Education 2000. Issues and options for the future of Education in Queensland

Queensland. Department of Education, 1985

Overview of the document

74 page discussion paper based on a review of the organizational effectiveness and operational efficiency of the Department of Education, discussing in particular curriculum development, staff preparation and management, decision-making and communication, and the structure of educational institutions. It consists of 33 pages of discussion, a two page summary of options and seven appendices. Following the report, an Advisory Committee was appointed to review all submissions made in response to this discussion paper, which in the following year delivered its report and 42 recommendations. The contents of this report, and its recommendations, are also summarized here.

Keywords

Curriculum development; transitions; teacher education; pre-school education; pre-compulsory education; post-compulsory education; TAFE.

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Summary of Contents

INTRODUCTION

➢ Notes that the basis for the provision of educational services in Queensland is found in six pieces of legislation, the most far-reaching of which is *The Education Act 1964-1984* which covers pre-school, primary, secondary, special and technical education, compulsory education, advanced education (including teacher education), the Department of Education and a number of statutory boards.

- Notes the size and complexity of the organization of the Department: "As an organization, its complexity is compounded by the demography and geography of Queensland, by the diversity of curriculum offerings, and by the constant need to anticipate changing demands for services." (p. 1)
- Notes that a special Task Force was established in 1984 to review the organizational effectiveness and efficiency of the Department of Education's educational institutions.
- Argues that two major issues have emerged regarding the organization and future development of educational institutions: "a concern about the relevance of the curriculum and its continuity from stage to stage" and "the responsiveness and flexibility of institutions" (p. 2)
- Notes that "tensions will occur between system-level co-ordination and the efforts of particular institutions to respond in a flexible manner to local needs" and that it is at the points of student transition where these issues "tend to surface most publicly", organizational responses to which generally involve "policies and practices pertaining to the admission and reception of students into institutions at various levels, and the assessment and selection of students prior to the transition between levels." (p. 3)
- Argues that the challenge is to identify organizational strategies that promote and maintain a healthy and productive tension between the apparently conflicting issues.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
- Notes that since 1859, "the system has undergone many changes which can be interpreted as indications of on-going concern for relevance and continuity of curricula and for flexibility and responsiveness of educational institutions" (p. 5). Some of these changes are described at pp. 5-7.
- Argues that "In view of the early historical importance of the primary school as a single institution catering for the whole period of compulsory schooling, it is natural that much attention in past years has been focused on the issues of continuity, relevance, responsiveness and flexibility at the points of entry from home to primary school and at the final point of exit from primary school." (pp. 5-7)
- Argues that "In summary, the foregoing résumé suggests that:
    - The emergence of separate institutional provisions for preschool, primary, secondary, special, and technical and further education constitute identifiable and deliberate organizational responses to social, economic, political and educational circumstances that have been in operation during the past century.
    - Each type of institution appears to have been established to provide relevant curricula for specific groups of students who were considered to have needs that fell outside the scope of other educational institutions.
    - There have been significant shifts in the functions of the various types of institutions over the years in response to changing circumstances.
    - The need to co-ordinate educational programs to achieve continuity across institutional boundaries has been recognised since early this century and has provided a continuing challenge that still exists.
    - There have been many attempts in the past to increase the degree of flexibility of the education system in Queensland." (p. 14)

2. SOME ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESENT INSTITUTIONS
Curriculum Development
- Notes that there are significant differences in the curriculum development procedures

applicable to educational institutions at the various levels of education and provides the following examples:

- o Preschool level: A significant role accorded "to individual teachers and parents with system-level input comprising a statement of general aims and philosophy and selected resource documents." (p. 15)
- o Primary schools: Particular significance attached to "a central system-level structure charged with 'probing needs, developing curricula, designing syllabuses, disseminating information, resources and material, implementing new ideas and evaluating the progress of all curriculum areas.' Detailed syllabuses and curriculum guides are organized into seven major subject areas and constitute the framework within which schools prepare and implement educational programs." (p. 15)
- o Secondary schools: Policy is developed "through a central committee structure within the Division of Secondary Education. In general, the development of subject syllabuses is carried out by the Board of Secondary School Studies, by the Department's Curriculum Services Branch and by schools themselves". (p. 16)
- o TAFE system: Curriculum development "involves consultation with employer groups, employee groups, professional associations and organizations, government departments and agencies, special interest groups and students through specialized curriculum advisory committees". (p. 16)
- o Special education: Curriculum development involves "ad hoc advisory committees, action research projects, and resources development". (p. 16)

➢ Argues that as there are currently "a variety of philosophies and orientations to curriculum development" and "an array of different organizational arrangements", "it would appear to be timely to review present arrangements with a view to determining ways of enhancing curricular continuity throughout the system". (p. 16)

Staff Preparation and Development

➢ Highlights "the organizational differences that apply to the staff preparation and development procedures for different types of institutions.

