

Policy

Statement

4

**EDUCATING
FOR THE
21ST CENTURY**

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION		2
SECTION 1	Aims of schooling in South Australia	5
	Charter	5
	Commitment	5
	Outcomes	7
SECTION 2	What will be taught	
	Essential skills and understandings	
	Required areas of study	10
	How studies relate to phases of schooling	12
SECTION 3	How schools will support students' learning	15
	Essential student care	15
	Quality education in a productive school	16
	The education partnership	18
SECTION 4	Curriculum assurance	21
APPENDIX A	National goals for schooling in Australia	22
APPENDIX B	Relevant acts, policies and statements	24
CHART		26

FOREWORD

To educate our children for tomorrow's world is a continuing challenge for us as teachers and parents. We are faced with competing and sometimes conflicting needs - to encourage and teach our children to preserve what we value of our past, to respond to the demands of the present, and to be well prepared for the future.

This document is a statement of the ideals and aims that we hold today for the education of children who will leave school in the 21st century. It also looks to the national interest. The Department for Education & Children's Services is committed to the vision of a future in which the students of today will play a key role in making Australia a culturally rich and competitive nation.

I thank all those who took part in the consultation processes during the development of this key document - teachers, parents, students, people in the workplace and the wider community.

It is my pleasure to approve *Educating for the 21st century* as the official charter for public schooling in South Australia.

Ian McPhail
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

The prime purpose of education is the development of the human intellect in all its dimensions — social, cultural, moral, emotional and physical. Education is the means by which a society passes on to each individual an understanding of culture in its many forms and at the same time develops the capacity to contribute to the improvement of that culture through interaction with others.

Education is also the means by which a nation prepares those who will work to sustain a viable and environmentally responsible economy through their contributions to a wide range of services and technologies in such areas as parenting, home duties, business, industry, community work, health, welfare, the arts, law, science, politics, education and agriculture.

Education serves both the individual and the nation. It strives to develop each person's values, skills and knowledge and, in so doing, enriches and extends the most significant resources of any nation - its collective brain power, wisdom and work capacity.

This charter looks to the current and expected demands on public schooling in the 1990s, mindful that those entering our schools during the next decade will graduate into the 21st century. We are, in this regard, educating now for the 21st century. Decisions taken now — educational directions set now — will affect individual life opportunities and the future course of the state and the nation.

The document *Our schools and their purposes* has served South Australian schooling well during the 1980s. This new charter affirms and builds on many of the core values and educational priorities of *Our schools and their purposes*. *Educating for the 21st century continues to place high priority on educational fundamentals such as literacy, numeracy, communication, innovative thinking and learning, general knowledge and concern for individual well-being*. It reaffirms and strengthens a commitment to include and give full educational access to girls, Aboriginal students, students of non-English speaking backgrounds, students with disabilities, students in poverty and students in isolated settings.

The charter does, however, set some important new directions which arise from current or anticipated changes in our society and the world.

These changes go beyond the obvious realities of advanced information technologies, and such things as biotechnics and robotics. They encompass global issues to do with care about the planet's survival; cultural issues to do with quality of life, justice, interdependence and mutual respect; and economic issues to do with productive and fulfilling work and national viability.

In particular, while acknowledging the importance of nurturing and safeguarding each individual in the care of teachers, the charter underlines and concentrates on the key role of the public education system — *to provide high quality teaching in the service of challenging, formal learning*. Schools have a role, along with parents*, other social agencies and the wider community, in shaping values, attitudes and responsible behaviours, but they must not and cannot be expected to meet this challenge alone. Ultimately, schools' accountability to the public, and to students and their parents, must be with respect to the range, quality and usefulness of what students learn. In this regard, the attitudes, commitment and tenacity of students themselves are crucial.

This charter relates to the educational assurances which a public system must give in accounting for the considerable state and national investment in public schooling. It adheres to the principle of education for all and sets out the values and educational priorities that will promote a socially-just democracy, ensuring the development of citizens who can contribute to a society which requires ever increasing levels of knowledge and performance.

