school community in sharing in, and reflecting on, experience together;
- (d) provide learning experiences which all students find challenging and satisfying and which give them opportunities to succeed;
- (e) enable all students to engage in learning which integrates theoretical understandings with practical activities;
- (f) effectively assist all students to overcome the effects of poverty, disability, distance, isolation, or other educational disadvantages.

F.1.2 Schools should therefore be seen as the focal point of the educative process. Powers vested in schools should be such that the system-wide capacity to provide quality schooling for all students in the system is not undermined. Powers vested in schools should be within broad general guidelines for curriculum, staffing, buildings, grounds and equipment.

## **F.2 COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

### **F.2 POLICY**

F.2.1 A collaborative school community is one in which its parents, students, staff, the principal and the wider community all work together towards achieving the best educational and personal outcomes for each and every student, and one which meets the needs and aspirations of the whole school community.

F.2.2 A collaborative school community exists where:

- (a) members of the school community are open, honest and willing to work collaboratively and share ideas and responsibilities;
- (b) the whole school community cooperates, both internally and with outside parties, and there is an enthusiastic, vibrant and positive environment for its members;
- (c) school decision making groups acknowledge and fulfil their roles and responsibilities;
- (d) a partnership exists between students, parents, the principal and school staff;
- (e) there is an openness and members of the school community are valued and empowered to contribute in many ways to the organisation and management of the school;
- (f) members of the school community share in the development of a vision and aims for the school, and move forward together to achieve these aims;
- (g) students are actively encouraged to achieve their full potential;
- (h) there is a team of committed and enthusiastic staff;
- (i) there is an ability to share not only successes, but also problems and their solutions.

### **F.3 SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **PREMISE**

1. Professional development is one of the most significant means by which school communities provide quality education and through which they are equipped to meet new challenges and directions.
2. The impact of the relationship between home and school on student learning makes it imperative for professional development to be available for the whole school community, not only for teaching staff.
3. Professional development should acknowledge the respective roles of each section of the school community while increasing the capacity for cooperative action and decision making.

#### **F.3 POLICY**

F.3.1 Professional development must:

- (a) take account of the needs of the various sections of the education community;
- (b) provide opportunities for participants to come into contact with new ideas;
- (c) provide support for these ideas to be transferred into operational form in the school;
- (d) support networking within and beyond the school;
- (e) address issues in the context of the school setting, and use strategies relevant to that setting;
- (f) focus on the school as the unit for change rather than the individual;
- (g) recognise that schools are complex social systems and that the whole system's needs must be taken into account;
- (h) address issues such as supportive organisational school climate and the key role of the principal in facilitating change;
- (i) be based on a synthesis of system initiatives and school identified needs, as to see either in isolation is counter productive.

F.3.2 Professional development policies and priority areas should be established by representative committees.

F.3.3 Support should be provided to enable the collaborative planning of programs.

F.3.4 Professional development strategies should be an integral part of any system initiative.

F.3.5 Professional development programs should be conducted with minimum disruption to the education of students.

F.3.6 Schools should develop an agreed process for identifying issues which require professional development and which take into account the needs of the various groups within the school community;

F.3.7 Government funds should be available for organisational development for parent/school community bodies.

F.3.8 Childcare should be provided to allow parents to take part in professional development activities and should be seen as a legitimate charge on professional development funds.



## **SECTION G - SCHOOL DECISION MAKING**

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### **G.1 SCHOOL BASED DECISION MAKING**

#### **G.1 POLICY**

- G.1.1 School based decision making should be as widespread as possible and may cover as many aspects of the operation of the school as the school community desires.
- G.1.2 School based decision making can take place in a multiplicity of forums, including school councils, parent organisations (including all those that represent particular groups within the parent committees), all subcommittees of these groups, all ad hoc committees and special focus committees (eg student welfare and curriculum).
- G.1.3 School based decision making must be governed by the following principles:
- (a) all representatives on decision making bodies must be duly elected from a recognisable constituency to which they have a binding duty to report;
  - (b) all decisions which are binding on the whole school community, or which are used to justify policy binding the whole school community, shall be made by a body consisting of representatives from all stakeholders;
  - (c) the ability to be involved, represented and heard must be equally available throughout the school community. Involvement must be actively encouraged and supported.

## **G.2 SCHOOL COUNCILS**

### **G.2 POLICY**

#### G.2.1 Structure, powers and functions of school councils

- (a) School councils provide an important structure through which parents can be actively involved in the governance of schools. Therefore, where school councils are already established with a satisfactory definition of their composition, rights and responsibilities, parents:
  - (i) should participate in their decision making processes;
  - (ii) must receive training, support and assistance from departments of education with their roles and responsibilities in these councils.
- (b) There should be a collaboratively developed agreement between government and state/territory-wide representative parent groups about the compositions, powers and accountability of school councils.
- (c) In particular, where school councils do not exist, such collaboratively developed agreements are a prerequisite for the formation of school councils. Within this framework, school councils should be established in all schools where the school communities agree that they should be formed, but that they should not be imposed on schools.
- (d) School councils should be established as statutory bodies, responsible to and reporting directly to Parliament through the Minister. School councils must operate within the broad guidelines which apply to the government school system in each state/territory. School councils must develop policies which will:
  - (i) guarantee access to all students through open enrolment;
  - (ii) provide a comprehensive curriculum which at least covers the eight key learning areas;
  - (iii) oversee the allocation of staffing and resources provided by the system in a manner which protects the rights of all students, parents and teachers.

#### G.2.2 Composition of school councils

- (a) School councils should have:
  - (i) a majority of parents of students in the school;
  - (ii) student representation is desirable and in the senior years of schooling, essential;
  - (iii) significant representation of teachers from the school;
  - (iv) the addition of members of the wider community should be made only by a decision of the school community, based on the fundamental criterion that additional members have a commitment to the guidelines of the government school system, and the particular educational policy of the school.
- (b) The parent representatives on school councils should be elected through meetings of existing broad school parent organisations and/or an annual school meeting. Parent representatives should present the views of these broad school community organisations on the school council, and should report to broad school parent organisations on school council deliberations and decisions.

#### G.2.3 Responsibilities of school councils

Within broad system guidelines, school councils should have responsibility for school governance, including curriculum and financial control. As a minimum, where school communities agree, responsibilities should include:

- (a) determining the educational and broad organisational policies of the school, including those relating to student welfare/discipline within strict social justice guidelines;
- (b) establishing the curriculum priorities and objectives, the shape of the school curriculum and the plans for its delivery;
- (c) developing:
  - (i) frameworks for the evaluation of the school program;
  - (ii) priority areas for review/development;
  - (iii) timelines for action;
  - (iv) developing processes that ensure reviews are carried out in a collaborative manner;
- (d) allocating resources through:
  - (i) development of the school's annual budget;
  - (ii) control of the budget and school finances;
  - (iii) participation in selection of staff;
  - (iv) development of an annual return of the preferred staffing profile for the school for the ensuing year;
  - (v) control over the use of school facilities outside school hours;
  - (vi) development and management of capital expenditure programs;
  - (vii) authorisation of all student adventure activities, trips, excursions or camps of more than one day's duration;
  - (viii) participation in selection of the principal and key leadership positions in the school.

### **G.3 ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **PREMISE**

1. Schools are responsible to the public through the government for the use of public resources. Statistical provisions and audit requirements provide a basis for this financial accountability.

### **G.3 POLICY**

- G.3.1 Each school should be responsible for reporting to its community how provision is made to meet the full range of educational needs of its students.
- G.3.2 Schools meet accountability requirements when:
  - (a) the school community is involved in decisions;
  - (b) they submit their practices and processes and policies to ongoing scrutiny;
  - (c) they convey information about what the school is doing through regular newsletters to the community;
  - (d) they provide public access to policy documents.
- G.3.3 All schools should produce an Annual Report that combines an account of the work of the school council and of the staff. This report should be presented to the school community and discussed at an annual open meeting. A copy of the report must be sent to the relevant education authority to assist in the improvement of services to schools.
- G.3.4 Schools should be designed and developed with the active participation of the community, to be part of the cultural, recreational and educational activities of the community.
- G.3.5 In order to enrich and extend the learning experience of students, learning programs should use the varied resources of the community.

## **G.4 PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING**

### **PREMISE**

1. Parents have unique knowledge and understanding of their children, and are the first and most significant educators.
2. Parents have the right, because of their responsibility to and for their children, to participate in decision making affecting their education.
3. Parents have talents, interests, and skills which can enrich and diversify the life and programs of schools.
4. Students learn best when the school programs recognise and value the cultural and social backgrounds of both parents and students, and there are many ways in which parents participate which will benefit students.

### **G.4 POLICY**

- G.4.1 Education departments should guarantee the establishment of structures, supports, and opportunities:
- (a) within schools to maximise parental participation in decision making about educational goal settings, and policy development on a state/territory wide basis;
  - (b) to maximise parental consultation and participation in decision making in school life and educational programs at school level;
  - (c) which ensures extensive collaborative processes prior to the decisions being made and during the implementation of sensitive curriculum issues.

## **G.5 PARENT ASSOCIATIONS/CLUBS**

### **G.5 POLICY**

- G.5.1 For parent participation to be effective there must be forums for formulation of the parent viewpoint.
- G.5.2 At the school level this requires the establishment and maintenance of parents' clubs or associations which are independent bodies operating under separate regulations.
- G.5.3 Government support for the establishment of a parent club in every school should include:
- (a) development of regulations;
  - (b) establishment grants for all newly formed clubs.
- G.5.4 Parents associations/clubs and school councils should work together in identifying school needs and priorities, however they should remain independent bodies.
- G.5.5 Parent club office bearers must be parents with children in the relevant school who do not work as teachers in that school nor for the equivalent of more than eight hours per week in any other capacity at the school.
- G.5.6 The role of parents clubs should be:
- (a) to act as a forum for discussion and formulation of the parent view on issues concerned with the education policies and well-being of:
    - (i) the individual school and its students;
    - (ii) the whole school system;
  - (b) to convey the parent views to the individual school council and to other decision making bodies;
  - (c) to elect parent club representatives to school councils and to support those representatives;
  - (d) to use and promote democratic practices that enable all parents to participate, and as a means of encouraging school improvement;
  - (e) to receive and raise funds either by themselves or in conjunction with other bodies associated with the school;
  - (f) to conduct in-service activities relevant to the government school system.

### H.1 NEW SCHOOLS

#### PREMISE

1. The establishment of new non-government schools undermines the viability and community standing of government schools.
2. Any proposal for establishing a new school should take into account the impact the new school will have on existing schools within a specific catchment area.

### H.1 POLICY

- H.1.1 Governments should cease assisting the establishment and funding of new non-government schools, and additional pupil places in existing non-government schools where:
- (a) it represents an uneconomic use of public monies because sufficient pupil places already exist in neighbourhood schools;
  - (b) the new school or additional places would adversely affect the capacity of neighbourhood schools to provide quality curriculum.
- H.1.2 An enrolment impact statement must be prepared, based on broad community consultation.
- H.1.3 No new non-government school should be established unless the combination of its private resources and income, as determined by an independent statutory body, enables it to operate, from the beginning, at government school resource standards.

## **H.2 CLASS SIZES**

### **PREMISE**

1. Teacher/pupil ratios and class sizes have a significant effect on the quality of the teaching and learning experience and on learning outcomes.

### **H.2 POLICY**

H.2.1 In determining the formulae for staffing levels in schools, governments, in collaboration with all stakeholders, must take account of the differing needs of schools, their students and their communities

H.2.2 Class sizes must not exceed:

Kindergarten - Pre-primary	15 students : 1 teacher
Years 1-7	20 students : 1 teacher

Composite classes must not exceed the maximum recommended for the lowest year group involved:

Composite classes of more than 3 grades	15 students : 1 teacher
Practical classes not to exceed	15 students : 1 teacher
Secondary	20 students : 1 teacher

H.2.3 Where a class includes the integration of a student with special needs, all needs of the student must be met.

H.2.4 Regular classes within which students with developmental disability and/or special needs are integrated must have the staffing allocation adjusted to support the learning needs of the whole class.

H.2.5 Identified disadvantaged schools must have an increased differential staffing allocation which reduces the class size further to provide equitable outcomes.

### **H.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

#### **PREMISE**

1. Early childhood education covers the care and education, formal and informal, of all children from birth to 8 years of age. These years are the most critical for children because they establish the foundation for future learning.
2. The early years of schooling are crucial in laying the foundations for successful learning and positive attitudes. It is in the early years that children develop concepts about themselves as learners and attitudes to schooling. Positive experiences in the early years establish thinking and processing skills.
3. The future achievements of an individual are influenced substantially by the learning experiences in these early years. Improvement of the learning outcomes of children in these years will have benefits both socially and economically for society as a whole.
4. Child-care, pre-school and the first years of schooling should contain a range of experiences which acknowledge learning as a continuous experience.
5. The early years of school should address, within integrated programs, the developmental needs of children.
6. All health, welfare and educational services, especially those effecting early childhood years should be coordinated.
7. Parents must be involved in the educational processes and decision making about their individual children and about the design and delivery of all services for this age group.
8. Changing societal patterns require an increase in both the amount and variety of provision of quality childcare and preschool.
9. Early intervention from the time of identification of a child with developmental disability or learning difficulty, is essential if the child is not to miss the foundation experiences necessary for all future learning.

#### **H.3 POLICY**

- H.3.1 Pre-school education should provide for the optimum development of the child.
- H.3.2 The care and education of the pre-school child must be high on the list of government priorities in terms of funding, research and implementation of programs. The needs of the child, in conjunction with his/her family unit, must be the primary consideration. It is necessary to recognise:
- (a) the needs of children at each stage of their development;
  - (b) that liaison between parents, persons and authorities involved with pre-school education and formal schooling is essential;
  - (c) that there should be an agreement between the state and territory governments to recognise any pre-schooling undertaken by a child in another state/territory or system.
- H.3.3 Governments should:
- (a) accept greater responsibility for the provision of childcare and preschool services;
  - (b) provide further support to childcare in the home, and to greatly expand family support services;
  - (c) provide, and encourage other employers and unions to provide increased opportunities for part-time employment and job-sharing as well as quality childcare for parents in employment where and as required;

- (d) ensure all child care facilities and centres are licensed and regularly inspected so that they meet all desirable standards;
  - (e) contribute where necessary to the funding of childcare programs and facilities to cater for school age children before and after school and provide adequate vacation care;
  - (f) ensure that there is an adequate supply of trained teachers and other personnel for the early childhood education and should recommend and provide training programs which address the special nature and needs of children in these early years.
- H.3.4 Free preschool education should be available to all children twelve months prior to the commencement of school.
- H.3.5 Governments must recognise pre-school education as part of a school system so that:
- (a) it may become accepted as a necessary part of education and of the school curriculum;
  - (b) there can be proper and effective programs for early childhood education;
  - (c) there is neither an abrupt break between pre-school and infant school, nor a duplication of learning experiences;
  - (d) communication between staff of different institutions supports the family and staff for the benefit of the child.
- H.3.6 Governments must ensure that there is an adequate supply of teachers and all other personnel, including para-professional and ancillary staff for pre-school services by recommending or providing training programs which emphasise the development of the whole child and communication between home and services.
- H.3.7 All childcare workers in licensed childcare centres must have qualifications appropriate to their level of appointment, and where employees are providing preschool programs they must have teaching qualifications.
- H.3.8 All family day care staff with responsibility for coordination should possess proven competency or qualifications appropriate to early childhood services.
- H.3.9 Pre-service training and ongoing professional development of early childhood practitioners must include training to support programs that enable them to work in partnership with parents in caring for and educating their children.
- H.3.10 Government must ensure that:
- (a) the developmental needs of the child are met through services which are interdisciplinary and coordinated with other community services, including screening, recognition and, if necessary, referral of the 'at risk' child;
  - (b) parents have the opportunity and support to gain information and skills to enable them to participate effectively in any intervention programs.

## **H.4 SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT**

### **H.4 POLICY**

- H.4.1 It is inappropriate to have a uniform starting age because children develop at different rates and in different ways that have nothing to do with age alone.
- H.4.2 Determination of a child's readiness to commence school should be based on consideration of social, intellectual and emotional factors.
- H.4.3 In order for school commencement and enrolment decisions and procedures to be advantageous to the child, parents and teachers must be partners in discussion about a child's readiness to commence school.