Staff Management

➢ Summarizes staff management policies and practices across the different types of institutions.

Communication and Decision-Making

➢ States that "Communication and decision-making procedures for all types of institutions are accomplished through a variety of proven organizational practices such as standardization, promulgation of administrative instructions, promulgation of guidelines pertaining to types of services and programs, and the use of clearly defined advisory and consultative processes." (p. 18)

Structure

➢ Argues that "There would appear to be little merit in debating the relative merits of the structures pertaining to the different types of institutions. Rather, a more important question appears to be a somewhat more global one: are present organizational objectives as they apply to institutions the most appropriate ones for the years to come?" (p. 19)

Summation
- ➢ Concludes that "The following points summarize many of the significant issues that emerge from a comparison of the organizational characteristics pertaining to various types of educational institutions in Queensland, and having particular bearing on discussions concerning the relevance of curricula, the improvement of continuity in curricula across the boundaries of institutions, and the maintenance of responsiveness and flexibility within educational institutions:
  - o The organizational characteristics of the various types of educational institutions presently operating in Queensland differ considerably from one another in relation to policies and practices pertaining to the five nominated organizational dimensions.
  - o Many of the organizational differences appear to be essential to the nature and types of programs offered by the various types of institutions.
  - o The unique organizational characteristics of particular types of institutions have fostered specialization of staff at particular levels and in particular areas of education.
  - o These unique characteristics also appear to have limited the potential for effective interactions among different types of institutions in such matters as staff exchanges, program oriented communications, and systematic communications concerning students moving from one type of institution to another.
  - o There appear to be few incentives, and certainly some disincentives, for teachers and administrators who might wish to broaden their specializations and move into institutions operating at other levels of education.
  - o In the main, there appear to be few formal mechanisms within educational institutions to encourage the notion of unified educational communities by means of co-operative, systematic planning involving the various types of educational institutions in a particular geographic area." (p. 20)

3. LOOKING AHEAD
- ➢ Presents a range of organizational options, arranged according to their particular relevance to the five dimensions of organizational concern discussed in the previous section for public discussion.

Curriculum Development – Compulsory and Pre-Compulsory Education
- ➢ Canvasses issues relating to early childhood education.
- ➢ Discusses issues to do with the improvement of the continuity of educational programs across Years 1-10, and in particular the primary to secondary school transition, are brought up, and issues regarding procedures for curriculum development.
- ➢ Outlines the following options to as a means of focusing public discussion:
  - o "It is proposed that curriculum guidelines for the span from Preschool to Year 10 (P-10) be developed within a common framework that provides for planned shifts in curriculum emphases to parallel changes in interests, abilities and learning styles that accompany human development and learning." (p. 22)
  - o "To this end it is proposed to establish a Curriculum Management and Accreditation Committee (P-10) with a membership suitably representative of the relevant fields of operation, and the following terms of reference: to establish a philosophy for P-10 education in Queensland; to assess and

systematically monitor system-level curriculum documents across the P-10 span; to develop system-level guidelines for the preparation and approval of curriculum documents for this span; and to commission the preparation of syllabuses and curriculum guidelines by appropriately constituted groups. (p. 22-23)

Curriculum Development – Post-Compulsory Education

➢ Notes that demand for tertiary places in Queensland outstrips supply and is growing faster than the creation of additional places, which "brings into question the relevance of senior secondary courses for many students." (p. 25)

➢ Argues that the present socio-economic conditions in Australia also have a major bearing on the immediate post-compulsory years of education with particular attention needing to be paid to: the growth of the service sector and activities based on information collection; trends in the availability of employments; major changes in the nature of work; escalating technological change; and the training and re-training that these changes necessitate.