Public schooling in South Australia is delivered through a schooling system in which each school will develop its own character and emphasis. At the same time, however, all students will be guaranteed access to a broad, balanced curriculum within the common framework set out in this charter. The concerted effort of all people who work in the system, at all levels, and the combined efforts of students, teachers and parents, will be to this end.

Wherever parents are mentioned, this includes all caregivers, acknowledging that numbers of South Australian children are in the care of people other than parents.

The Department for Education & Children's Services of South Australia, at all levels within the public schooling system, will seek to:

- strive for *excellence* in all areas of endeavour
- ensure *justice* in all areas of responsibility
- guarantee *accountability* for its actions
- exercise *imagination* in all tasks
- encourage a *passion for learning*.

The charter is to be read in the context of these aims.

It is also important to note that this charter takes into account and complements the set of agreed National Goals of Schooling in Australia endorsed in 1989 by Ministers of Education across all states and territories. (See Appendix A.)

Educating for the 21st century is a blueprint for the future and a vision towards which all our schools will work. It will guide and shape plans but is not itself a plan. In successive three year plans and as part of the annual

budget process, the system and the schools will set specific goals and targets, allocating available resources accordingly.

This document is not only for educators. It will stand as a public document for the use of parents and all community members who wish to understand, examine, participate in and support the role of public schooling in South Australia.

SECTION 1 AIMS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CHARTER

The Department for Education & Children's Services of South Australia has a charter to provide education based on the following premise.

All young people in South Australia have the right to gain, through the public schooling system, a broad and balanced education that prepares them for effective participation in society.

COMMITMENT

Putting this charter into practice requires a commitment on the part of all departmental schools and services to provide and maintain high quality schools which support the development of *all* students. It requires all those who work within the education system to do the following things.

Strive for excellence

- Place a high value on the achievement of every student in a range of culturally, socially, physically and economically valuable areas of study.
- Expect all students to strive to achieve their personal best.
- Encourage students to become independent learners who can analyse, pose questions and persist in seeking answers.
- Foster a spirit of enterprise in students and help them to approach change and unforeseen circumstances in a positive and constructive way.
- Develop in students the desire and capacity to learn effectively and to go on learning beyond school.

Enact principles of social justice

- Recognise, affirm and actively support all students' equal entitlement to the knowledge and skills that are valued in our society.
- Value students' diverse experiences and acknowledge their special needs, taking into account students' gender, capabilities and disabilities, and their diversity of cultural, geographical, social and linguistic backgrounds when planning learning programs.

- Ensure that allocation of resources, teaching methods and styles of assessment and reporting will secure the successful participation of all students.
- Help students to develop the skills of critical social analysis based on principles of social justice.
- Endorse and practise democratic decision making, among peers and in the classroom.

Provide a secure setting

- Provide students with a safe, ordered and supportive schooling which promotes self-esteem and self-respect and is free from harassment based on gender, socioeconomic circumstances, race, culture or disability.
- Take all measures necessary to deal with issues of child protection and prevention of abuse.

Foster cooperation

- Develop schools and classrooms which are consistent with and demonstrate a set of moral and ethical values incorporating fairness, respect for self and others, honesty, cooperation and collaboration.

Involve the community

- Value communication and develop a partnership with parents.
- Communicate and participate with the local and wider community.
- Work in partnership with business, industry, trade unions and the wider community to prepare students for life beyond school.

OUTCOMES

With this shared commitment, the Department for Education and Children's Services of South Australia aims to develop individuals who have the following attributes.

Valued knowledge, skills and understandings

- They have acquired and can use knowledge, skills and understandings gained through studies in a required curriculum (as set out in Section 3).
- They can plan, design and complete tasks and evaluate outcomes.
- They can work efficiently and effectively in groups.

- They can ask critical and constructive questions and use imagination and reasoning in developing plans and acting on them.
- They can recognise the need for information and can select, use and present it effectively.
- They can take care of their own physical and emotional health and care for the health of others.
- They can continue to learn confidently and effectively beyond the end of formal schooling.