For this to occur the following needs to happen:

- (a) parents must make the final decision as to when their child commences school;
- (b) a handbook which describes the laws and regulations governing school commencements, the processes of school enrolment and parents'/children's rights should be developed and widely distributed;
- (c) schools and kindergartens (preschools) should jointly develop transition programs which introduce children to school before they commence full-time. Such programs must cater for children who do not attend kindergarten as well as those who do;
- (d) programs designed to increase parents' awareness of child development should be developed in conjunction with parents and made widely available;
- (e) support mechanisms designed to assist parents and children experiencing problems commencing school be made available. These could take the form of small support groups or flexible attendance arrangements;
- (f) provisions of sufficient publicly funded pre-schools and childcare places to accommodate flexible school commencement times;
- (g) there should be nationally consistent nomenclature and starting age eligibility for entry into pre-compulsory schooling across all states and territories.

## **H.5 PROGRESSION THROUGH SCHOOL**

### **H.5 POLICY**

H.5.1 The prime concerns of curricula are to meet the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of all students and to provide for the different rates and ways in which children learn.

H.5.2 Structural arrangements and the organisation of schools should facilitate the meetings of those needs and not use annual promotion as the only means of progression through school.

H.5.3 For the majority of students the age peer group in the local government school is generally the most appropriate setting for meeting those needs.

H.5.4 The needs of individual children must be the determining factors in placing students when they transfer within or between schools and/or states/territories.

H.5.5 When students transfer to a new school, either intrastate or interstate, their academic achievement records should be provided to the new school.

H.5.6 Parents must be equal partners in any decisions concerning the placement or promotion of students.

## **H.6 THE EARLY YEARS OF SCHOOLING**

### **H.6 POLICY**

1. Governments must recognise the special needs of children in the early years of schooling and must provide:
  - (a) reduced class sizes in the first three years of school;
  - (b) learning programs which recognise the importance of play in the development of young students;
  - (c) support for students experiencing difficulties in literacy and numeracy;
  - (d) teachers who have qualifications in early childhood education.
2. Schools must acknowledge the prior learning experiences and background of students and work in partnership with parents and care-givers to maximise learning outcomes of students.

## **H.7 RURAL EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. There is a responsibility for governments to ensure adequate resources to provide for the educational needs of students in rural and remote areas.
2. The guiding principle for all education provision in rural and remote areas must be the preservation and enhancement of the community.
3. Government subsidies must be targeted to create opportunities within communities rather than to assist people to leave. This approach assists the community to maintain its ethos and prosperity by retaining its population and by providing employment.
4. There must be a recognition that:
  - (a) Students in rural and remote areas of the nation have an absolute right to high quality public education, and governments have a responsibility to ensure this provision.
  - (b) The quality of education in rural and remote areas must not be affected by lack of resources, limited or costly access to services, climatic conditions, or professional, social and physical isolation.
  - (c) funding decisions must reflect the priority of local provision to meet local need.

### **H.7 POLICY**

H.7.1 ACSSO supports the principle of differential funding

H.7.2 Governments should ensure the delivery of high quality educational services to rural and remote communities by:

- (a) providing resources to expand itinerant teacher services, consultancy services and counselling services for children in rural communities;
- (b) exploring a variety of ways to increase curriculum options, in particular, those available in senior schooling;
- (c) ensuring that opportunities to undertake vocational education and training are equitably available to rural students; remove the barriers to students moving between school and post compulsory education options and avoid duplication of services and resources.
- (d) providing targeted funding for professional development for teachers and parents in isolated schools;
- (e) ensuring health services, including mental health services, are available to the same extent in rural areas as elsewhere.
- (f) providing access for students with disabilities and learning difficulties to support services, support teachers, guidance officers, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists and physical therapists.

H.7.3 To ensure the needs of geographically isolated students are met governments should provide:

- (a) opportunities for students studying at home by distance education to work, socialise and learn with other students in residential facilities to supplement home learning.
- (b) consultation about support for the role of parents in distance education, including regular professional development
- (c) a telecommunication system which ensures reliable and prompt access to distance education programs and resources;

- (d) recognition of the central role of Information Communication Technology for rural areas by providing enhanced opportunities for rural schools to become centres of excellence in this field
- (e) places in fully equipped and staffed government boarding schools as a priority for Isolated students where no alternative but boarding away from home exists. These schools should be situated where possible, at central locations to facilitate as many students as possible to returning to their homes at weekends;

If no government boarding school is available, students who are required to live away from home to attend a government school which provides curriculum necessary to meet requirements for entry to specific post compulsory courses should be eligible to receive allowances to cover boarding costs for living away from home or Austudy / Abstudy as applicable.

- (f) fully funded school term hostels as an alternative to boarding schools, allowing students to preserve better links with their parents, friends and community, and help maintain employment within their locality.
- (g) eligibility criteria for Access for Isolated Children (AIC) that ensure all families living at the same property use the same egress point.
- (h) only students who attend government schools and meet the AIC scheme's eligibility criteria should receive assistance to cover boarding or living away from home costs
- (i) assessment of the impact on any small rural school of students in their drawing area being granted AIC
- (j) accommodation at government boarding schools that does not exceed the allowances available and make available financial assistance for students to travel to and from their homes during designated school holidays;
- (k) regulations to ensure that when non-school agencies apply for government funding for residential facilities they do so on the basis of a strong pastoral care policy and that regular inspections are carried out to ensure they comply with policy;
- (l) travel assistance during designated school vacations for government school students who need to live away from home to attend the nearest government school that satisfies the individual students education requirements;
- (m) grants for an adult to accompany all government school children when required to travel for the purpose of remedial assessment or assistance;
- (n) subsidies to overcome the constraints on rural and isolated students' opportunities to participate in excursions and social, cultural and sporting pursuits due to the high costs of such factors as travel and accommodation.

- H.7.4 All teacher training institutions should provide compulsory education units and a rural practicum within courses that will prepare teachers for living in and working with school communities in rural areas.
- H.7.5 The federal government and state/territory authorities should provide financial support for off-campus teacher education programs for students, including mature-age students, in rural towns designed to help increase the proportion of teachers in rural schools who are long-term local residents.
- H.7.6 Education authorities should be urged to consider special contractual arrangements, including incentives which will attract teachers and encourage them to stay longer in remote area appointments.

## **H.8 SCHOOL CLOSURES**

### **PREMISE**

1. The neighbourhood school is an essential feature of a public education system which provides structural support to:
  - (a) the commitment to a public education system which ensures that all children have access to a high quality education enabling a successful and constructive schooling for all;
  - (b) the development of a sense of shared purpose between the school and its community;
  - (c) the participation of parents in the educational process which takes place in schools;
  - (d) ensure safe access to schools.

### **H.8 POLICY**

- H.8.1 It is a fundamental obligation of government to provide government schools when and where they are needed.
- H.8.2 ACSSO opposes school closures except in circumstances where changes in land usage and residential population result in the loss of a nexus between the school and local community.
- H.8.3 Where school closures are mooted:
- (a) there should be full, proper, open and public consultation with the whole affected school community as well as with peak parent and teacher organisations and other community groups over a minimum period of 12 months;
  - (b) if a decision is made to close a school 12 months notice should then be given of the proposed closure;
  - (c) it is not possible to devise universally applicable criteria for the closure of government schools;
  - (d) each school closure being considered should be evaluated by an independent impact study which takes into account:
    - (i) educational, social, economic, cultural, environmental, urban planning, community and historical factors;
    - (ii) school population including future enrolment projections;
    - (iii) geographical and safety factors;
    - (iv) the availability of outside school hours care;
    - (v) access and accommodation for students at the nearest government school;
    - (vi) impact on the public schooling system as a whole, and in particular on the programs and resources of other government schools in the area;
  - (e) An appeals mechanism, independent of government must be established to adjudicate any disputed decisions.
- H.8.4 It is essential that a post-rationalisation review be conducted by a representative committee 12 months after the process is implemented and a public report issued.
- H.8.5 The schools and the land on which they are sited are public assets which should not be sold unless the site is not needed for another government school or alternative public use, in which case it must remain in public ownership. Where sites are sold the proceeds from the sale must be used for the benefit of children in the government school system.

## **H.9 REORGANISATION OF SCHOOLS**

### **H.9 POLICY**

H.9.1 Any reorganisation of schooling, including clustering, amalgamation or closure of schools, must have as its aim the improvement of the quality of education for all students. Any reorganisation should therefore:

- (a) contribute to and build confidence in the public education system;
- (b) uphold the concept of neighbourhood schooling;
- (c) facilitate easy access for students from all social backgrounds;
- (d) facilitate retention of students from all social backgrounds;
- (e) provide access to wide ranging post-school pathways;
- (f) facilitate parent participation in school decision making.

H.9.2 ACSSO calls on school systems to ensure that:

- (a) parents are in the majority on any committee formed to formulate reorganisation proposals;
- (b) any reorganisation committee at the school level has representatives of the local school parent organisation(s);
- (c) schools considering reorganisation hold open meetings to inform the whole school community of:
  - (i) the criteria for possible reorganisation;
  - (ii) the processes leading to the final decision;
  - (iii) the options that could be considered;
  - (iv) the ways parents can impact on the final decision;
- (d) there has been consultation and negotiation between the curriculum committee of the affected schools in order not to disadvantage any students;
- (e) that students and staff receive adequate counselling to dispel uncertainties and anger.

## **H.10 MANAGEMENT OF ENROLMENT DECLINE**

### **PREMISE**

1. Enrolment trends in a number of state/territory government schools systems have overall, changed from a pattern of continuous growth to one of decline. It should be recognised that within this trend there are still areas of expansion of school enrolments.
2. A period of declining enrolments should not be seen by governments as an opportunity to reduce resources to government schools but as an opportunity to pursue ACSSO's prime objectives of equality of outcomes. In any case, amalgamation and closures may not achieve significant system wide cost savings.

### **H.10 POLICY**

- H.10.1 The school council should be given adequate time and the necessary resources to facilitate planning for the school's future.
- H.10.2 It will be necessary to develop more flexible staffing arrangements and to provide teachers with the opportunity to acquire a wider range of skills.
- H.10.3 To maintain staff morale and enthusiasm, there should be encouragement, challenges, and a widening of experience and opportunities for teachers.
- H.10.4 Any changes in operational status should not be implemented without a detailed plan of all aspects, including lead time, having been negotiated with the school council and the whole school community, to avoid unnecessary disruption to staff and students.
- H.10.5 The school council must have access to information to enable it to determine the educational effects as it makes its decisions on the most appropriate course of action and future management. Information should be made available on a continuous basis, and not just at times of crisis.
- H.10.6 Economic considerations should not be the major factor in decisions on future school operations. Decisions should be made in consultation with the school council, primarily on educational grounds, and with due regard to the preferences of the school community and the part played by the school in community life.
- H.10.7 Decisions on the future operation of a school should be made at school level by the school council, in consultation with the local and school community, including students where appropriate, on all matters affecting the future operation of the school such as:
- (a) use of distance education technology;
  - (b) the continuing operation as a small school;
  - (c) some shared activities;
  - (d) amalgamation with others;
  - (e) closure.
- H.10.8 Any changes in operational status should not be implemented without a lead time of at least two years to avoid unnecessary disruption to students.
- H.10.9 Any decision on the use of space not required for school purposes should be made by the school council. The school council should be given the option of managing the surplus facility, accepting the liability for maintenance and outgoings and receiving the proceeds of the sale, hire, rent or leasing of the facility.
- H.10.10 Surplus space in an existing government school should not be made available for non-government school use without the concurrence of the government school community.

## **H.11 DIVERSITY AND CHOICE**

### **PREMISE**

1. Neighbourhood coeducational government schools, which provide a full range of educational opportunities within democratic decision making frameworks, are the most desirable setting for most students.

### **H.11 POLICY**

- H.11.1 Within each neighbourhood school, curriculum options and diverse educational styles should be available to meet the needs of each student.
- H.11.2 Governments should encourage diversity within and among government schools to ensure that the needs of each school community are met.
- H.11.3 In each neighbourhood school curriculum options and teaching strategies which meet the needs of the students should be developed jointly by teachers, parents and students within statewide curriculum frameworks and educational policies.
- H.11.4 Schools should, wherever practicable, cooperate with each other to share resources, staff and facilities to enrich the curriculum experienced by students.
- H.11.5 Modern technology should be utilised wherever possible to assist schools, especially in remote areas, to work with other schools to provide greater educational opportunities for their students. Provision of this technology should be fully funded by governments.
- H.11.6 Flexible structuring of schools, staffing, administration and timetabling within and between schools should be investigated to facilitate greater curriculum choice and educational opportunities. Full consultation and broad agreement with all school communities affected should occur before changes are implemented and continue afterwards.
- H.11.7 Parents have the absolute right to have their child educated at their local government school. Parents also have the right to apply for enrolment, and to have that application fairly dealt with, at any government school that, having satisfied local demand, seeks further enrolments.
- H.11.8 As public schools belong to the people of the community, where there are more prospective enrolments than places available:
  - (a) students from the community must have priority over out of area enrolments or overseas students;
  - (b) clear criteria for determining priority for other students must be determined in consultation with the school community and be published;
  - (c) any re-zoning of school enrolment boundaries must be done in consultation with all the school communities involved.

## **H.12 SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

### **PREMISE**

1. The library is of central importance to students and teachers throughout the school.
2. School libraries should provide a range of materials, resources and services designed to support all areas of the curriculum and provide for the needs and interests of all students and teachers. These resources should:
  - (a) reflect the diverse multicultural nature of Australian society;
  - (b) avoid stereotyping based on age, gender, race, geographic location, socio-economic status, class and culture;
  - (c) cater to the full range of abilities, skills and interests present and aimed at in the school;
  - (d) support competency in language and communication including accessing and using information, and the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

### **H.12 POLICY**

- H.12.1 ACSSO endorses the development and regular revision of a statement of minimum standards and objectives for library resource facilities and services in government schools, supported by the Australian School Library Association and Australian Library and Information Association in *Learning for the future: developing information services in Australian schools* (Melbourne, Curriculum Corporation 1993)..
- H.12.2 The provision of staff, space, equipment and library materials should be at levels not less than those proposed in the above publication.
- H.12.3 The staffing of all school libraries must include a qualified teacher librarian. Where this is not possible on a full time basis there should be regular and significant access to a qualified teacher librarian.
- H.12.4 ACSSO supports the provision of library services to the community through the use of school libraries, taking account of the need to preserve the quality of service to students to the school and to ensure unrestricted access to the library and its materials to those students.
- H.12.5 ACSSO favours local, regional, state/territory and national cooperative systems or arrangements that release professional library staff from routine tasks and enable them to engage more fully in direct services to students and teachers.
- H.12.6 School libraries should provide appropriate resource materials to facilitate both the professional development of teachers at the school and the education of parents in their role, and that school libraries to those ends utilise all available resources, including inter-library loan facilities, computerised information resources and automated library management systems.
- H.12.7 Where a joint school and community library exists priority should be given to the quality of service to students and staff of the school and to ensuring unrestricted access to the library and its materials to those students and staff.

## **H.13 PLANNING, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

### **PREMISE**

1. Government has the responsibility to fully fund the provision and maintenance of safe, attractive school buildings which optimise student learning and contribute to occupational health and safety.
2. Government school buildings should conform to established building codes and standards and to system facility schedules which guarantee adequate building and grounds space for the numbers of students and staff at the school.
3. Innovative planning approaches are required to ensure changing education needs are met.
4. Decisions regarding the planning and design of schools should be made by those who have been democratically elected and represent the people who will be affected. As local knowledge and opinion are important if the right decisions are to be made the local community should be involved in the decision making process.

