



Ministerial Council on Education,
Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

FIFTEENTH MCEETYA MEETING

10-11 July 2003
PERTH

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for Education and Training meeting in Perth for the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs have agreed to progress initiatives of national significance for education in Australia.

The following motions were unanimously passed by all members of the Council:

Sexual abuse in schools

Council:

- a requested the preparation of model uniform legislation to be considered by all States and Territories, that provides for nationally consistent procedures and processes for the conduct of criminal record checks of persons seeking to work in educational settings with children;
- b agreed to advise the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General of its intention to consider model uniform legislation that would affect the operation of spent conviction legislation throughout Australia; and
- c endorsed the decision of Australian Education Systems Officials Committee (AESOC) that Queensland have lead responsibility for progressing this issue, in collaboration with other jurisdictions.

Nationally Consistent Curriculum Outcomes

Council:

- a noted the executive summary of Curriculum provision in the Australian States and Territories: Research Report for the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs 2003 which is the result of considerable work undertaken to map curriculum approaches across jurisdictions and identify both areas of commonality and difference.
- b directed AESOC to manage a national project on behalf on State and Territory Education Ministers to deliver consistent curriculum outcomes in all schools across Australia, in the four domains of English, Maths, Science and Civics and Citizenship. The project is to build upon the areas of commonality identified in the mapping exercise in the research report.

- c endorsed the development of Statements of Learning, as described in paragraphs 17 to 30 (attached), that define and deliver common curriculum outcomes to be used by jurisdictions to inform their own curriculum development and implementation.
 - d approved, in the first instance, the development of one set of statements of learning in English;
 - e requested AESOC to scope, develop and arrange funding for the statements in the first domain and to have a final draft ready by the end of February 2004 so that Ministers can make a decision out-of-session in March 2004 on further work being undertaken on the additional three domains; and
 - f directed AESOC to develop a position paper by December 2003 that addresses the issue of states and territories moving to a more uniform starting age for schooling and common nomenclature within the context of a 2010 target date for commencement. This work to inform the development of the first set of statements of learning especially in relation to the determination of the junctures of schooling for which statements would be written.
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Review of Higher Education

Council:

- a Noted the Commonwealth paper on the Review of Higher Education
- b Agreed to the merit of developing best practice in university governance arrangements, and for States and Territories to work with the Commonwealth to reach agreement on a set of National Governance Protocols;
- c As outlined in the paper, agreed to work with the Commonwealth and provide advice on developing a mechanism for the distribution of new university places
- d Agreed to work with Commonwealth in developing a mechanism to further streamline university reporting and compliance arrangements, in particular:
 - i agree to a new Accountability Framework for university reporting which meets the needs of both State and Commonwealth, and eliminates duplication and improves information-sharing;
 - ii reduce the administrative burden on universities; and
 - iii develop a common approach across jurisdictions to regulatory arrangements, including commercial powers of universities.
- e Agreed to increased Commonwealth/State cooperation in promoting collaboration between the higher education and business/industry and other education sectors, in particular:
 - i agree to work with the Commonwealth to develop national arrangements for articulation and credit transfer between the higher education sector and the vocational and training sectors;
 - ii agree to greater involvement of the State and Territories in the development of funding proposals under the Capital Development Pool; and

Agenda Item:

- iii work with the Commonwealth to develop a new framework for Commonwealth-State negotiations on higher education policy and planning matters.
 - f Agreed to consider the outcome of this work at a future meeting of MCEETYA organised especially for the purpose of dealing with these higher education matters.
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Signatories to this statement:

Minister for Education (WA) – The Hon. Alan Carpenter MP (Chair)
Federal Minister for Education – The Hon. Dr. Brendan Nelson, MP
Minister for Education (VIC) – The Hon. Lynne Kosky, MP
Minister for Education Services (Vic) - The Hon. Jacinta Allan MP
Minister for Education (SA) – The Hon. Trish White, MP
Minister for Education (NT) – The Hon. Syd Stirling MP
Minister for Education (Tas) – The Hon. Paula Wriedt MHA
Parliamentary Secretary (NSW) – The Hon. Bryce Gaudry
Minister for Education (ACT) – Katy Gallagher MLA
Minister for Education (Qld) – The Hon. Anna Bligh MP
Minister for Training (Qld) – The Hon. Matt Foley MP