Self-reliance

- They can evaluate and analyse their own achievements and actions and deal constructively with criticism and advice from others.
- They can show enterprise, exercise judgement and initiate action in unfamiliar or demanding situations.
- They are confident and determined in their social, intellectual and physical endeavours.
- They have a well-developed capacity to protect themselves.

Community responsibility

- They apply moral and ethical values and skills of social analysis in assessing situations and taking action.
- They value and work towards a society which is characterised by cultural diversity within a framework of social cohesion.
- They use their knowledge, skills and understandings to work constructively towards a society which operates on principles of social justice.
- They exercise the democratic rights and meet the obligations of Australian and global citizenship.
- They make positive contributions to the community and have confidence in using community resources.

While these are broad, ultimate outcomes of a total schooling process, they are goals that will be aimed at by all teachers and administrators in partnership with parents from the time that a child first comes to school.

SECTION 2 WHAT WILL BE TAUGHT

ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDINGS

Providing an education for the 1990s and beyond that will support the outcomes stated in Section 1 requires all schools to work within a common framework.

The following nine essential skills and understandings will form the framework of learning for all students throughout their years at school.

Some areas of study will emphasise some of these skills and understandings more than others, but it is essential that all teachers take into account these nine components in planning their students' learning programs no matter at what level they are teaching.

Communication skills, especially the interrelationship of reading, writing, listening and speaking, and an understanding of the broad-ranging means of verbal and non-verbal communication which form the bases of human thought and interaction.

Social skills and an understanding of the values, attitudes and practices that contribute to social justice and effective participation in a multicultural society.

Planning and design skills and an understanding of the role of goal setting, reasoning, aesthetic judgement and the imagination in solving problems and undertaking projects in all areas of learning.

Information skills which involve the capacity to recognise a need for information, to know how and where to find it from a range of sources, and how to select, use it and share with others.

Environmental skills and an understanding and appreciation of our environment, the relationship we have with it and how we must look after it.

Mathematical skills and an ability to apply mathematics in everyday life.

Health and safety skills and an understanding of the need for physical and emotional safety and well-being of self and others.

Technological skills and an understanding of the functions, purposes and impacts of technology in a changing world.

Work skills and an understanding that the attitudes, knowledge, skills and work practices of the school and community help to provide a preparation for the world of paid and unpaid work beyond school.

REQUIRED AREAS OF STUDY

This section presents the seven areas of study which provide students with the broad range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and understandings that will prepare them for effective participation in Australian society.

This does not presuppose or necessitate the division of the curriculum into seven areas. Schools may achieve an effective and balanced curriculum in different ways. In analysing the curriculum offerings available to students, however, schools are required to demonstrate that each student is experiencing the full range as set out below.

That is, in formal curriculum terms, the Department for Education & Children's Services requires that studies in the following seven areas be undertaken by all students at every year level **during the years of compulsory schooling**.

Languages

Studies in languages encompass both studies in English and the learning of languages other than English.

Studies in languages extend students' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in a variety of contexts and situations. They involve comprehending, appreciating and producing an ever-widening range of texts and the discussion and evaluation of such texts.

The study of English is required throughout the years of compulsory schooling. Students for whom English is a second language or who have special language needs will be supported through formal courses and in other ways as appropriate.

All students in the primary years will, in addition, study a language other than English. At the secondary level all students will have access to the study of a language other than English.

Mathematics

Studies in mathematics provide students with knowledge and understanding of space, measurement, chance and statistical data, number and algebra and the relationships between ideas in these domains. Students also learn the characteristic ways of thinking and doing which enable the development of these ideas, along with the application and communication of mathematics in a wide range of contexts.

Appreciation of the role of mathematics in our society and confidence in using mathematical information are essential features of citizenship.

Health and personal development

Studies in health education, physical education and home economics provide students with a balance of knowledge, processes and skills which equip them for independent living based on informed decisions. Students so equipped are able to promote and protect their own and others' physical, social and emotional well-being.