### **H.13 POLICY**

- H.13.1 The siting, planning and design of school buildings and environs should be based on a holistic approach, taking into account the standards relating to minimum site, size and design requirements and the possible alternative uses before the life of the building expires. In the interests of economy and efficiency, school buildings should be designed to require low maintenance and low energy costs.
- H.13.2 The basic philosophy of a particular school must be developed by the local representative parent decision making body in the school, with access to professional planning advice to formulate the educational specification for the school.
- H.13.3 The local representative parent decision making body in the school should be involved in the development of a comprehensive plan for community usage.
- H.13.4 Where regular community usage or shared facilities exist, the representative parent decision making body in the school shall have management authority and the revenue from the use of the facilities shall be retained by the local school.
- H.13.5 It is the responsibility of governments to provide sufficient funds for the ongoing maintenance and improvements of capital facilities in public schools as and when such maintenance or improvements are required.
- H.13.6 Prior to the establishment of a new school, a local representative parent decision making body must be formed to define the local needs and formulate the aims of the school.
- H.13.7 Governments should arrange for the provision of professional planning and architectural advice to local representative parent decision making body in the school in formulating educational specifications for new schools or additions and alterations to existing schools.
- H.13.8 Information needed to ensure effective management of school facilities should be made available by the relevant government agencies and departments.
- H.13.9 Government resources should be made available for the training of school councillors in their roles and responsibilities relating to the management of school facilities.
- H.13.10 Planning authorities should review their standards criteria to ensure that the requirements of safety, access for disabled people, low maintenance and low energy costs are met;
- H.13.11 In newly developing areas
- (a) school sites should be identified following consultation with community and other relevant groups prior to the approval of any development proposal or plans.

- (b) new schools should be ready to open as soon as student numbers reach the required minimum level.

## **H.14 CHARTER OR GRANT MAINTAINED SCHOOLS**

### **PREMISE**

1. Charter schools are schools which are publicly owned and publicly financed, but privately operated outside system guidelines.
2. Such schools are self-governing under the terms of a performance contract, and are free from regulatory and administrative constraints of the public system, including those requirements governing curriculum, teaching methods and the hiring of staff.
3. Charter schools are developed from part or all of an existing government school, or through the creation of a new school in competition with regular public schools in the area.
4. The free market approach has been shown to exacerbate inequality and is not conducive to successful teaching and learning.

### **H.14 POLICY**

- H.14.1 All government schools must remain within the public education system and:
- (a) offer a free and secular education within the parameters of the curriculum framework;
  - (b) accept all students within their catchment area;
  - (c) receive funding from the government;
  - (d) employ registered and qualified teachers and maintain consistent employment conditions for school staff.
- H.14.2 ACSSO rejects the free market/parent choice approach to schooling embodied in the concept of charter schools.



## SECTION J - EVALUATION AND REPORTING

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### J.1 ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF STUDENTS

#### PREMISE

1. Assessment for the purpose of evaluating individual student progress should be non-competitive and for information between teacher, student and parent.
2. Certification should be by a central authority issued whenever the student leaves school and supplemented by a local school leaver statement and/or portfolio of achievement.
3. The student is entitled to recognition of success in any particular aspect of the total learning process.

#### J.1 POLICY

- J.1.1 Schooling should consist of a variety of learning experiences of which the academic tertiary-directed subjects are but a part.
- J.1.2 It is the responsibility of tertiary institutions and employers to make their own decisions concerning student's tuition or the work force.
- J.1.3 All school leavers should receive documentation of positive achievement during their secondary schooling
- J.1.4 Certification should not differentiate between classes of subjects through perceived differences in difficulty but should provide information about subject content for the benefit of potential employers.
- J.1.5 The minimum information required for admission procedures should be released for public information, and only if the student owner of the information gives permission and is made aware of the nature and extent of the information.
- J.1.6 State systems should support the transfer between government schools, of records of academic achievement to ensure correct student placement in classes when moving interstate and to encourage a similar arrangement for students transferring from non-government to government schools.
- J.1.7 Every effort should be made to negotiate agreements with tertiary institutions which discourage the introduction of entrance exams by those institutions.
- J.1.8 ACSSO views with concern the implementation of costly national and state-wide testing programs which do not provide useful information for teachers and parents about the educational development of the individual child.
- J.1.9 National and state testing programs testing constructed and administered by authorities outside the education system negate the principle of school-based curriculum development and evaluation.
- J.1.10 National and statewide testing programs do not provide useful information to parents, teachers or students about the educational development of the individual. Such testing programs:
- (a) have a high questionable validity in predicting a student's future achievement;
  - (b) may discriminate against recent immigrants, Indigenous Australians, students with disabilities and socio-economically disadvantaged students;
  - (c) may influence and pre-determine teacher expectations of children;
  - (d) may not allow for creative or alternative responses;

- (e) do not take account of the differing stages of development of individuals at different ages.

## **J.2 REPORTING TO PARENTS**

### **J.2 POLICY**

- J.2.1 Reporting is a sharing of information about student progress and achievement so that parents, teachers and students can work together to improve student learning. Reporting can take various forms including displays and performances, written reports, meetings and parent/teacher/student conferences.
- J.2.2 An effective school reporting program/policy is dependent on and will contribute to a cooperative climate of close home/school communication.
- J.2.3 Reporting programs should include a range of both formal and informal approaches as no one approach will meet the needs of all students. Schools should be flexible in implementing reporting strategies, to ensure reporting remains primarily responsive to the needs of each individual student.
- J.2.4 Reporting student programs must be based on the following principles. They should:
- (a) make clear the basis on which judgements are made and wherever possible cite the evidence;
  - (b) be an interactive process between parents, teachers and students;
  - (c) be designed to provide a basis for planning the future learning of the particular student;
  - (d) recognise the complexity of student learning;
  - (e) be based on assessment practices which enable any substantial differences in student achievement from that of peers to be identified and reported;
  - (f) occur in a systematic and publicly understood manner;
  - (g) encourage parents, students and teachers to initiate reporting processes as soon as problems relating to learning are observed and ensure that students are involved in setting their own goals for learning and in helping to decide how their work will be assessed. This should commence at the beginning of formal education to achieve progressive student self-responsibility for learning.
- J.2.5 Every school community should, through its school council or appropriate body, develop policy and processes for assessment and reporting through open collaborative processes and ensure that these are widely communicated and understood within that community.
- J.2.6 Reporting policy and practice could include:
- (a) written reporting;
  - (b) a method of additional 'early warning' contact between parents and teachers if and when learning or behaviour problems occur;
  - (c) provision for at least two formal interviews per year, between parents, teachers and students – one interview to be early in the year;
  - (d) a known system of additional opportunities for discussions about student progress between home and school, which is conducted in a welcoming, friendly manner and environment;
  - (e) samples of student work across all curriculum areas which come home regularly, with teacher comment included and with room for parent and/or student comment;
  - (f) occasions early in the year when written and verbal information will be given to parents about the curriculum which will be taught and the expected student outcomes;
  - (g) opportunities for parents to participate in and visit classrooms to observe the curriculum in practice;

- (h) provision of opportunities for student participation in reporting on their own progress;
- (i) teachers maintain cumulative folders of relevant student work and anecdotal records of each student which are regularly updated, for use at all parent/teacher/student discussions about progress, and on which to base written reports. All pieces of student work are the property of the student, and should finally be returned to them;
- (j) the form of the report reflects the school's assessment policy and agreed learning goals;
- (k) home visits, where agreed by the parents and teacher, are seen as part of the reporting process;
- (l) reporting is conducted in both English and the first language of the parents if other than English;
- (m) reporting is detailed in respect to the skill acquisition, personal and social development of the student. Reports must clearly set out the level of student attainment in each curriculum area in relation to expected student outcomes;
- (n) all reports, whether written or oral, focus on the future learning of the child and result in parents, teachers and students jointly developing strategies for the future;
- (o) reports are regarded as a professional and privileged communication between teacher, student and parent;
- (p) reports are released to other persons only with the agreement of the parents and student.

### **J.3 SCHOOL EVALUATION AND CURRICULUM PLANNING**

#### **J.3 POLICY**

- J.3.1 Each school should undertake regular self-evaluation and planning to ensure that policies and programs are appropriate in meeting the needs of students and the responsibilities given to schools.
- J.3.2 School evaluation is a particularly valuable method for improving:
- (a) understanding of what happens in schools;
  - (b) decision making and curriculum planning;
  - (c) the teaching and learning in schools.
- J.3.3 Self-evaluation should be a systematic process which involves parents, students and teachers in identifying priorities; defining important questions; collecting and interpreting information. School communities should be assisted in their evaluation activities by a wide range of external people selected by the school for their particular knowledge of, or expertise in, areas being evaluated or in techniques for self-evaluation.
- J.3.4 At the request of schools, education departments should provide advisory services on self-evaluation techniques, and should organise and resource cooperative evaluations of programs operating in a number of schools.
- J.3.5 The role of the school council – or, in the absence of a school council, the established school community committee – in school evaluation should be to:
- (a) establish and participate in an overall framework for ongoing school self-evaluation, including agreed timelines;
  - (b) establish and be involved in processes to ensure that all groups in the school community can participate;
  - (c) negotiate roles for people external to the local school community, if any;
  - (d) as appropriate, allocate resources and arrange support services for the evaluation activities, or collaborate with negotiated evaluation activities;
  - (e) consider the outcomes of evaluation, communicate the results to the school community and ensure that the results become the basis for action and future planning;
  - (f) be the sole body, with agreement of the Principal, having any right to authorise any release of data beyond the school community. This does not authorise the release of any data which could be used to construct school league tables.
- J.3.6 People working in parts of the education system outside schools need information from schools to assist them in making decisions, planning or school improvement. Schools have a responsibility to contribute their knowledge to the work of the system and to learn from the experience of other schools.

## **J.4 PUBLIC COMPARISONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS**

### **PREMISE**

1. Any system of public education must be based on the notions of cooperation, support and mutual progress towards shared goals.

### **J.4 POLICY**

- J.4.1 ACSSO opposes any form of public comparison of the performance of individual schools because it:
- (a) promotes competition between schools and undermines the integrity of the government school system;
  - (b) fails to take into account the wide variety of influences on, and the different needs of, school communities.

## **J.5 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE RANKINGS AND LEAGUE TABLES**

### **PREMISE**

1. Schools are both educational and social institutions. Schools are built to serve a community, whether that community is defined by physical boundaries or a common belief or ethos. The school's purpose is to educate and prepare the children of its community to enter society as responsible, independent individuals. Therefore, the school's accountability is to its community and it demonstrates its accountability by how well it meets its community's needs.
2. All schools are also accountable to the wider public. There is increasing pressure for areas of major public expenditure, such as education, to demonstrate that they are exercising responsible decision making and producing outcomes for that expenditure.
3. Rankings introduce the notion of competition into education which not only sets schools up to rival each other, but creates danger of the emergence of high profile schools which will attract students from great distances and in the process, displace local students.

### **J.5 POLICY**

- J.5.1 Academic achievement is not the sole outcome of schooling. Learning, and a love of learning, personal development, the ability to analyse information and solve problems, the ability to work with others, and the development of independent thinkers and well-rounded confident individuals should be as important, if not more important indicators of schooling success, than the achievement of a relatively small number of final year students in a narrow range of academic disciplines.
- J.5.2 Schools' accountability is fully justifiable, but should not be based on a single measure of the merits of an individual school. Parents should have access to information about their children's performance at the school level, but should also be provided with broader information about the school, including:
- (a) the school's ethos and unique culture;
  - (b) the ways in which the school supports its students;
  - (c) how receptive the school is to the concerns and interests of the student's parents;
  - (d) how responsive the school is to the diverse needs of the school's community;
  - (e) the range of curriculum offerings and other school-based activities.
- J.5.3 Schools should not be publicly ranked. Therefore, governments should take steps, through statutory intervention if necessary, to limit the availability of examination or assessment results of individual schools.
- J.5.4 Schools have a responsibility to publicise information on the school's curriculum and other relevant information as indicated at J.5.2 by utilising all available methods including development of attractive and relevant websites and open days.



### K.1 TEACHERS AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

#### PREMISE

1. The quality of schooling is closely related to the quality of teachers.
2. The selection of potential teachers, their training, further development and professional attitudes and standing are vital factors in the quality of school education.
3. Among the qualities to be looked for and developed in teachers are enthusiasm, imagination, tolerance, sensitivity and perceptiveness and affinity with young people.
4. Schooling is most effective when there is a partnership between teachers, parents and students.
5. The contribution of teachers in developing a collaborative school community is a key aspect of effective schooling.
6. Teachers should recognise that the school is an integral part of the community and be prepared to promote the active involvement of parents and the community in appropriate ways in schooling.
7. Teachers should be knowledgeable about and prepared to draw on community resources, and should be able to work cooperatively with the family and with people and organisations in the community.
8. Teachers share a responsibility to develop the potential of students in all aspects of schooling.
9. Teachers should see their students as individuals and develop with them relationships of mutual respect and dignity.
10. Teachers should have acquired a high level of knowledge and skill, an ability to communicate, an awareness of man and of the natural world, and an understanding of society and its workings.

## **K.2 THE PROFESSION OF TEACHING**

### **PREMISE**

1. The conditions of teaching must be such as to foster and promote fully professional attitudes, responsibilities and status in the teaching service.

### **K.2 POLICY**

- K.2.1 As professionals, teachers must accept their professional responsibilities including the need for ongoing development.
- K.2.2 Teacher organisations should formulate a code of ethics for the profession of teaching, and take such steps as are necessary to ensure that it is both publicised and upheld.
- K.2.3 Standards for admission to the teaching profession should be established by the teaching profession, as in other professions.
- K.2.4 There should be a formal registration process for all state and territory teachers, as part of the process of the national registration of teachers. This should include:
- (a) maintenance of a register of teachers licensed to teach;
  - (b) maintenance of up to date information on registered teachers as supplied by state and territory teacher registration authorities;
  - (c) in consultation, establishment of minimum national standards in relation to teacher training, qualifications, education quality and the professional development of teachers.
- K.2.5 There should be an independent teacher registration authority in each state and territory with legislated responsibilities, including:
- (a) reporting teacher qualifications, professional development and adverse character information to the national registration authority;
  - (b) setting and collecting teacher registration membership fees;
  - (c) reporting convictions on indictable offences to the national registration authority;
  - (d) deregistering teachers convicted of an indictable offence;
  - (e) cautioning, suspending registration or deregistering of teachers found guilty of misconduct by the employing authority;
  - (f) providing character references, including letters of introduction to the national registration authority, other state or territory registration authorities or overseas educational bodies;
  - (g) notification to the national registration authority and all state and territory registration authorities of teachers facing disciplinary action;
  - (h) determining consistent minimum standards for registration, teacher training, quality improvement in education and professional development.

### **K.3 ADMISSION TO TEACHING**

#### **K.3 POLICY**

- K.3.1 There must be an adequate supply of trained teachers with the necessary ethics, intellect, temperament, professional knowledge and skills.
- K.3.2 Admission to teaching should be offered:
- (a) on completion of an approved tertiary course;
  - (b) taking into consideration not only academic excellence, but also vocational aptitude and personal qualities;
  - (c) to a wide variety of persons qualified by reason of their particular discipline, skills, diverse experience outside teaching, academic studies and education, personal experience in areas of particular need;
  - (d) in a balanced range of ages and of both sexes;
  - (e) to people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- K.3.3 Special consideration should be given to selecting teachers to cater for the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- K.3.4 Opportunity should be available for teaching on a contract or consultancy basis for limited periods.

## **K.4 THE RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS**

### **K.4 POLICY**

- K.4.1 There is need at national, state/territory and regional level for monitoring of social and educational trends and for planning in education so that the training and recruitment of teachers may be encouraged and guided accordingly.
- K.4.2 Both the need for, and the availability of, teachers require efficient planning rather than an arbitrary imposition of quotas on teacher training.
- K.4.3 The effective implementation of this planning requires continuing, consistent and comprehensive collection of information.
- K.4.4 Education systems, tertiary institutions and government education and other agencies should make this information available in useful format for publication on a national basis by a federal agency.
- K.4.5 The appropriate authorities must make the necessary financial and other provisions to encourage mature age persons to enter teaching.
- K.4.6 Each State and Territory should have a formal registration process which includes details regarding qualifications and both Federal and State police clearances. It is the responsibility of each State and Territory to ensure the register is maintained to include the current status of all teachers.

Registration information from each State and Territory should be provided to a National Board of Teacher Registration.

## **K.5 THE PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS**

### **K.5 POLICY**

K.5.1 Institutions engaged in training teachers should be:

- (a) of tertiary standard;
- (b) multi-disciplinary and covering a wide range of learning and training;
- (c) independent of government departments.