COLLABORATION ON CONSISTENT CURRICULUM OUTCOMES - EXTRACT

The nature of the statements of learning

Definition

17. While definitional work will need to occur as part of the first stage of the process, this proposal recommends that the statements of learning help achievement of 'high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding' as stated in the Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals of Schooling in the Twenty-First Century.
18. The statements of learning would not attempt to describe the whole of learning within a domain. Instead they would identify and build on important and essential elements of learning within the domains that are common among jurisdictions' curriculums. Through the articulation of these elements, they would provide a common basis on which Australia's education systems can make progress towards greater consistency.
19. The statements of learning should represent a level of skill that is reasonable and challenging and appropriate to the majority of young Australians.
20. It is proposed that the statements of learning encapsulate the essential knowledge, understanding, skills and capacities of the four curriculum domains of English, Maths, Science and Civics and Citizenship at agreed points of schooling.
21. It is further proposed that the statements integrate some of the generic and trans-disciplinary capacities and understandings from the National Goals of Schooling within the domains. In particular, the incorporation of information and communication technologies across all domains is seen as essential.
22. This powerful combination of the distinctive knowledge, understanding and skills of the domains with the generic capacities and understandings from the National Goals of Schooling will achieve the aim of the recommendation to 'equip students to make progress towards high order skills, deep levels of thinking and the attributes needed for a global, knowledge-based society'. In addition, this combination provides a known context for the development of these high order capacities and adds value to the ways these domains have been traditionally constructed.
23. The statements would outline a sequence of learning within each of the four domains showing progression in expected student learning across the chosen years of schooling. In doing so they would define the knowledge, skills, conceptual understanding and capacities that characterise learners at particular points in schooling and illustrate the rate and kind of progress which should occur.
24. Again, acknowledging that definitional work needs to occur as part of the first stage of the process, it is envisaged that the statements of learning build on commonalities among the 'outcomes' in system curriculum documents but would differ from those 'outcomes' in that:
 - they would be more specific about skills, conceptual understandings, knowledge and capacities;
 - rather than providing discreet 'outcomes' of learning, they would group skills, understandings, knowledge and capacities together; and

- they would state how a group of skills, understandings, knowledge and capacities are to be demonstrated in a particular product or action considered to be an essential competence.
25. Any work on the development of statements of learning would need to be based on:
- a sound theoretical base;
 - existing or new empirical data on current levels of achievement; and
 - professional judgement about necessary and appropriate statements of learning and levels of performance.
26. The statements of learning should be written in plain language to ensure that they are accessible to parents and community members.

Using and supporting the statements of learning

27. As stated above, the statements of learning would be integrated within system curriculum documents as a part of each system's normal renewal processes and time period or within school curriculum documents. If the statements of learning are to achieve greater consistency across States and Territories, this task may involve some compromises and adjustments to local curriculums and approaches by individual state and territory systems and the non-government sector.
28. Nevertheless, the limited scope of the statements of learning proposed would avoid constraining systems, sectors or schools more than is necessary to achieve the Ministerial purpose. The proposal leaves systems, sectors and schools with flexibility and autonomy to integrate these statements into their own curriculums in a manner which suits the diversity of students needs and types of schools across the country.
29. The statements will be defined in such a way that they enable students to demonstrate their mastery of particular knowledge and skills in a number of ways and teachers to monitor them using classroom-based 'assessment for learning' principles and repertoires. They should also imply the potential for teachers to use a wide repertoire of teaching styles.
30. This proposal does not assume system monitoring or reporting of achievement of the statements of learning; this will be a matter for individual systems and sectors to decide on.