Science

Studies in science provide opportunities for students to develop ways of investigating, describing and understanding our physical and biological world and to apply those ways to solving problems beyond the context of the classroom. Studies in science encourage students to seek and use evidence as the basis for forming ideas and taking action, and assist in the development of responsible attitudes towards the environment.

Society and environment

Studies in society and environment provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will equip them for effective and critical participation in local, national and global communities.

Studies in society develop understandings of structures and systems; heritage and change; environments, cultures and beliefs; business and economics.

Studies in environment develop understandings of ecological processes, sustainable conservation, environmental ethics, aesthetics and decision making.

The arts

Studies in the arts involve students in experiences of creating, presenting and appreciating. These studies will result in students acquiring arts knowledge and developing a range of artistic skills and other skills related to planning and design that will equip them for lifelong involvement in the appreciation of the arts. Such studies include the visual arts, craft, design, dance, drama, media studies and music.

Technology

Studies in technology provide students with opportunities to develop technological capability through planning, developing and refining design concepts, selecting appropriate materials, tools and processes for particular design purposes, carrying designs through to completion and appraising the outcomes.

In the development of a balanced learning program within these seven areas, schools will be guided by Department for Education & Children's Services curriculum documents.

HOW STUDIES RELATE TO PHASES OF SCHOOLING

Pre-compulsory schooling

- Children are not required to begin formal schooling until they are six years old but may enter at Reception level soon after they turn five. Some government schools also offer pre-school education facilities.
- The pre-compulsory curriculum will provide for the development of the nine essential skills and understandings through integrated studies in the seven areas outlined above.
- This curriculum will be offered through learning programs that focus on the nature and experience of the young child and the quality of the relationship between teacher, parents and the child. This focus will provide the foundation for a close and continuing relationship between home and school throughout a child's schooling.

Compulsory schooling

- During the years of compulsory schooling, studies in these seven areas, set in the framework of the nine essential skills and understandings, will provide a broad and balanced curriculum. They will also provide opportunities for students to develop areas of talent and interest in which they may choose to specialise during their senior secondary years, within the requirements of the South Australian Certificate of Education.
- For students with disabilities and special needs, learning objectives and course content will need to be negotiated in order to develop an appropriate and challenging curriculum.
- Departmental guidelines will be developed in relation to expected outcomes in the required areas of study. During the years of compulsory schooling, schools will use these guidelines in reporting on student achievement.

Post-compulsory schooling

- Post-compulsory schooling is available to all and has no upper age limit.
- The curriculum available to post-compulsory students and the way it is assessed will be largely shaped by the requirements of the South Australian Certificate of Education, under the

auspices of the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia.

- The nine essential skills and understandings will continue to be taken into account by all teachers in planning their students' learning programs in government schools.
- On leaving school, all post-compulsory students will receive a Student Achievement Record, which summarises their achievements while at secondary school. School leavers will be issued with a Personal Portfolio in which to keep their Student Achievement Record, their South Australian Certificate of Education and other relevant documents.

SECTION 3 HOW SCHOOLS WILL SUPPORT STUDENTS' LEARNING

The Department for Education & Children's Services is accountable not only for the content of school learning but for the quality of that learning. Quality education requires that students learn in a secure environment in a way which challenges them to achieve their personal best. This in turn requires both a duty of care and quality assurance from all those concerned with the education of government school students.

ESSENTIAL STUDENT CARE

While acknowledging that successful student learning requires that students are secure, healthy, well-adjusted and provided with special measures where necessary, it must be pointed out that the school alone cannot always ensure all those conditions. The school must, in many cases, exercise its duty of care in partnership with:

- parents
- the education system as a whole
- other government and community agencies.

The shared nature of this responsibility is governed to some extent by legislation (see Appendix B) and will be reflected in the support services which are provided within schools and across schools by agencies within and outside the department.

These services will ensure that:

- school staff are equipped to implement the curriculum in such a way as to enhance the social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being of each student
- school staff and volunteers are able to identify children at risk through neglect or abuse and to respond appropriately
- concerns regarding the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of students are addressed by appropriate diagnosis and the planning, delivery, coordination and evaluation of appropriate services
- information is collected to identify specific groups of students who are disadvantaged and is used in resource planning and policy development.