K.5.2 All pre-service teacher education should:

- (a) be of at least four (4) years duration or the equivalent;
- (b) introduce compulsory components to enable ALL teachers to be adequately prepared in the acquisition of language development, literacy and numeracy skills;
- (c) include as a minimum, course time of at least 100 hours pre-service training in the teaching of language development and literacy skills;
- (d) include courses which prepare all teachers, particularly teachers trained for early childhood and primary years, to detect at an early stage and to cater for the learning needs of children.
- (e) include courses which prepare all teachers to detect at an early stage and to develop strategies for teaching, students of exceptional needs.
- (f) comprise study of the main elements of philosophy, psychology, sociology as applied to education, the theory and history of education, and of comparative education, experimental pedagogy, school administration and methods of teaching the various subjects;
- (g) include the study of the educational value, including the positive effects on student learning, of the participation of parents and the community in schools and in educational decision making;
- (h) include practical experiences of techniques and strategies which will facilitate genuine participation and shared decision making in schools;
- (i) include practice in teaching and in conducting extra curricula activities under the guidance of fully qualified teachers;
- (j) include experience and contacts with work and activities outside academic life and teaching;
- (k) include the opportunity to acquire a minimum of 12 months work experience outside schools and academic institutions;
- (l) include a module which will develop skills in resolving conflict between members of staff, students, parents, and members of the action, and providing for the development of self-awareness and personal growth;
- (m) include a compulsory Certificate of First Aid course. This credential must be renewed regularly at Departmental expense.

K.5.3 Teacher training courses should develop in all students:

- (a) their general education;
- (b) their ability to teach and educate others;
- (c) an awareness of the principles which underlie human relations;
- (d) a sense of responsibility for a contribution through teaching and personal example to the individual welfare of the student and the development of the society.

- K.5.4 Teacher training courses should include among their concerns and discussions:
- (a) the role of the teacher and of other school staff in the school of the future;
  - (b) cooperation in education within the school, with the family and with the community, its institution and its organisations.
- K.5.5 All pre-service programs of teacher education, should require graduates to be well prepared in each one of the five following areas:
- (a) education knowledge (nature of children and adolescents and their development; learning, teaching and evaluation processes; social, cultural, institutional and political context of education; language and arts);
  - (b) human relationships knowledge (awareness of self; counselling; interpersonal and group skills);
  - (c) teaching practice;
  - (d) knowledge of relevant curriculum trends;
  - (e) processes for development of school-based curriculum.
- K.5.6 In respect of teaching subject knowledge:
- (a) secondary teachers of year 11 and 12 students must have academic qualifications to at least second year tertiary level in subjects relevant to the curriculum areas in which they are teaching and must have taken one of their subjects at third year tertiary level;
  - (b) secondary teachers of junior or lower secondary students must have academic qualifications to at least first year tertiary level in subjects relevant to the curriculum areas in which they are teaching;
  - (c) all primary teachers should be qualified generalist teachers, so they have a capacity to teach effectively in all areas of the curriculum as well as any specialist areas in which they may have qualifications.
- K.5.7 In respect of teaching practice:
- (a) student teachers should be placed in schools for periods of at least six months under the direct supervision of an experienced teacher based on the 'internship model' used in the education of medical practitioners;
  - (b) the role and functions of supervising teachers (school based teacher educators) should be recognised as one requiring different professional knowledge and skills additional to those of a normal classroom teacher;
  - (c) special federal funding should be provided for in-service courses to permit current supervising teachers to develop and upgrade their knowledge and skills in that role.
- K.5.8 Improvement in the status and conditions of the teaching profession will result in educationally competent and socially committed students being attracted to teacher education courses.
- K.5.9 In respect of entry to pre-service teacher education courses, candidates be counselled at all points of entry to the profession so that they develop an understanding of their own particular aptitude for teaching.
- K.5.10 Innovative teacher education courses should be sought, based on the needs of children and teachers. Such courses should not be constrained by the existing structures and policies of higher education institutions.

## **K.6 TEACHERS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **K.6 POLICY**

- K.6.1 Compulsory units in Special Education and teaching “gifted and talented” children should be included within all accredited pre-service teacher education courses at early childhood, primary and post-primary levels. The content of such units should provide the following:
- (a) knowledge of the developmental and learning difficulties which will be encountered in the regular classroom at pre-school primary and secondary levels;
  - (b) knowledge of the range of learning needs & abilities which may be encountered in the regular classroom;
  - (c) assessment and teaching strategies related to specific development and learning difficulties and exceptional abilities;
  - (d) knowledge of access to and use of support services such as resource teachers, school counsellors and inter-disciplinary services;
  - (e) experience in the regular classroom at pre-school, primary and post-primary level;
  - (f) observations, techniques and practicum with specific experiences in programs for children with exceptional abilities and / or learning difficulties and behavioural problems in the regular classroom at pre-school primary and secondary levels.
- K.6.2 The provision of special education programs, and identifiable funding for such, at both pre-service and in-service levels to prepare teachers to better meet the special educational needs of children.
- K.6.3 Selection of teachers should be based on their suitability to work in the field of Special Education.
- K.6.4 Systems of education should develop promotional structures which allow teachers to achieve promotion within the field of Special Education.

## **K.7 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS**

### **PREMISE**

1. Effective teaching requires ongoing professional development and training to reflect changes in pedagogy and in the content and social context of education.

### **K.7 POLICY**

- K.7.1 Every opportunity should be taken to widen the experience of teachers both within and outside teaching.
- K.7.2 Authorities and teachers must recognise the importance of in-service education designed to secure a systematic improvement of the quality and content of education and teaching techniques.
- K.7.3 Education authorities must accept the responsibility for a continuing program of in-service training for teachers.
- K.7.4 In-service courses should, where appropriate, involve and bring teachers into contact with persons from other occupations.
- K.7.5 Federal, state and territory education authorities should continue to promote and finance in-service courses in the areas of literacy, numeracy and oral communications.
- K.7.6 Whole school development programs should be planned, implemented and evaluated with parents and the school community included as an integral component of each process.
- K.7.7 The introduction of new curricula or the implementation of special programs should be accompanied by appropriate planned in-service programs which include parents.
- K.7.8 Education employing authorities should accept the responsibility of introducing a minimum mandatory in-service requirement of teachers during each year of teaching.
- K.7.9 Education centres should provide an impetus to the professional development of teachers and offer scope for the involvement of parents and the community.

## **K.8 PROMOTION IN TEACHING**

### **K.8 POLICY**

- K.8.1 Teachers should be able, subject to their having the necessary qualifications, to move from one type or level of school to another within the education service.
- K.8.2 The organisation and structure of an education service, including individual schools, should provide adequate opportunities for the recognition of additional responsibilities to be exercised by individual teachers, on condition that those responsibilities are not detrimental to the quality of their teaching work.
- K.8.3 Promotion should not be dependent on the acceptance of administrative responsibility; there should be adequate promotion opportunity for teachers who wish to remain classroom teachers rather than accept the administrative responsibility involved in becoming principals, deputy principals, etc.
- K.8.4 Promotion procedures and practices should not discriminate against women and make it more difficult for them to attain positions of responsibility equally with men.
- K.8.5 The preparation of persons for principals and other educational management positions should reinforce their role as educational leaders and should emphasise good interpersonal skills and processes of shared decision making. Consideration of these qualities should be an integral part of the selection and evaluation of persons for and in these positions.

## **K.9 PART TIME TEACHING**

### **K.9 POLICY**

- K.9.1 There are both sociological and educational reasons to consider the possibilities and value of part-time teaching arrangements which can:
- (a) offer opportunities to those with family responsibilities eg parents of young children, lone parents;
  - (b) attract persons of experience in teaching or other occupations;
  - (c) widen experience for those who have no experience outside teaching;
  - (d) distribute satisfying employment more widely.
- K.9.2 Conditions for part-time employment should be on the same basis as those for full-time employment.

## **K.10 THE PROFESSIONAL STAFFING OF SCHOOLS**

### **K.10 POLICY**

- K.10.1 Each state and territory government is responsible for the staffing of all its government schools and for the ongoing maintenance of a permanent career teaching service.
- K.10.2 In the staffing of schools, several different interests and responsibilities have to be addressed and reconciled taking into account:
- (a) the requirements of schools that their professional staffing should be appropriate to the policies, approaches and programs of the school in the context of overall state/territory policies;
  - (b) the responsibility of the system for the wellbeing of all schools and children in the system;
  - (c) the rights of teachers to tenure and satisfactory conditions including promotion, transfer and ongoing professional development.
- K.10.3 To safeguard the rights of teachers and of all schools and children, the system should be the employing authority for teaching staff and should set conditions for employment.
- K.10.4 In order to pursue its policies and programs effectively, the school must have a considerable voice in both the allocation and selection of professional staff.
- K.10.5 Parents and teachers, through their elected representatives, should play an active role at the system level in setting general staffing policies and at the school level in establishing the criteria for selecting staff to fill particular vacancies as they occur:
- (a) duly elected representatives of the parent body or bodies should be included on a school staffing committee (or staffing committee of the school's council where school councils exist) to be established in each school. This committee's task is the establishment of general criteria for each vacancy to be filled. These criteria are to be established within the framework of the school's educational needs, priorities, goals and philosophies;
  - (b) duly elected representatives of the parent body or bodies should be included on any selection panel formed to choose a new Principal or senior members of staff;
  - (c) such representatives shall be trained in the functions and processes of selection panels, including interviewing techniques if appropriate, at the Department of Education's expense. ACSSO affiliates should run such courses for parents or, at the very least, should be active participants in developing such courses.
- K.10.6 ACSSO affiliates should be involved in discussions about the manner in which such selection processes operate, particularly regarding the role of parents.
- K.10.7 Grievance procedures
- (a) In order to ensure ongoing development of a high quality teaching force, education authorities, teacher unions and parent organisations should collaboratively develop grievance procedures to deal with complaints concerning teaching staff;
  - (b) Such procedures should protect the rights of all concerned and be known and accessible to all members of the school community.

**K.11 ANCILLARY STAFFING**

**K.11 POLICY**

- K.11.1 Education systems must provide adequate ancillary staff and support services so that teachers may perform their professional roles.
- K.11.2 The allocation of ancillary staff time to schools should be made centrally and should be based on local characteristics and identified needs, not only on student enrolments.
- K.11.3 It should be the responsibility of the school to select and deploy ancillary staff.

## **K.12 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN STAFFING NUMBERS**

### **PREMISE**

1. All learning takes place within the cultural framework of the learner, a reality that is often unacknowledged in educational policy and practice.
2. Indigenous Australian teachers and other Aboriginal school personnel are best placed to understand the cultural frameworks and languages of Indigenous Australian students.
3. There is a need for appropriate support and liaison staff for all school children and particularly for those whose cultural milieu differs most from the mainstream culture;
4. It will take time before desirable numbers of Indigenous Australian teachers are trained.
5. Up to the present, insufficient Indigenous Australians have qualified as teachers to make a genuine and proportional impact upon education systems and their teaching practices.
6. It is necessary for both Indigenous Australians to maintain close contact with their communities, particularly during teacher training.
7. Some courses currently available to Indigenous Australian teacher trainees limit them to teaching Indigenous Australian children.
8. Indigenous Australian children suffer educational disadvantage because their cultural background is not taken into account in the learning process.
9. Aboriginal assistant teachers provide another link between the Aboriginal community and the school.

### **K.12 POLICY**

- K.12.1 More Indigenous Australian teachers must be trained, and increasing numbers employed, commensurate with the perceived needs of Indigenous Australian students.
- K.12.2 Teacher training schemes which are relevant to Indigenous Australians and which, upon completion, provide proper certification acceptable throughout education systems, should be extended.
- K.12.3 The training and qualification resulting from all completed teacher training courses for Indigenous Australians should be equal in status to those of any fully trained teacher and should equip them to teach in any school in the system.
- K.12.4 Due to the diversity of Aboriginal communities a variety of teacher training courses must be made available to Aboriginal people:
- (a) teacher training courses need to be flexibly designed to allow Indigenous Australians to move in and out of teaching studies as their lifestyle and community warrants;
  - (b) government should provide a career structure for assistant teachers with opportunities for them to upgrade their qualifications as needed.
- K.12.5 More Indigenous Australian assistant teachers and other resource persons must be trained, and increasing numbers of these people should be employed until adequate numbers of fully qualified Indigenous Australian teachers are trained.
- K.12.6 Training for Indigenous Australians as teachers, assistant teachers or other resource personnel should be undertaken within an Indigenous Australian cultural context and without prolonged separation of the trainees from their communities.
- K.12.7 To provide a firm link between the Aboriginal community and the school, Indigenous Australian Home/School Liaison Officers, Cultural Officers and School Counsellors should be trained and employed, where needed, in adequate numbers so that these children do not suffer educational disadvantage.



**L.1 CURRICULUM****PREMISE**

1. Curriculum is the totality of learning activities students engage in through schooling. The content of courses, staffing policy, facilities and resources, teaching and learning styles, school organisation and assessment and reporting procedures impact on student learning and so are a necessary part of curriculum considerations.
2. Effective outcomes for all students can only be achieved when the above elements are organised on principles consistent with the following understandings about the nature of learning:
  - (a) learning is a process by which individuals actively construct meaning;
  - (b) learning is a social activity and occurs best in situations where learners cooperate;
  - (c) learners bring substantially different prior experiences to classrooms and so learn different things at different rates and in different ways from the same teacher in the same classroom;
  - (d) learning is influenced by the social, emotional and psychological experiences that students bring to school;
  - (e) learning is an intricate process; basic and complex learning frequently occur at the same time;
  - (f) knowledge is derived from specific bodies of knowledge: knowing where particular knowledge comes from, and how it can be understood in different contexts and concrete examples, is necessary for effective learning.

**L.1 POLICY**

- L.1.1 Each school has a responsibility to create curriculum suited to all of its students which builds on the needs, aspirations and cultures of that school community.
- L.1.2 In deciding school organisation and learning experiences, the foremost concern should be to ensure that all students learn in ways and at rates appropriate to their educational and developmental needs.
- L.1.3 Learning situations should be socially interactive, dependent on and developing networks amongst and between students and teachers.
- L.1.4 Education systems have a responsibility to develop, through a collaborative process which includes the effective representation of parent and teacher organisations, curriculum frameworks which address issues of inclusiveness and social justice.
- L.1.5 Processes for achieving individual and collective ownership on the part of parents, students and teachers must be integral to the:
  - (a) formation of school and system objectives;
  - (b) development of curriculum by schools;
  - (c) design and supply of curriculum resources.
- L.1.6 Curriculum resources should include:
  - (a) guidelines which provide a coherent framework for the whole of schooling, refer to section L2;
  - (b) exemplar courses/units;

- (c) consultancy support for both process and content.
- L.1.7 School curriculum should involve students in activities which:
- (a) encourage intellectual independence;
  - (b) investigate the three major fields of human enquiry: natural science, social science, and aesthetic studies;
  - (c) enable the mastery of communication skills, including both literacy and numeracy;
  - (d) facilitate the development of creative and physical skills;
  - (e) provide an increased understanding of the environment;
  - (f) contribute to personal and social development;
  - (g) develop capacities for decision making and participation in decision making activities;
  - (h) encourage active commitment to others.
- L.1.8 Lifelong continuing education is necessary for the fullest development of people. Alternative types of education must be provided for people to choose what suits their needs and through which they can progress in stages which suit them.
- L.1.9 Tertiary selection needs must not dominate secondary school curricula nor should secondary curricula needs dominate primary curricula.
- L.1.10 Where a tertiary rank exists the process by which it is calculated, including the contribution of individual subjects, should be available on request to students and schools.
- L.1.11 Formal certificates of scholastic attainment alone should not be seen as the prime indicator of a person's educational achievements or suitability for employment.
- L.1.12 Legal restrictions preventing teachers from raising questions of value or political content should be removed. Students and teachers should have the rights of withdrawal from sections of learning programs to which they have conscientious or other valid grounds of objection.
- L.1.13 Coeducation should be encouraged at all levels without discrimination in respect to curricula. Curriculum must be without gender bias and orientation. Curriculum administrative procedures and learning materials should not model stereotypical roles, careers or educational outcomes for one sex only.
- L.1.14 Teachers should be made aware of the need for the fostering of creativity and the development of an active, participatory involvement of people of all ages in drama, music, dance, art and craft and creative writing.
- L.1.15 Maximum use should be made of the community's artists and craftsmen/women within and without the school to pass on their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm.
- L.1.16 Liaison with the Arts Council of Australia and its Boards and other bodies involved in creative fields should be developed so that integrated programs of activity in all creative fields are available to all people.

## **L.2 CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

### **PREMISE**

1. The changing social, cultural and economic demands facing Australia today highlight the need to work towards a cohesive society.
2. Education is a contributor to national development.
3. Everyone has a right to education which will assist them to develop the kind of knowledge, attitudes, personal qualities and skills which will enable them to participate meaningfully in the Australian community.
4. Schools cannot operate as separate units, but must enable regional, cultural and ethnic differences to be taken into account and contribute to their local communities and the national culture.
5. ACSSO's concern is for the common good of Australia, as well as for the individual good.

### **L.2 POLICY**

- L.2.1 ACSSO supports the development and trialing of national curriculum frameworks that provide sound advice to schools, so that they develop curricula inclusive of the learning needs of all students, with particular regard to matters related to gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic background, geographic location and physical ability. Frameworks should be informed by the findings of authoritative research about the nature of teaching and learning.
- L.2.2 Nationally developed frameworks should consist of a set of principles and goals for broad areas of learning, suggestions for enhancing learning, teaching and evaluation, and the scope of appropriate curriculum encompassing all the years of schooling.
- L.2.3 A national curriculum framework is not prescribed content or rigidly implemented programs, nor should it be driven by outcome statements but is a broad expression of skills, generalisations and understandings that will provide one element of what is necessary to provide a minimum guarantee of curriculum quality.
- L.2.4 The development of curriculum resources at the national level:
- (a) must be based on the premise that schools should be empowered to be creators of curriculum which meet the needs of their students;
  - (b) should be achieved through collaborative processes which build on the best practice in schools;
  - (c) should enable teachers, parents and students to work together on curriculum issues at school level;
  - (d) must take a period of time that allows for the desired breadth of participation.
- L.2.5 Structures established to manage the development and evaluation of frameworks and profiles need to include representatives of parents/school council and teacher organisations in order to build community confidence in the quality and relevance of the documents produced.
- L.2.6 ACSSO supports the development of national frameworks as a resource to assist the improvement of teaching and learning in classrooms, and to provide a nationally consistent language for reporting students achievements to their parents, at the school level. However, ACSSO would not support the identification of outcomes for specific grade levels, or the use of frameworks to prescribe the curriculum of schools.
- L.2.7 All draft frameworks should undergo limited and carefully controlled trialing in schools on a voluntary basis, in order to contribute to the evaluation of their usefulness, and their improvement as appropriate. The experience of schools during the trial period should be monitored through the examination of at least the following:

- (a) the usefulness of the frameworks in supporting school based curriculum development;
- (b) the impact of their introduction on previous school teaching and assessment practices;
- (c) the impact on the workload of teachers;
- (d) the professional development needs of school council members and other teachers and parents;
- (e) their usefulness in reporting the progress of students to parents.

L.2.8 Representative bodies, which include people nominated by government school council and parent organisations, should be maintained at state/territory and national levels to receive information from schools and to evaluate the frameworks.

L.2.9 ACSSO does not support the use of frameworks for the purpose of collecting data to produce state/territory or national reports on student performance, particularly where such reports would permit the identification of individual students or groups of students from specific schools, individual teachers, or schools.

L.2.10 Agreement on a set of national protocols for student assessment and reporting is urgently required, with particular attention to the issue of the ethical use of data about student performance.

**L.3 CORE CURRICULUM**

**L.3 POLICY**

L.3.1 The imposition of any centrally prescribed core or common curriculum at either national or state/territory level would be contrary to our belief and policy on:

- (a) curriculum development by parents, teachers and students to meet the needs of individuals;
- (b) the relation between education, society and the individual;
- (c) the relationship between the community and its school.

L.3.2 The relevant education authorities should provide adequate support services to parents and teachers to enable the development of curriculum at a school level to meet students needs. Such services should include:

- (a) curriculum statements and guidelines;
- (b) information on curriculum development;
- (c) consultants to work with parents and teachers;
- (d) in-service activities.

## **L.4 LITERACY AND NUMERACY**

### **PREMISE**

1. It is the right of all people to be literate – that is, to have the power to invest words with meaning, to recognise the ideas someone else wishes to convey, and to express thoughts appropriately.
2. It is the right of all people to be numerate – it is the responsibility of the education system to foster the development of concepts which lead to understanding and the effective use of mathematical skills.
3. Favourable learning environments, flexibility in the distribution and use of resources, and positive expectations on the part of teachers and parents are basic steps towards ensuring that every child is encouraged by a sense of achievement to develop confidence and self-esteem.

### **L.4 POLICY**

L.4.1 Governments and all departments of education should:

- (a) as a first priority, place greater emphasis on primary education in the allocation of funds;
- (b) provide adequate capital and recurrent funds for specialist support services on a multi-disciplinary regional or school basis (ie remedial teachers, psychologists, therapists, social workers and others) for teachers, parents and students;
- (c) provide and ensure the use of reliable 'developmental schedules' for regular screening of children from the earliest age possible;
- (d) work positively towards the integration of health and education services to provide improved facilities for assessment, guidance and counselling;
- (e) enable all teachers through pre and in-service training to recognise children with learning difficulties and/or exceptional abilities and to provide learning programs and environments to suit individual needs;
- (f) provide support for the classroom teacher through ready access to advisers, consultants and by the employment of teacher aides, also by encouraging the use of parents as teachers' aides in the classroom;
- (g) ensure that parents have access to all records and reports concerning the development of their child.
- (h) encourage innovative school-initiated learning programs which demonstrate diversity of approach to specific situations individual learning needs and emphasise cooperative involvement of parents, teachers and students;
- (i) build, equip and professionally staff resource rooms in all schools;
- (j) encourage the development and publication of learning materials relevant to the needs of all students.
- (k) recognise the importance of learning to read and implement effective programs with adequate resources, including staffing, to ensure that all students learn to read, and make particular arrangements for those experiencing difficulties;
- (l) recognise that children of the same age will exhibit a wide range of literacy and numeracy skills and ensure that all students remain engaged and involved in the learning process;
- (m) make provisions for the re-entry into school and community based literacy programs for early school leavers and adults.

## **L.5 INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS' LANGUAGES**

### **PREMISE**

1. Language is a major means of communication and a vehicle for transmitting the culture, wisdom and achievements of the past, for indicating present concerns and for shaping the future and that therefore language is power.
2. Maintenance and development of a child's first language is essential to cognitive development.
3. While all Indigenous Australian languages, including Aboriginal English, provide a means of cultural communication, only English will provide a means of communicating with members of mainstream culture and institutions.
4. The learning of more than one language from kindergarten age onwards generally enhances a child's cognitive development, self-esteem, identity and educational achievements.
5. A disadvantage is imposed on Indigenous Australian children from traditional communities where the language of classroom instruction is English.

### **L.5 POLICY**

- L.5.1 A policy on Indigenous Australian education in schools should recognise that it is essential for all Aboriginal children to develop the ability to communicate effectively in both their own first language (whether this is a traditional Indigenous Australian language, a Creole, or Aboriginal English) as well as in English.
- L.5.2 Development, maintenance and teaching of Indigenous Australian children's first language by community members for whom it is their first language, is essential to the end of schooling.
- L.5.3 Indigenous Australian students must have access to a curriculum which will enable them, by the end of primary schooling, to attain proficiency in a form of Australian English which will allow them to interact effectively with the broader community.
- L.5.4 An Indigenous Australian Language Committee should be established by the Federal Government in acknowledgment of the importance of the language interests of all Indigenous Australians.
- L.5.5 The provision of adequate and appropriate pre-service and in-service training for teachers of Aboriginal students or teacher aides in Aboriginal bilingual programs as well as the provision of high quality materials for the teaching of Aboriginal languages is essential.

## **L.6 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)**

### **PREMISE**

1. Post-compulsory curriculum must be based on sound principles of teaching and learning that encourage and allow for the development of qualities which assist all young people to adapt to a variety of post school situations.
2. A high quality general education is essential for all young people until the end of formal schooling and is the best way to prepare them for the process of lifelong learning and the frequent and flexible changes that will be demanded of them in the employment market.
3. Curriculum must be related to the real world and culture of students and must explicitly assist them to develop skills and knowledge valued not only by employers but by others beyond the precincts of the school.
4. Theory and practice must be integrated in all aspects of the post-compulsory curriculum.
5. Specific vocational subjects must be set in an appropriate career and general education framework.
6. The competencies which underpin curriculum design in vocational education must be thought of as complex, interrelated, structured and holistic.
7. Competencies include the knowledge, skills, understandings, attitudes and values appropriate to any context. Narrow definitions of competency must not be allowed to influence curriculum design in schools.

### **L.6 POLICY**

- L.6.1 The curriculum design in VET must be based on the following principles with particular attention given to:
- (a) individual and specific needs of all students in post-compulsory years;
  - (b) the needs of:
    - (i) rurally isolated students;
    - (ii) indigenous students;
    - (iii) students with disabilities
    - (iv) NESB students;
    - (v) students experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage;
    - (vi) students experiencing abuse and/or family crisis;
  - (c) the cost of delivery of VET;
  - (d) the extent to which the redirection of funds or the cost of VET courses will restrict equitable access.
- L.6.2 A set of consultative procedures must be established within vocational education to balance the interests of 'industry led' initiatives beside the experience and expertise of other groups with a professional and human interest in the education of the young.
- L.6.3 Vocational education must move beyond narrowly specific job preparation and must include broad competencies. Teaching in these subjects must include supported critical reflection on both the subject material and the job experiences.
- L.6.4 VET courses need to be accredited. Students must be aware of:

- (a) the capacity of the course to articulate within the context of the Australian qualifications framework;
  - (b) both the advantages and limitations of VET courses on their subject patterns and any future curriculum pathways.
- L.6.5 Expert career advice and counselling must take place within the context of the school. Career counselling must take account of the future, and balance the immediacy of employer needs against the preparation for meaningful and established career paths in future.
- L.6.6 Any work component in vocational education must be rewarded by the payment of a socially just wage to young people.
- L.6.7 Support must be given to students to ensure that their educational and industrial rights are protected.
- L.6.8 Any move to involve schools in labour market brokerage agencies which require schools to invest funds or which in other ways may lead to increased pressure on students to leave school early is antithetical to the purposes of schooling and rejected by this organisation.
- L.6.9 Workplace experience for students in vocational education must be the subject of rigorous monitoring, assessing and reporting to ensure that the curriculum is being delivered in a way that adds to the student's knowledge and skills.
- L.6.10 Teachers and trainers in VET within the school system must be credentialled appropriately, and must have teacher training as well as appropriate vocationally specific experience and expertise.
- L.6.11 Procedures for granting of credit transfer and recognition of prior learning must be clearly expressed, explicit, transparent, equitable and portable.
- L.6.12 VET must not be used to shift costs from private industry to the public schooling system.
- L.6.13 The increasing emphasis on the supposed right of employers to choose private providers of vocational education and training must not be at the expense of the quality, choice or availability of a wide variety of vocational education and training courses. 'User choice' must not operate at the expense of a commitment to equity.

## **L.7 CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. Education is a lifelong process. Educational institutions must take this into account in their structures, curriculum and accreditation.

### **L.7 POLICY**

- L.7.1 Schooling should provide a curriculum that gives each student a full range of options for further study and work.
- L.7.2 Access to post compulsory education should be guaranteed at appropriate times during the whole of life.
- L.7.3 Distribution of facilities should be such as to make education as far as possible available to all individuals, wherever they may need it.
- L.7.4 Young people and older adults wishing to re-enter secondary school should be able to do so without disadvantage.
- L.7.5 Degrees and certificates should not be looked upon as an 'end result' of an educational career but rather as steps and guides towards a process of lifelong education and lifelong career and personality development.
- L.7.6 All educational institutions should recognise prior learning and accredit this where appropriate.
- L.7.7 All education institutions should provide ongoing opportunities for educationally disadvantaged students, through the selection process, curriculum and teaching methodology and access for geographically isolated students.
- L.7.8 Governments and all institutions of higher learning should coordinate and facilitate the process whereby individuals can continue to acquire new skills and further knowledge throughout life.
- L.7.9 The development of community-based learning resources for continuing education should be supported.

## **L.8 CAREERS EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. Careers education is intended to enable all students to leave school with the skills, knowledge and understandings to achieve their own vocational choice.
2. Careers education enhances self esteem, and instils confidence in the ability to achieve.
3. Careers education is defined as the process whereby all students are brought to a realisation of their potential skills and abilities upon which they may base future decisions about their ways of earning a living.

### **L.8 POLICY**

- L.8.1 Courses should support the development of broad competencies rather than being training to fit specific jobs and provide sufficient involvement in a range of actual or simulated career experiences so that students will feel confident in the choice of their first career.
- L.8.2 Careers education should give students an understanding of such things as the social and political dimensions of unpaid work, an appreciation of the different views of the relations between work and leisure and an understanding of what different kinds of jobs may require.
- L.8.3 Adequate careers education should be available to all students.
- L.8.4 Careers education should include aspects of living skills, concepts of leisure, voluntary work and unemployment and knowledge of work situations and systems in preparation for entry into a working life.
- L.8.5 Career counselling should be available to all students at all secondary schools by persons trained specifically for this purpose.

## **L.9 TECHNOLOGY STUDIES**

### **PREMISE**

1. Technology is the application of scientific and other knowledge, material and energy in a systematic and creative process to achieve practical responses to human needs.
2. Technology studies includes but is not limited to the application of scientific knowledge for the purposes of manufacture (trade and practical subjects) and computer based information technology.
3. The techniques of research and design are used by students in all levels of schooling when technology is applied across the curriculum.
4. The inclusion of technology in school programs is validated by:
  - (a) the need to maintain control over the technology around us and over its effects on the quality of human life;
  - (b) the need for all to be technologically literate in an increasingly technological society;
  - (c) the need to be able to make informed decisions about our lives and the wider society;
  - (d) the need to be secure and confident in using products of advanced technology on a daily basis;
  - (e) the need to provide self-fulfilment and allow for creativity through the exploration of a variety of mediums.

### **L.9 POLICY**

- L.9.1 Technology programs in schools must involve students in generating ideas and acting on them, as well as using and developing processes and products that meet the needs of their community.
- L.9.2 Technology studies should be an integral part of high quality general education available for all children.
- L.9.3 Enquiry methods of learning and the integration of theory and practice should be emphasised.
- L.9.4 Technology will impact on most aspects of current curriculum and will also require separate studies of its own which over time could be integrated and consolidated.
- L.9.5 Government must provide adequate resources to enable all children to have access to technology studies.
- L.9.6 Fully funded professional development programs must be provided for parents and teachers.

## **L.10 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **PREMISE**

1. Australia is a modern technological society, one that is part of and needs to compete in the international market place. In any such society, a critical understanding of, and competence in, the use of information technology is essential to all its citizens and to the health and long term survival of that society.
2. All students must be given the opportunity to acquire, critically evaluate and competently use information processing skills.
3. To enable this to occur, all students must have access to an appropriate range of electronic resources and trained teachers irrespective of location, economic status, gender, culture or ability.

### **L.10 POLICY**

- L.10.1 All students must have free and appropriate access to information technology at all government schools.
- L.10.2 All students must be given the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, capabilities, skills and critical attitudes that together comprise information literacy, a key competency for lifelong learning.
- L.10.3 All students must be given the opportunity to actively participate in designing, making, appraising and refining ideas which can be converted into action.
- L.10.4 Students with special needs must be provided with access to appropriate technologies which will enable them to develop skills, competence and confidence in the use of information technology.
- L.10.5 Ongoing professional development programs must be developed for teachers. These programs must enhance and foster their competence in both the use and teaching of information technology.
- L.10.6 Information technology must be introduced where it will assist the process of teaching and learning and not as an end in itself, nor as a substitute for human interaction.
- L.10.7 New technologies must not be used as a means of reducing the number of classroom teachers or of increasing class sizes.
- L.10.8 Access to electronic networks and teaching and learning resources, such as EdNA, must remain free for all schools. Information on effective learning and teaching, software, hardware, IT networks and web resources must be provided and must be up-to-date, comprehensive and critically evaluated within each system.
- L.10.9 Local community technology centres should be established which offer access to information technology for groups which lack the resources to provide the infrastructure for themselves.
- L.10.10 A nationally coordinated information technologies and schools policy must be established to focus on:
  - (a) costs of access;
  - (b) the possibility of interagency funding for information technology;
  - (c) funds for schools and communities to purchase both software and hardware;
  - (d) the possibilities for usage which brings people together to support students, schools and families;
  - (e) parents, as stakeholders, collaboratively participating in the development of policies and protocols at all schools, covering access, usage and educational programs.