QUALITY EDUCATION IN A PRODUCTIVE SCHOOL

In a productive school there is a positive relationship between teachers and learners. Each student will strive for personally satisfying outcomes based on good planning, clearly negotiated guidelines, cooperative making and doing

and the opportunity to learn from assessing and evaluating outcomes. Teachers will encourage imagination, enterprise, commitment and industry.

The Department for Education & Children's Services endorses the following characteristics as indicators of quality for all government schools.

School climate

- The school is both welcoming, supportive, challenging and an enjoyable place to be in.
- Every student is valued as a learner and contributor and is challenged to achieve his or her personal best.
- No student's skills or abilities are wasted through any form of discrimination, exclusion or neglect.
- Students are encouraged towards independence and self-discipline through active student participation and negotiated student-teacher decision making.
- Parents are acknowledged as partners in the education of their child and their opinions and skills are valued.
- Teachers are valued as professionals with highly developed skills and knowledge.
- School resources and funds are used wisely and in ways that provide maximum benefit to all students.
- The outside community is welcomed as a valuable resource.
- The school principal provides leadership in school management and the planning of learning programs.

Diversity

- Teachers take into account students' gender, capabilities and disabilities and their socio-economic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds in planning learning programs that aim to meet the outcomes of schooling (see Section 1).
- Students undertake work programs with differing demands, which are designed to extend their current levels of achievement.

Assessment and reporting

- Work is undertaken within a framework of clear and demanding expectations requiring student participation in planning, assessing and evaluating.
- Forms of assessment are integral to the learning and teaching programs.
- Parents are kept fully informed regarding their child's progress.

- Reporting on assessment includes an indication of the work undertaken and is clear and useful to students and parents.

Teaching

- Teachers are encouraged to enhance their own professional knowledge and skills through:
 - evaluating their own performance
 - observing others in practice
 - sharing successful practices with their colleagues
 - inviting evaluation of their performance in the classroom
 - undertaking further training, development and professional reading.
- Teachers are supported in their work by their peers, school-based and system-based personnel, and by parents and the wider community.

THE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Communication and interaction between students, parents and teachers is an extremely important factor in students' learning.

The foundations for a close relationship between home and school are laid in early childhood. This close relationship needs to be fostered through all levels of schooling.

Schools must have clearly stated policies on parent and student participation. The policies will promote and develop the role of parents in schools and support parents and students in school decision-making processes.

Role of teachers

Teachers as professionals have prime responsibility for what happens in the classroom.

In their relationship with **parents**, teachers will:

- know their school community — its differing backgrounds, attitudes, expectations and aspirations
- keep parents informed about learning programs that are being planned and delivered
- consult with parents about matters relating to the school's educational program
- inform parents of school activities and invite and support parent involvement

- provide opportunities for all parents to participate in the decision-making structures of the school
- invite and encourage parents to visit and help
- raise matters of interest with parents and act on concerns raised by parents.

In their relationship with **students**, teachers will:

- provide clear guidance for students' learning while fostering
- the students' own growing sense of responsibility, independence and interdependence in planning and carrying out activities
- establish a supportive climate that encourages cohesion in a community of learners with a wide diversity of backgrounds, abilities and interests
- work towards equality of educational outcomes
- expect and demand the students' personal best
- celebrate students' success with students, parents and the school community
- encourage and help students to participate in the decision-making and leadership structures of their classroom and the whole school
- promote awareness of educational and life opportunities and help students to set achievable goals.

Role of parents

Parents will be encouraged to support students' learning by:

- taking an active interest in their child's learning
- engaging in a cooperative relationship with their child's teachers
- assisting the school in establishing a shared set of values and expectations
- reinforcing the school's aims
- keeping the school informed on matters of relevance
- taking up opportunities to be involved in school activities
- taking up opportunities to participate in school decision-making structures and processes.