## **L.11 HEALTH EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. Health education is a combination of learning experiences which affect the way students think feel and act in regard to their own well-being and that of others.

### **L.11 POLICY**

- L.11.1 All students should have the opportunity to undertake comprehensive health education.
- L.11.2 The health curriculum should provide knowledge that will equip students to make informed decisions and take responsibility for their health and well-being during and after school years.
- L.11.3 Health education should:
  - (a) be integrated, ongoing and related to development levels from K to year 12;
  - (b) incorporate knowledge of all systems of the body and the fine balance which exists between them;
  - (c) develop an understanding of factors which influence the quality of life enjoyed by an individual or a community;
  - (d) provide accurate information about health and health related matters;
  - (e) promote attitudes and behaviour which contribute to personal and community well-being;
  - (f) develop in students the ability to make decisions about personal and community health matters and encourage students to take responsibility for these decisions;
  - (g) encourage a bias in sport and recreation towards fitness and skill.
  - (h) ensure closer cooperation between education and health authorities to develop health curricula which met the needs and interests of students and school communities in today's society and which provide for community input at development, implementation, resourcing and evaluation stages.
- L.11.4 Moral and social education is primarily the responsibility of the family and community, but should be given appropriate attention in the school within a program of guidance in community relationships, health and pastoral care.
- L.11.5 Age appropriate education, including sexuality, sexually transmissible diseases, blood-borne viruses and HIV/AIDS education should be available to all students within the school health curriculum. Parents must have the right to withdraw their children from these programs if and when they desire to do so.
- L.11.6 The protection of children is the responsibility of adults in the community. Accordingly:
  - (a) all students should receive age-appropriate instruction by a properly trained person in approved child protection programs;
  - (b) child protection policies at the school level must be developed in consultation with the parents, teachers, students and other education and health professionals;
  - (c) before a child protection policy is implemented in a school, parents must be informed of the program content and be given the opportunity to participate.

## **L.12 PEACE EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

1. For the continuation and enrichment of humanity, world peace is essential, not optional.
2. The achievement of peace will involve social change particularly in attitudes and practices.
3. Education is one means of fostering awareness of the need for peace and international understanding and bringing about attitudinal change.

### **L.12 POLICY**

- L.12.1 The development of peace education within the existing curriculum is in the interests of students and society.
- L.12.2 The emphasis on peace in the curriculum should include the following principles:
- (a) to be a process of learning to understand, advance and manage peaceful social change;
  - (b) to examine possible directions and constructive outcomes of the future changes that might be produced;
  - (c) to examine the implications of the termination of conflict and the maintenance of peace;
  - (d) to incorporate knowledge of and ideas on peace, conflict and social changes;
  - (e) to emphasise the development of critical thinking as a tool with which to examine propaganda, stereotypes and arguments advanced by differing interests;
  - (f) to involve students in working with persons of other cultures;

## **L.13 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

### **PREMISE**

- 1 The responsibility for observing and conserving the environment belongs to all members of society.
- 2 Management of the environment will require both individual and collective planning and action at local, national and global levels.
- 3 Increased awareness of and concern for environment issues is the key to successful management strategies that will maintain a harmonious balance between human development and the ecology.
- 4 Schools have a significant role to play in improving society's understanding of the complex nature of our total environment and enabling people to participate in debating issues and developing strategies to conserve the environment.

### **L.13 POLICY**

- L.13.1 All students should have access to an environmental curriculum which alerts them to the need to safeguard the earth's environment and the responsibilities of both individuals and societies in this.
- L.13.2 Environmental education should be integrated across the curriculum through all year levels in addition to being a separate curriculum area at appropriate levels.
- L.13.3 All young Australians should have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to be able to:
- (a) protect ecosystems and preserve biodiversity
  - (b) use and re-use resources wisely
  - (c) work towards sustainable economic development;
  - (d) enhance the quality of their own lives and that of future generations
- L.13.4 Environmental education programs in schools should enable students to:
- (a) take a holistic approach to understanding the issues and situations;
  - (b) build a coherent understanding of the world where the interests of all elements are seen to be interdependent;
  - (c) integrate facts, skills and attitudes to inform their choices and actions.

## **L.14 STUDIES OF ASIA**

### **PREMISE**

- 1 Australians require new skills, knowledge and understanding related to the Asian region and Australia's engagement with Asia in order to meet the challenges and opportunities of living and working in the twenty-first century.
- 2 The countries of the Asian region are of critical importance. They are our closest neighbours and major trading partners. They represent the cultural heritage of a growing number of Australians and their rich traditional and contemporary cultures provide opportunities for our social, creative and intellectual development.
- 3 Knowledge and understanding of Asia and Australia's relationship with Asia make an important contribution to being good neighbours and responsible global citizens; and to a harmonious, creative and prosperous Australia.

### **L.14 POLICY**

L.14.1 By the end of their schooling all young Australians should have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to be able to:

- (a) develop informed attitudes and values about Asia;
- (b) know about contemporary and traditional Asia;
- (c) connect Australia and Asia;
- (d) communicate and interact effectively with people of the Asian region.

L.14.2 Schools should:

- (a) systematically include studies of Asia and Australia within the mainstream curriculum, across learning areas and year levels, with a balance between in-depth, sustained studies and broader studies that explore themes, topics or issues;
- (b) develop a whole school plan which addresses the amount of time students spend learning about Asia, the level of resources allocated, and staffing arrangements;
- (c) put in place programs which will increase the understanding and inclusion of the whole school community, including parents, of its studies of Asia and Australia program;
- (d) provide opportunities for students to gain contact with an Asian language and for those that wish to do so, to learn an Asian language;
- (e) ensure that Asian parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school including in decision making bodies.

L.14.3 Education authorities should ensure that:

- (a) high quality resources are available to support schools in their studies of Asia programs
- (b) professional development programs for principals and teachers are available including the opportunity for in-country study programs

L.14.4 Teacher education institutions should adequately prepare new teachers to support studies of Asia programs by:

- (a) including course content about contemporary and traditional Asian peoples, societies, cultures and environments;
- (b) developing approaches to teaching and learning related to studies of Asia and Australia.



**M.1 STUDENT WELFARE****PREMISE**

1. A safe and healthy school environment is conducive to effective learning and is important to the well-being of students and staff. Accordingly, education authorities have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate duty of care policies and guidelines are developed to assure the safety and wellbeing of students at school and on school organised activities, including:
  - (a) a sun/skin protection policy;
  - (b) a comprehensive excursion policy;
  - (c) programs and strategies for controlling bullying and assault in schools;
  - (d) an appropriate administration of medication policy and procedures;
  - (e) an emergency action/crisis management policy, including provision for emergency first aid;
  - (f) pregnant and parenting students.

**M.1 POLICY**

- M.1.1 Crisis information brochures in different languages should be easily and discreetly accessible to all students, eg. general handout to students at beginning of 1st term, placed in student common room or other student facilities.
- M.1.2 Policies at the school level must be developed in consultation with the parents, teachers, students and other education and health professionals.
- M.1.3 Education authorities and schools should be required to maintain confidential records of incidents and events related to health and safety in order to survey trends and determine action required to control these occurrences.
- M.1.4 Each school should have a sufficient number of fully qualified support personnel for the purposes of:
  - (a) providing assistance and advice to emotionally disturbed or disruptive students and their families;
  - (b) providing pastoral care on a day-to-day basis;
  - (c) giving career guidance and advice on adapting to an independent existence in the community.
  - (d) providing support, assistance, pastoral care and career guidance for pregnant and parenting students to continue attending school and their studies.
- M.1.5 Teachers and parents should be provided with training and development for mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse.
- M.1.6 The welfare of students should be seen as an integral part of the total curriculum.

## **M.2 DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

### **PREMISE**

1. All children have the right to education within a setting which is free from all forms of violence or the threat of violence.
2. Positive interaction between members of school communities is best fostered through relevant curriculum and school organisation.
3. All people have the right to be treated with dignity. School-based behaviour policies work best when they are based on positive encouragement, counselling, promotion of self esteem, respect for one's self and for others.
4. The success of school-based behaviour policies depends on the commitment of students, parents, teachers and school staff. This will be best achieved when behaviour policies are collaboratively developed and made explicit to all members of the school's community.

### **M.2 POLICY**

- M.2.1 Behaviour policies should seek to promote a safe learning environment through the introduction of a school-wide ethos of non-violence to manage student behaviour.
- M.2.2 Behaviour policies should include strategies designed to counteract the behaviour stereotyping which encourages some children to see and use violence as a solution to interpersonal problems.
- M.2.3 School-based policies and programs should deal with behavioural difficulties at the school level with a minimum of formality and a maximum of cooperation and consultation between students, parents and teachers.
- M.2.4 All teachers should receive pre-service education and ongoing professional development which incorporates units in behavioural sciences, including communication and interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, negotiation, group dynamics and behaviour management.
- M.2.5 State/territory educational systems have the responsibility to involve parents and teachers in the development of a broad framework which sets the parameters within which government schools develop their own behaviour policies.
- M.2.6 If a child is placed, or either willingly or under duress places him/herself outside the school setting, alternative access must be assured through innovative programs which recognise that the current school setting does not meet the needs of all children.
- M.2.7 Any child who is placed outside the school setting is entitled to appeal against the decision. Any such appeal will be before an independent panel consisting of a parent representative and a system representative, with the right to an advocate.
- M.2.8 Any education system which has provision to exclude children has an obligation to offer a safe, caring and responsible educational environment more conducive to the educational needs of the child.

### **M.3 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

#### **PREMISE**

1. Corporal punishment in all its forms is totally unacceptable.

#### **M.3 POLICY**

- 3.1 Schools should seek to promote reason, tolerance, understanding and knowledge as important values that guide the way in which people deal with each other. Threats, coercion, reprisals and fear of physical punishment should not form the basis of school culture.
- 3.2 ACSSO strenuously opposes the use of corporal punishment in Australian public schools.

## **M.4 SCHOOL RULES**

### **PREMISE**

1. For the school to function as an effective learning environment and in ways which respect the rights of the whole school community, agreements about appropriate behaviour need to be developed by that community.
2. These agreements must be consistent with all of the policies developed by the school community and conform to education department regulations and broad guidelines.

### **M.4 POLICY**

- M.4.1 Schools should ensure that there are established procedures, adequate resources, appropriate support and opportunities for parents, students and staff to participate in the negotiation of codes of behaviour at classroom and at whole school level.
- M.4.2 Regular reviews of the codes of behaviour should be undertaken to ensure their continued appropriateness and effectiveness. These codes of behaviour should be published and made available to all students and parents.

### N.1 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

#### PREMISE

1. Government schools must have proper and safe buildings, grounds and facilities, equipment, supplies and services to allow for both comfort and sufficient space for students and teachers.

#### N.1 POLICY

- N.1.1 Design briefs for the upgrade of older buildings as well as the construction of new schools should incorporate the most recent advances in site planning, building design and construction and facilities, paying attention to environmental factors to ensure the comfort of all occupants. Factors should include natural ventilation, air-cooling, air-conditioning and/ or heating, and solar rather than mechanical power.
- N.1.2 All new and existing schools should be air-cooled/heated, or supplied with additional funding for the purposes of installing appropriate equipment.
- N.1.3 Air-cooling/heating should be installed also in conjunction with:
  - (a) major capital upgrades;
  - (b) asbestos roof replacements.
- N.1.4 Ongoing cost implications of air-cooling/heating and whether equipment meets required design, electrical, mechanical and health standards should be considered before installing air-cooling/heating systems in schools.
- N.1.5 Schools will not close but classroom activities should be modified to suit hot weather conditions.
- N.1.6 Weather protection should be provided over sandpits, play equipment and assembly areas.

## **N.2 HEALTH CARE**

### **PREMISE**

1. No student's educational progress should be impeded through lack of proper health care.
2. The physical, mental and educational development of the student is assisted by coordinated services and thus integrated health services must aim to provide both preventative and corrective health care for all students.
3. Scientific evidence has shown that exposure to sun on a regular basis, particularly during times of high level UV radiation, is injurious to health. Avoidance of exposure and provision of protection is regarded as responsible action and education authorities have an important role to play in ensuring protection and providing students with relevant information.

### **N.2 POLICY**

- N.2.1 All education facilities should comply with the minimum standards established by the appropriate local fire service authority.
- N.2.2 Access to diagnostic, medical, para-medical, specialist teaching and other support services should be available to all children with impairments and/or disabilities to meet their additional educational requirements in special or regular schools.
- N.2.3 Every teacher should be trained in first aid and be required to hold a current senior first aid certificate.
- N.2.4 Appropriate emergency action/crisis management policy guidelines, including procedures for the provision of emergency first aid and incident reporting to parents and education authorities should be developed.
- N.2.5 All schools should be provided with sufficient resources to:
- (a) fund the cost of senior first aid training for school staff from duly authorised instructors;
  - (b) adequately equip first aid rooms;
  - (c) develop and implement appropriate emergency action/crisis management policy in accordance with guidelines established by education authorities.
- N.2.6 All students are entitled to continuity of education, irrespective of exposure to, or the development of, any communicable disease.
- N.2.7 The weathering and deterioration of asbestos cement products in government school buildings is a serious health problem which should be managed by:
- (a) regular, bi-annual checks of school buildings and grounds for asbestos dust and fibres;
  - (b) regular maintenance of asbestos roofs;
  - (c) eventual safe removal of all asbestos products from school sites.
- N.2.8 The school canteen should support the health education programs of the schools and should have appropriate nutritional policies that are compatible with the cultural background of the students attending the school.
- N.2.9 Education authorities should develop and implement ultra-violet/sun care protection and skin cancer awareness strategies that provide sun protection and shade guidelines to protect all students by:
- (a) implementing school based ultra-violet/sun protection policies that emphasise structural change;

- (b) encouraging ultra-violet/sun protection education in training for all teachers;
- (c) introducing sun safety programs that minimise children's exposure, including purpose built and natural shade creation, protective dress standards, sunscreen and use of sunglasses;
- (d) appropriate timetabling of outdoor activities;
- (e) promoting self awareness and personal responsibility for UV protection;
- (f) encouraging adults in the wider community to present good role models.

### **N.3 DRUG EDUCATION**

#### **PREMISE**

1. The goal of drug education in schools is the minimisation of harm, ideally through prevention of inappropriate drug use. Harm minimisation as defined in the National Drug Strategy accepts that interventions that reduce the risk of harm associated with drug use without necessarily eliminating it, can have important benefits.
2. In contemporary Australian society, drug use/abuse occurs in three major contexts:
  - (a) the control of health;
  - (b) legal drugs used for recreational or social purposes;
  - (c) illegal drugs or substances used in unacceptable ways for the purpose of intoxication or getting 'high'.
3. Drug education must therefore encompass all three contexts; the appropriate information about the use of drugs must be presented before discussing the consequences and problems of misuse.
4. All drug use carries some risk. It is an issue of relative risk; risk from drug use comes in various guises, eg from a drug's long term toxicity, its potential for abuse and/or addiction and from the probability of problems occurring from its use (intoxication).
5. Drug abuse can directly affect the performance of the user and indirectly other students. The abuse of certain substances by students can impair physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.
6. The patterns of behaviour that contribute to drug use/abuse frequently emerge during adolescence.
7. The school is an obvious access point for addressing the needs of young people and can play an important part in promoting the development of health-enhancing values, attitudes and behaviours.