Role of students

Students will be encouraged to aid their own learning by:

- giving of their personal best

- taking part in the development of an agreed code of behaviour
- abiding by the code of behaviour
- undertaking tasks and activities that will increase their independence, interdependence, citizenship and self-discipline
- contributing to student decision-making forums
- assisting their teachers to provide an effective and challenging learning environment
- working cooperatively with other students
- cooperating with their parents and assisting their parents to understand their learning needs
- completing work as contracted and required.

SECTION 4 CURRICULUM ASSURANCE

The following processes are designed to ensure that this charter for public schooling in South Australia is put into practice.

- Every school principal is required to ensure that the school's curriculum is aligned with the charter, commitment and outcomes laid down in *Educating for the 21st century*.
- Every government school in South Australia will be subject to a periodic school review by the Education Review Unit. The criteria against which each school is assessed will be consistent with the charter of *Educating for the 21st century*.
- The Department for Education & Children's Services, through its management, financial and personnel support structures, is committed to supporting schools as they work to achieve the values, processes and outcomes outlined in this charter.

APPENDIX A NATIONAL GOALS FOR SCHOOLING IN AUSTRALIA

The following ten goals, agreed to by all Australian Ministers of Education in April, 1989, form the basis for cooperation and collaboration between schools, states and territories and the Commonwealth.

It is expected that all state schools will be guided by these goals in the planning of their curriculum.

1. To provide an excellent education for all young people, being one which develops their talents and capacities to full potential, and is relevant to the social, cultural and economic needs of the nation.
2. To enable all students to achieve high standards of learning and to develop self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, respect for others, and achievement of personal excellence.
3. To promote equality of educational opportunities, and to provide for groups with special learning requirements.
4. To respond to the current and emerging economic and social needs of the nation, and to provide those skills which will allow students maximum flexibility and adaptability in their future employment and other aspects of life.
5. To provide a foundation for further education and training, in terms of knowledge and skills, respect for learning and positive attitudes for lifelong education.
6. To develop in students:
 - the skills of English literacy, including skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing
 - skills of numeracy, and other mathematical skills
 - skills of analysis and problem solving
 - skills of information processing and computing
 - an understanding of the role of science and technology
 - in society, together with scientific and technological skills
 - a knowledge and appreciation of Australia's historical and geographic context
 - a knowledge of languages other than English
 - an appreciation and understanding of, and confidence to participate in, the creative arts
 - an understanding of the concern for balanced development and the global environment, and
 - a capacity to exercise judgement in matters of morality, ethics and social justice.

7. To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context.
8. To provide students with an understanding and respect for our cultural heritage including the particular cultural background of Aboriginal and ethnic groups.
9. To provide for the physical development and personal health and fitness of students, and for the creative use of leisure time.
10. To provide appropriate career education and knowledge of the world of work, including an understanding of the nature and place of work in our society.

These goals will be reviewed from time to time through community consultation.

APPENDIX B RELEVANT ACTS, POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

The following acts, policies and statements are relevant to the educational aims, content and practices outlined in *Educating for the 21st century: a charter for public schooling in South Australia. C*

Acts

Education Act 1972 (as amended)

Equal Opportunity Act 1984

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986

Policies

Our schools and their purposes 1981 (out of print)

Diversity and cohesion 1982 (out of print)

Equal opportunities for girls 1983 (out of print)

Fostering the gifts and talents of children 1984 (out of print)

Sexual harassment 1984 (out of print)

Languages 1985 (out of print)

National policy for the education of girls in Australian schools 1987

School discipline 1989

Parents and schools 1989

Anti-racism 1990

Student participation 1990

Child protection 1990

Students with disabilities 1991

Other policies in draft:

- Aboriginal education
- Multiculturalism in education

Statements

The first years of school 1992

Social justice action plan 1992

Children and learning in the primary years 1988

School-industry links report 1988

Partners in learning 1988

Enquiry into immediate post-compulsory education (First Report 1988 and Second Report 1989) (out of print)

Learning in early childhood 1989

Curriculum digest — primary and secondary 1989

Student assessment 1989

Open access education 1990