#### **N.3 POLICY**

- N.3.1 Drug education is best taught in the context of the school health curriculum.
- N.3.2 Drug education should commence in the primary years, be sequenced over time and be supported by relevant policies.
- N.3.3 Drug education programs need to be based on research, effective curriculum practice and identified student needs.
- N.3.4 Drug education should be comprehensive and reflect an understanding of the characteristics of the individual, the social context, the drug and the interrelationship of these factors.
- N.3.5 A comprehensive drug education program, embracing harm minimisation strategies, should also address interventions, including counselling services and referral procedures.
- N.3.6 A clear statement of what a drug education program is expected to achieve is critical.
- N.3.7 The achievement of drug education objectives, processes and outcomes, should be evaluated. Evaluation needs to focus on the long term nature of learning and behaviour changes, with observations about the shorter term impact of a program considered in the context of their contribution to long term outcomes.
- N.3.8 Mechanisms should be developed to involve students, parents and the wider community in both the planning and implementation stages of a drug education policy.
- N.3.9 Ongoing professional development for teachers is an essential part of an effective drug education program.

## **N.4 VACCINATION/IMMUNISATION PROCEDURES**

### **PREMISE**

1. The health and wellbeing of the school community should be protected by controlling outbreaks of preventable infectious diseases.

## **N.4 POLICY**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

N.4.1 The school community should be protected from preventable infectious diseases by all sectors of the school community and government services working in cooperation to control outbreaks of preventable infectious diseases. The roles of the various sectors should include but not be limited to the following.

- (a) Parents/caregivers should be responsible for:
  - (i) all decisions – ethical, moral and religious – regarding the vaccination of children under their care and protection;
  - (ii) the safekeeping of records of vaccinations;
  - (iii) verification of school based records as well as other externally stored records.
- (b) Education departments should be responsible for:
  - (i) maintenance and administration of school based vaccination records that are consistent with the principle of protecting the health of the school community in the event of an outbreak of a preventable infectious disease;
  - (ii) advice to parents/caregivers of the vaccination status of their children as recorded in school based records;
  - (iii) maintenance of school based vaccination records and the integrity of that data;
  - (iv) provision of information to parents/caregivers regarding disease prevention and control policies and procedures.
- (c) Health Departments should be responsible for:
  - (i) establishment of a record of vaccination status for all persons who have received vaccinations against preventable infectious diseases;
  - (ii) notification to parents/caregivers of changes to the vaccination status of their children;
  - (iii) production and provision of information to parents/caregivers regarding vaccination issues;
  - (iv) maintenance of records of vaccination and the validation of that data against evidence provided by parents/caregivers and general practitioners;
  - (v) provision of records for individuals from the central record to parents/caregivers, schools and other public health organisations only with the prior approval of the parent/caregiver.

### **Information for parents/caregivers**

N.4.2 Parents/caregivers should be provided with information, in plain English as well as in community languages, on:

- (a) government policy and the rationale behind the policies that affect vaccination, outbreak control and school attendance;

- (b) government procedures regarding outbreak control and attendance at school;
- (c) government policies in relation to the keeping of records, types of information contained in the records, privacy and confidentiality of information regarding vaccination;
- (d) parental roles and responsibilities in relation to vaccination.

#### **Adult volunteers/employees**

N.4.3 Government policies and procedures for controlling outbreaks of infectious diseases should apply equally to all sectors of the school community, including:

- (a) students;
- (b) teachers;
- (c) administrative personnel;
- (d) volunteer workers;
- (e) other paid workers.

#### **Notification of vaccination status**

N.4.4 Effective control of outbreaks of preventable infectious diseases would be enhanced by:

- (a) a requirement that parents/caregivers disclose their child's vaccination status when enrolling students at state/territory schools and preschools, including schools of distance education. In the event that a person chooses not to disclose relevant vaccination information for an individual, then the individual to which the information relates should be classified as unvaccinated;
- (b) acceptable evidence being a certified record of vaccination status from a general practitioner or the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR);
- (c) development by departments of education of a standard procedure for collecting and recording relevant vaccination information;
- (d) the provision of vaccination services, upon request by parents/caregivers, as part of community health services in schools;
- (e) inclusion of vaccination status data in departments of education interschool transfer documents.

#### **Exclusion procedures**

N.4.5 Where outbreak control officers have the power to exclude unvaccinated children during an outbreak of a preventable disease, the student's education must be continued through other approved methods which must not impose an additional financial burden on parents/caregivers.

## **N.5 SAFETY**

### **PREMISE**

1. A safe and healthy school environment is conducive to effective learning and is important to the wellbeing of students and staff.

## **N.5 POLICY**

### **N.5.1 Education authorities should:**

- (a) ensure that only ergonomically appropriate furniture is purchased by schools and that all existing inappropriate furniture is replaced. Guidelines, including those in tender documents, should be developed to achieve the above;
- (b) take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of students and staff at school and on school organised activities;
- (c) employ adequate numbers of safety officers to monitor grounds, building and sporting venues used for school activities;
- (d) maintain records of incidents and events related to health and safety in order to survey trends and determine action required;
- (e) address areas of concern in the school environment where research shows adverse effects of unsafe equipment, materials or procedures.

### **N.5.2 All children should be instructed in safety precautions and encouraged to achieve survival skills.**

### **N.5.3 State/territory departments of education should:**

- (a) provide teachers and ancillary staff with in-service training to complete a compulsory Certificate of First Aid which includes training in appropriate procedures for handling blood and other bodily fluids and training in the understanding and management of asthma, epilepsy, diabetes and chronic fatigue syndrome. This credential must be renewed at departmental expense;
- (b) ensure that emergency evacuation drill is carried out in all schools at least once a term;
- (c) ensure a qualified first aid person or lifesaver attends school sporting events and carnivals.

## **N.6 SCHOOL BIKE AND ROAD USE**

### **N.6 POLICY**

- N.6.1 To ensure safe passage of children to and from schools and to reverse the high and increasing death and injury rates of pedal cyclists, there must be closer collaboration between school communities, traffic and town planning professionals and the relevant authorities at local, state/territory and federal government levels.
- N.6.2 Education departments in cooperation with relevant local authorities, police departments, main roads departments, transport departments and local fire boards, are responsible for ensuring the safe environment of children attending and travelling to and from school.
- N.6.3 The effective long term solution to the road toll lies with educating road planning and law enforcement authorities as well as whole school communities – parents, teachers and children. School communities have a communication, educational and enforcement capability that urgently needs nurturing and developing.
- N.6.4 Bike-plans for individual school communities must include education, engineering, enforcement and encouragement programs. Specific goals include:
- (a) the introduction of school and community bicycle education courses with an on road component to develop safe and responsible road use behaviour, tolerant attitudes to other users and survival skills;
  - (b) the engineering design of roads to incorporate bikeways;
  - (c) the construction of bike-paths separated from roads on school property and into school catchment areas;
  - (d) dispersal of children on school property by increasing access / entry points where appropriate;
  - (e) the enactment of legislation to:
    - (i) protect the rights of all road users especially pedal cyclists;
    - (ii) enable efficient and positive enforcement procedures on pedal cyclists;
    - (iii) facilitate innovative and cost-effective pedal cycle integration with existing roads, footpaths and parks;
    - (iv) make compulsory the wearing of safety helmets;
  - (f) the encouragement of the use of cyclists visibility devices;
  - (g) where applicable the Safety House scheme should be sought in homes along bike-paths away from public roads.

## **N.7 BUS SAFETY**

### **PREMISE**

1. The safety of children in transit is of the utmost importance.

### **N.7 POLICY**

N.7.1 Governments should investigate and legislate that new buses should have:

- (a) approved safe seating and restraints;
- (b) impact resistant sides and roofs which are at least strong enough to withstand crushing in the event of capsize;
- (c) safety padded interiors and recessed interior fittings;
- (d) dual braking systems fitted;
- (e) a fail safe stopping device fitted to operate in the event of driver incapacity;
- (f) displayed, four flashing amber lights (two at front and two at rear) to operate in conjunction with the door control, to signify a legal requirement that other vehicles are prohibited from passing at more than 25 kph; and after legislation encourage owners of all existing buses to refit to comply with that legislation.

N.7.2 All buses carrying school students:

- (a) plying in remote areas, be fitted with two way radio for use in case of emergency;
- (b) in non-metropolitan areas be fitted with an additional flashing light system on the front to warn oncoming motorists of the possible presence of students;
- (c) should be fitted with auxiliary mirrors to improve the bus drivers vision across the front of the bus so they can intervene if students attempt to cross in front of the bus;
- (d) be limited to carrying of one person to each single seat and no-one standing.
- (e) should carry a distinctive identification clearly visible to other road users;
- (f) should have a properly qualified driver subject to annual health checks and all drivers of school buses should undertake a recognised course in basic life support techniques;
- (g) carry an adult supervisor other than the driver;
- (h) undergo a safety check prior to the commencement of each semester.

N.7.3 On routes travelled by school buses there needs to be marked areas out of which a bus must have passed before students cross the road.

N.7.4 A speed limit of 40 kph maximum should be set outside all schools.

## **N.8 SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS**

### **PREMISE**

1. ACSSO recognises and accepts that there is a risk of students injuring themselves on playground equipment. Such injuries should be controlled through adherence to appropriate safety standards, adequate supervision and adequately maintained equipment.

### **N.8 POLICY**

- N.8.1 The provision of playground and play equipment should enhance student's learning to make decisions and take responsibility for their actions in a supportive play environment whilst also encouraging initiative, exploration, experimentation and enjoyment.
- N.8.2 Physical arrangements for student's play must be appropriate to their individual learning, social, emotional, physical and intellectual development and determined in consultation with the local school community.
- N.8.3 Play should be supervised by appropriately trained and skilled adults.
- N.8.4 Professional planning and architectural advice to school communities including input from people with an understanding of play development should be provided.
- N.8.5 Play equipment must satisfy national safety standards including the use of appropriate soft-fall surfaces.
- N.8.6 The removal of play equipment is supported when all avenues for replacement / repair have been exhausted and not as a way for government to minimise their potential legal liabilities.
- N.8.7 Maintenance of playgrounds and play equipment should be performed routinely by appropriately competent persons.

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## **SECTION O - THE MEDIA**

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### **O.1 THE MEDIA**

#### **PREMISE**

1. Radio, television and printed media are valuable and necessary in education and must be made available to students at all levels.
2. Television, radio and the printed media are the most effective media of mass communications available, exerting a profound influence on society.
3. It is the responsibility of the Australian Broadcasting Authority to be ever mindful that it is the guardian of the airways and the servant of the public. It is not, and should never be seen to be, the promoter of the licensees.

#### **O.1 POLICY**

- O.1.1 Television and radio should be used as tools to enrich the quality of life; they are a public utility which should act in the interest of, and be accountable to, the consumer, particularly in reference to children's entertainment and educational programs. The printed media should be used to inform, entertain and educate and publishers of printed media should exercise responsibility in their choice and use of editorial, particularly in the field of education.
- O.1.2 Until licensees show an intention to produce, purchase and schedule quality programs especially for children, self-regulation is unacceptable.
- O.1.3 The federal government should:
  - (a) develop and maintain independent facilities for national sound and television broadcast systems;

- (b) provide television coverage for remote areas having due regard to its likely impact;
- (c) provide the Australian Broadcasting Commission with the necessary funds to provide quality programs which promote personal growth of individuals and quality of life;
- (d) provide the Australian Broadcasting Authority with sufficient funds to publicise the structures for interested parties to be kept up to date with the deliberations and decisions of all facets of the tribunal;
- (e) ensure that an advisory committee is in place which deals specifically with areas of public concern relating to children and television;
- (f) provide audiovisual resources for schools including VTR for schools outside the normal range;
- (g) establish as soon as possible, community and public access for television and radio stations in as many centres as is practicable.

O.1.4 Education departments should:

- (a) provide suitable staff to operate and maintain audio-visual equipment and where required produce the necessary software;
- (b) provide suitable staff and courses for media education programs in schools.

O.1.5 All broadcasters should provide programs:

- (a) which inform, stimulate and entertain children;
- (b) which promote personal growth of individuals by ensuring quality and diversity in their choice of children's programs;
- (c) for all children, especially in early primary years, which reflect experiences they will encounter in their Australian environment;
- (d) which are sensitive to the multicultural nature of the Australian community;
- (e) that reflect the needs and sensitivities of the family viewing audiences;
- (f) give special consideration to the ages and interests of intended audiences;
- (g) pay particular attention to the time schedule of children's programs.

O.1.6 Publishers of printed media should:

- (a) be responsible and balanced in the manner in which they present educational news;
- (b) provide on a regular basis more feature articles which will inform the general public on educational issues;
- (c) exercise greater care in the use of correct language, spelling and syntax in their publications.

## **Programming**

O.1.7 The Australian Broadcasting Authority should:

- (a) systematically monitor programs and advertising, and exercise its authority in this respect;
- (b) form a committee for the purpose of keeping an overview of quality and balance on behalf of the viewing and listening public; this committee's terms of reference to include investigation of breaches of standards under which licenses are renewed;

- (c) have station produced and contracted productions subject to the same scrutiny of classification and censorship as imported and non-station productions;
- (d) establish and maintain standards for advertising directed to children which show due regard and protection for developing children and their abilities and which prevent their exploitation through the use of techniques which they are unable to handle;
- (e) examine and publicise all reports on the effects of large amounts of viewing on children's development;
- (f) research the advisability of Children's Time commencing at 4.00pm;
- (g) increase children's time from 1 to 2 hours daily, Monday to Friday, and ensure replaced Children's Time is allocated as an addition to the normal program allocation;
- (h) provide and promote effective and accessible sources of information to the public with regard to broadcasting practices and to public rights in this respect;
- (i) establish and maintain effective procedures for facilitating and assisting public participation in licence renewal hearings;
- (j) systematically gather through its own resources through licence periods information relating to the actual performances of commercial television and radio licencees;
- (k) ensure children's drama and magazine style programs are regulated to encourage diversity and stimulating experience for 6-13 year olds.

## **Advertising**

O.1.8 The Australian Broadcasting Authority should:

- (a) abolish advertising during children's time;
- (b) give greater consideration to young children's difficulties in separating fact from fantasy;
- (c) ensure advertising directed at children includes the appropriate age, depicts a child of that age and includes the recommended retail price, particularly in reference to toys;
- (d) ensure that items deemed to be harmful, eg alcohol, non-prescribed medicine, not be advertised in General Viewing Time;
- (e) ensure that children's comperes, characters, sporting and well-known television personalities shall not endorse or promote products considered as harmful.
- (f) ensure that the content of advertisements for goods and services be strictly vetted and restructured for scheduling according to content;
- (g) ensure that station promotions of material unsuitable for children not be shown immediately prior or immediately after Children's Time or during General Viewing Time;
- (h) ensure that comments in regard to prizes and gifts, their description and brand name, shall be counted as advertisements and their time included in the advertising allocation;
- (i) ensure that any advertising does not imply disadvantage in non-ownership of such items;
- (j) abolish advertising during programs for pre-school aged children.

- Accountability  
for government funds, 12
- Adults  
re-entry to school, 36, 112
- Advertising in media  
standards, 137
- Advertising in schools, 18
- Ancillary staff  
early childhood, 66  
in-service  
First Aid Certificate, 132
- Assembly areas  
weather protection, 125
- Assessment of students. *see* Students - Assessment
- Assistants. *see* Teaching assistants
- Australia  
development and survival, 4  
respect for multicultural nature of, 26
- Australian Broadcasting Authority, 136
- Australian Broadcasting Commission, 136
- Behaviour management, 122, 124
- Bilingual programs, 43
- Bus safety, 134
- Careers counselling, 111, 113
- Careers education, 36, 113
- Careers guidance, 26
- Certification, 104
- Child abuse  
protection of children from, 25  
mandatory reporting, 121
- Child care facilities, 66
- Child protection programs, 116
- Childcare, 65  
places, 67
- Children  
access to high quality education, 72  
development  
increasing parent awareness, 67  
early years, 65  
educational rights, 25  
emotionally secure, 25  
exceptional, 46  
institutionalised, 38  
interference with privacy, 25  
needs, 66  
participation in decision making, 25  
physically safe, 25  
protection from abuse and neglect, 25  
protection from exploitation, 25  
readiness for school, 67  
respect for, 25  
respect for cultures other than own, 25  
screening, 108  
with disabilities, 44  
with learning difficulties, 108
- Citizenship  
participation in, 4
- Class sizes, 64  
for children in institutions, 38  
students with disabilities, 64
- Codes of behaviour, 124
- Co-education, 104
- Collaborative process, 103
- Collaborative school communities, 54
- Commercial organisations  
links with schools, 18
- Community, 53  
shared purpose with school, 72
- Community based learning resources, 112
- Community languages  
teaching, 43
- Community members  
participation of  
development of school programs, 43
- Community organisations, 37  
acceptance of young people, 37  
provision of training positions, 37
- Community participation, 35
- Competition  
provision of education, 12
- Competition for resources, 18
- Competitive market model, 6
- Continuing education, 112
- Corporal punishment, 123
- Corrective institutions, 38
- Credit transfer, 36, 111
- Crisis information brochures, 121
- Cultures  
recognition, 26  
study of, 43
- Curriculum, 103  
Asia, 119  
bias free, 104  
broad, 2, 36  
careers education, 113  
choices, 76  
common, 107  
development, 103, 105  
with parents, 105  
development with parents, 107  
drug education, 128  
environment, 118  
free from racism, 43  
health, 116  
influence by external bodies, 18  
multicultural perspectives, 43  
options, 112  
peace education, 117  
planning, 85  
post compulsory, 110  
road-use, 133  
senior secondary, 36  
student development, 29  
technology, 114  
vocational education, 110
- Curriculum frameworks, 103, 105
- Curriculum statements and profiles, 105
- Cyclists  
safety, 133
- Democratic processes, 1
- Discriminatory practices  
abolition of, 5
- Drug education, 128
- Drug education policy  
involvement of parents, 128
- Drug use/abuse, 128
- Early childhood education, 65
- Early school leavers  
re-entry to school, 33
- Education. *see also* under other headings  
eg Preschool education, Primary education, Secondary education, Vocational education and training  
boys, 47  
competition theory, 12  
contribution to society, 3  
early childhood, 65  
for children with disabilities, 44  
free market theory, 12  
free until aged 18, 25  
girls, 47  
guarantee, 35  
highest quality, 25  
hospitalised students, 39  
Indigenous students, 49  
life long process, 3  
multicultural society, 43  
outcomes, 12, 87  
preparation for living in society, 25  
preschool, 65  
quality, 3  
research, 8  
right of individual, 3  
role of government  
federal, 14  
role of governments  
states/territories, 14  
rural, 70  
secondary  
continuation, 32  
social justice in, 41
- Education Departments  
administration, 9  
regional structures, 9  
supporting parent participation, 61
- Educational disadvantage  
programs, 14
- Educational expenses  
tax deduction, 20
- Educational programs, 26
- Educational research, 8
- Educational settings  
free from violence, 25
- Educational trends  
monitoring, 92
- Employers  
provision of training positions, 37
- English as a second language  
teaching, 43
- Enrolment decline, 75
- Environment  
respect for, 26
- Environment education, 118
- Equal opportunity, 47
- Equality, 4  
of outcomes, 15, 41, 47, 75
- Exceptional children, 46
- Family day care  
staff, 66
- Fees  
compulsory, 17
- Fire authorities  
requirements, 126
- First Aid Certificate, 126, 132
- First language, 84, 109
- Free market theory, 12
- Furniture, 132
- Gender equity, 47
- Gifted children, 46
- Goods and services tax, 20
- Government programs  
guidelines, 14
- Government schools  
defence by governments, 5
- Governments  
defence of government schools, 5  
federal  
funding of public education, 14  
role in education, 14  
funding  
of non government schools, 11  
of public education, 1, 11  
obligation to provide government schools, 72  
responsibilities, 11  
state/territory role in education, 14  
support of public education, 5
- Grievance procedures, 100
- GST, 20
- Guidelines for government programs, 14
- Health care, 126
- Health education, 116
- Health services, 126
- HIV/AIDS education, 116
- Home visits by teachers, 84
- Homophobia  
countering of, 29
- Hot conditions  
modification of classroom activities, 125
- Human rights  
respect for, 25
- Immunisation, 130
- Income tax, 20
- Indigenous Australian languages, 109
- Indigenous Australian parents, 50
- Indigenous Australian people, 26
- Indigenous Australians  
educational self determination, 51
- Individual, 3  
development, 3, 4  
rights, 3
- Infectious diseases  
notification of vaccination status, 131  
prevention, 130
- Information literacy, 115
- Information technologies and schools  
policy, 115
- Information technology, 115
- Integrated health services, 126
- Integration of health and education  
services, 108
- Interference  
unlawful, 25
- Intervention programs, 66
- Intolerance  
removal of, 4

- Job strategies, 37
- Joint school and community library, 77
- Kindergartens. *see* Preschools
- League tables, 87
- Learning activities, 103
- Learning environment, 47, 125
- Learning experiences, 36
- Learning programs, 108
- Learning situations, 103
- Legislation, 25
  - cyclists, 133
  - educational right of children, 25
  - public equity in school buildings, 12
- Lifelong education, 104, 112
- Lifelong learning, 35
- Literacy and numeracy, 36, 108
- Living allowance, 35
- Media, 135
- Multicultural society, 43
- National curriculum frameworks, 105
- Neglect
  - protection of children, 25
- Nomenclature
  - nationally consistent, 67
- Non government schools
  - accountability, 12
  - funded on need, 11
  - funding by government, 11
  - new, 12
  - resources and income, 12
  - use of government schools, 75
- Parent associations, 62
- Parent clubs, 62
- Parent organisations
  - responsibilities for sponsorship, 18
- Parent/teacher interviews, 83
- Parents
  - campaign for public education, 1
  - donation to schools, 17
  - grievance procedures, 100
  - involvement
    - in staffing, 100
    - promoted by teachers, 89
  - of students
    - with disabilities
      - rights, 44
  - participation, 21, 61, 72
    - in allocation of funds, 14
    - in decision making, 61, 62
    - in development of school programs, 43
  - Indigenous Australians, 50
  - payment of school fees, 17
  - professional development
    - technology, 114
  - representative on selection panels, 100
  - rights and responsibilities, 21
  - views, 62
- Partnerships, 54
- Peace education, 117
- Pedagogy
  - professional development for teachers, 97
- Personal fulfillment, 3
- Planning
  - for teacher availability, 92
- Play equipment, 135
  - maintenance, 135
  - safety, 135
  - weather protection, 125
- Post compulsory education, 112
- Preschools, 65
  - nationally consistent nomenclature, 67
  - places, 67
- Primary education
  - as a first priority, 108
- Prior learning
  - recognition of, 111, 112
- Private schools, 11
- Products
  - promotion by students, 18
- Profiles, 105
- Public education, 1, 4
  - funding
    - by governments, 1, 11, 14
  - image, 9
  - inclusive, 1
  - participation in policy formulation, 2
  - priority, 4
  - promotion by governments, 5
  - provision of resources, 2
  - support by governments, 5
- Racial equality, 43
- Radio, 135
- Records
  - maintenance
    - health and safety, 132
- Re-entry to school. *see* Schools - Re-entry to
- Relationships
  - cooperative, 3
- Reporting programs, 83
- Research
  - coordinating agency, 8
  - dissemination of results, 8
- Resource materials, 77
  - free from racism, 43
- Resource sharing, 16
- Resources
  - provision by governments, 5
- Respect
  - for children, 25
  - for parents, 25
- Road use education, 133
- Rural education, 70
  - differential funding, 70
- Safety, 132
- Safety House scheme, 133
- Sandpits
  - weather protection, 125
- School
  - community participation, 12
- School based decision making, 57
- School buildings, 78, 125
  - asbestos cement products in, 126
- School bus routes, 134
- School buses, 134
- School canteens, 126
- School commencement, 67
- School communities, 54
  - collaborative, 89
  - decision making, 57
  - professional development, 55
  - support, 2
- School councils, 58
  - composition, 58
  - management of enrolment decline, 75
  - responsibilities, 59
    - for sponsorship, 18
  - role in school evaluation, 85
  - structure, 58
- School curriculum. *see* Curriculum
- School environment
  - safe, 121, 132
- School evaluation, 85
- School facilities, 78
  - management, 78
  - shared, 78
- School fees
  - compulsory, 17
- School levies, 17
- School libraries, 77
- School requisites
  - gst, 20
- School rules, 124
- School uniforms, 31
  - advertising on, 18
- Schooling
  - beyond, 35
  - early years, 65
  - effective, 89
- Schools
  - accountability, 60, 87
  - air-cooled, 125
  - amalgamation, 74, 75
  - ancillary staffing, 101
  - annual report, 60
  - as labour market brokerage agencies, 111
  - attendance
    - infections diseases, 131
  - autonomy, 7
  - behaviour policies, 122
  - benefits from parents, 61
  - bike plans, 133
  - buildings
    - monitoring for safety, 132
  - change in operational status, 75
  - charter, 80
  - choice of, 12
  - closure, 72, 74, 75
    - appeals mechanism, 72
    - consultation, 72
    - impact study, 72
    - notice, 72
    - review, 72
  - clusters, 74
  - communication
    - with home, 43
    - with parents, 83
  - community links, 36
  - competition between, 6, 12
  - compulsory fees, 17
  - consultation with parents, 61
  - decision making, 36, 57
  - differences between, 7
  - discipline, 122
  - donations from parents, 17
  - emergency action policies, 126
  - enrolment decline, 75
  - establishment of non government, 63
  - evacuation drill, 132
  - flexible staffing, 75
  - free from violence, 122
  - funding on triennial basis, 14
  - government funding of, 11
  - grant maintained, 80
  - grounds
    - monitoring for safety, 132
    - heated, 125
  - Indigenous Australian teachers, 102
  - influence, 53
  - information about
    - for parents, 21
  - integration of students with special
    - needs, 44
  - links with external bodies, 18
  - management, 54, 75, 78
  - managment, 58
  - naming, 18
  - neighbourhood, 1, 72
    - effect of new non government schools, 12
  - new, 78
  - performance rankings, 87
  - playgrounds, 135
    - maintenance, 135
  - private. *see* Non government schools
  - provision of learning experiences, 53
  - public comparisons, 86
  - ranking. *see* Schools-Performance rankings
  - re-entry to, 26, 33, 36, 112
  - reorganisation, 74
  - reporting policies, 83
  - rural, 70
  - safe access to, 72
  - sale of, 72
  - secondary, 36
    - articulation with TAFE, 36
    - completion, 36
    - senior, 35, 36
  - self-evaluation, 85
  - shared purpose with community, 72
  - signage, 18
  - speed limits, 134
  - sporting events
    - attendance by first aid person, 132
  - staffing, 100
  - starting age, 67
  - support personnel, 121
  - TAFE/university enterprises, 16
  - transmission of social values, 43
  - use for advertising, 18
- Secondary education, 36
  - continuation, 32
  - provision of, 1
- Skills
  - acquisition of, 3, 115
- Skin cancer
  - awareness, 126
- Social justice in education, 41
- Society, 3
  - participation in, 3
  - participation in, 35
- Special education teachers, 96
- Specialist support services
  - provision of, 108
- Specific purpose programs. *see* Educational disadvantage - Programs

- Sponsors
  - acknowledgment of, 18
  - school dependence on, 18
- Sponsorship, 18
  - guidelines, 19
- Sporting events
  - naming, 18
- Staffing
  - ancillary, 101
- Statutory body
  - review of non government schools, 12
  - schools, 13, 14
- Structure
  - regional, 9
- Student development programs, 29
- Student learning outcomes, 103
- Student networks, 28
- Student progress. *see* Students - Achievement
- Student work, 83, 84
- Students
  - access to electronic resources, 115
  - access to information technology, 115
  - access to support services, 126
  - access to technology resources, 114
  - achievement, 81
    - certification, 81
    - documentation, 81
    - reporting policies, 83
    - reporting to parents, 83
    - self reflection, 84
    - transfer of records, 81
  - assessment, 81
    - policies, 83
    - results, 87
  - at risk, 30
  - attendance at school, 1
  - bicycle safety, 133
  - certification, 81
  - changing schools, 68, 81
  - completion of secondary school, 36
  - corporal punishment, 123
  - creativity, 104
  - disadvantaged
    - opportunities, 112
  - early intervention, 65
  - exceptional, 46
  - health care, 126
  - hospitalised, 39
  - in transit
    - safety, 133, 134
  - Indigenous, 49, 109
  - information about, 21, 81
  - learning, 103
  - learning enhanced through parent participation, 61
  - learning experiences, 53
  - low socio-economic status, 42
  - needs, 6, 68
  - opportunities for development, 41
  - options, 36
  - participation in decision making, 27, 28
  - placement, 68
  - play, 135
    - supervision, 135
  - progress through school, 68
  - promotion, 68
  - records, 81
    - access by parents, 108
    - reporting achievement, 105
    - returning to school, 33, 36, 112
    - rights
      - to schooling, 41
      - rights and responsibilities, 27
      - rural, 1
      - safety, 132
        - on bus routes, 134
    - secondary
      - continuation, 32
      - senior, 36
    - skills and understandings, 1, 53, 87, 115
    - starting age at school, 67
    - survival skills, 132
    - tertiary, 33
    - testing, 81
    - unvaccinated
      - exclusion, 131
    - use for advertising, 18
    - use of technology, 115
    - wearing of school uniform, 31
    - welfare, 121
      - policy, 121
      - with special needs
        - technology use, 115
        - withdrawal from programs, 22, 104, 116
  - Studies of Asia, 119
  - Sun care protection strategies, 126
  - Support services, 26
  - Sustainable resources
    - development of, 4
  - TAFE institutes, 36
  - TAFE/schools enterprises, 16
  - Taxation, 20
  - Teacher education
    - behaviour sciences, 122
    - early childhood, 66
    - special education units, 96
  - Teacher librarians, 77
  - Teacher registration authority, 90
  - Teacher training. *see* Teacher education
  - Teacher training institutions, 93
  - Teacher/student ratio, 64
    - for children in institutions, 38
  - Teachers, 89
    - classroom support, 108
    - code of ethics, 90
    - complaints against, 100
    - consultancy, 91
    - contract, 91
    - convictions
      - reporting, 90
    - deregistering, 90
    - early childhood, 66
    - education, 93
    - employment, 100
    - facing disciplinary action, 90
    - First Aid Certificate, 126
    - for disadvantaged groups, 91
    - fostering creativity, 104
    - guilty of misconduct, 90
    - inservice, 48, 97
      - Aboriginal students, 109
      - drug education, 129
      - First Aid Certificate, 132
      - learning difficulties, 108
    - involvement in staffing, 100
    - knowledge and skills, 89
    - mature age, 92
    - ongoing development, 90
    - part time, 99
    - planning for availability, 92
    - preservice, 48
      - Aboriginal students, 109
      - learning difficulties, 108
      - pre-service education, 93
      - professional development, 97
        - information technology, 115
      - promoting involvement of parents, 89
      - promotion, 98
      - provision of professional development
        - cultural backgrounds, 43
      - qualifications, 90
      - qualities, 89
      - quality of, 89
      - recruitment, 92
      - reductions due to technology, 115
      - registration, 90
      - relationship with students, 89
      - right of withdrawal from teaching, 104
      - safety, 132
      - selection of, 89
      - special education, 96
      - trained, 25, 91
        - early childhood, 66
      - working cooperatively with families, 89
    - Teaching
      - admission standards, 90
      - admission to, 91
    - Teaching assistants
      - appropriate cultural background, 43
    - Teaching conditions, 90
    - Teaching outcomes, 26
    - Teaching practice, 94
    - Teaching programs, 26
    - Technology studies, 114
    - Television, 135
      - advertisements, 137
    - Tertiary admission policies, 33
    - Tertiary allowance assistance, 33
    - Tertiary entrance agencies
      - admission procedures, 81
    - Tertiary institutes, 36
    - Tertiary institutions
      - entrance exams, 81
    - Tertiary ranking, 104
    - Tertiary selection, 104
    - Testing programs, 81
    - Trade union
      - provision of training positions, 37
    - Training positions, 37
    - Transition programs
      - preschool-schools, 67
    - Uniforms. *see* School uniforms
    - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 25
    - University/school enterprises, 16
    - UV radiation, 126
    - Vaccination, 130
    - Values
      - appreciation of others, 4
    - Viewpoints
      - appreciation of others, 4
    - Vocational education and training, 36, 110
      - course accreditation, 111
    - Vouchers, 12
    - Wage structure strategies, 37
    - Weather protection, 125
    - Work
      - guarantee, 35
    - Work experience programs, 26
    - Working collaboratively, 54
    - Workplace experience, 111
    - Youth, 35