➢ Notes that there have been a number of reports focused on transition education and training issues prepared by State governments and others and that an analysis of these reports shows "the clear need to reappraise the approaches taken by both secondary schools and TAFE colleges in dealing with education and training issues in the post-compulsory years...with particular emphasis on the provision of more equitable learning opportunities and a broader, more flexible base for learning". (p. 26)

➢ Notes that "of particular concern in this paper, are the resources presently committed in the senior secondary schools and the TAFE sectors" and that a main question is "whether or not the present mix of offerings from these two types of institutions considered together is the most relevant one for the next decade or so." (p. 26)

➢ Provides the following comments to stimulate further discussion:
  o "It is proposed that educational programs for the post-compulsory secondary and TAFE sectors be co-ordinated and developed co-operatively to cater adequately for the widely divergent needs of students and the requirements of employers and institutions of higher education." (p. 28)
  o "To this end, it is proposed to establish a Curriculum Management and Accreditation Committee (Post Year 10) with a membership suitably representative of the relevant fields of operation, and the following terms of reference: to establish a co-ordinated philosophy for post-compulsory secondary and technical and further education in Queensland; to assess and systematically monitor curricula at these levels; to develop system-level guidelines for the preparation and approval of courses at these levels; and to commission the preparation of syllabuses and curriculum guidelines by appropriately constituted groups." (p. 28)

Staff Preparation and Development

➢ Notes that "Present courses of initial teacher education focus on the preparation of teachers to work in particular types of institutions and, for teachers of older students, in specific subject/course specializations as well." (p. 28)

➢ Notes that specializations that focus on particular levels of schooling and on particular aspects of curriculum have advantages, but the constraints on deployment may be viewed as a disadvantage.

- ➢ Argues that there may be good reason to reconsider the premises on which specializations in courses of teacher education have been based.
- ➢ Provides comments intended to stimulate further discussion concerning ways of achieving balance between the benefits of specialization and the benefits of a more flexible movement of career teaching staff, including:
  - o Teacher education could be rationalized to provide the following three levels of specialization: early to middle childhood (age range 2-9 years); middle childhood to adolescence (age range 7-15 years); adolescence to adulthood (age range 13+ years).
  - o Overlap between these levels of specialization should be encouraged.
  - o All teachers in P-10 range should have broad understanding of human development and curriculum requirements across this whole range.
  - o Teachers prepared for 3rd level of specialization could be given sufficient preparation for work with adolescents to promote continuity in thinking about curriculum and to enhance flexibility of employment. (p. 29)
- ➢ Provides the following options as a means of focusing public discussion:
  - o "It is proposed that consideration be given to approaches to teacher education that provide more adequately for balance between the benefits of specialization and the benefits of flexibility in deployment of staff." (p. 30)
  - o It is proposed that priority be accorded to inservice initiatives directed towards the re-orientation and professional development of teachers and administrators required to enhance the relevance and continuity of educational programs and the responsiveness and flexibility of educational institutions." (p. 30)

Staff Management
- ➢ Provides the following options as a means of focusing public discussion:
  - o "It is proposed that consideration be given to adjusting staff management policies and procedures in ways that provide more adequately for balance between the competing benefits of specialization and a system-wide vision of curriculum continuity and relevance." (p. 31)
  - o "It is proposed that consideration be given to the development of career opportunities for teachers who wish to provide leadership in the areas of teaching excellence and curriculum knowledge, and to do so as practising teachers." (p. 31)
  - o "It is proposed that teachers and administrators be encouraged to widen their areas of specialization progressively throughout their careers." (p. 31)

Communication and Decision-Making
- ➢ Argues that "Discussion needs to focus on ways of: developing broadly-based co-operative educational communities; ensuring that educational decision-makers are well informed concerning relevant community needs and aspirations; informing the community concerning decisions made by and affecting their respective educational institutions; and involving the community in education and taking education into the community." (p. 31)
- ➢ Provides the following options as a means of focusing public discussion:
  - o "It is proposed that avenues be explored for enhancement of communications between all types of educational institutions and their respective communities." (p. 32)

- o "It is proposed that the notion of unified educational communities be promoted through co-operative systematic planning by the various types of educational institutions in a geographic area to establish unified approaches to general community liaison and involvement." (p. 32)
- o "It is proposed that shifts in the emphases of community liaison and involvement across the continuum of educational services be recognized as natural and desirable." (p. 32)
- o "It is proposed that a policy statement be developed on regional education advisory councils." (p. 32)
- o "It is proposed that the notion of unified educational communities be promoted through co-operative systematic planning by the various types of educational institutions in a geographic area, in relation to educational programs on both sides of transition points, and in relation to the movement of students across institutional boundaries." (p. 32)

Structure
- ➤ Argues that "The position adopted in the present paper is that present intra-institutional structures are relatively effective and have been developed over many years for many sound reasons." (p. 32)
- ➤ Provides the following options are proposed as a means of focusing public discussion:
  - o "It is proposed that the present broad structures of educational institutions in Queensland remain unchanged for the foreseeable future and that any changes that may eventuate in future years should be incremental and based on soundly researched information." (p. 32)
  - o "It is proposed to evaluate the relative merits of a variety of structural arrangements to provide a firmly researched information base for future decision-making." (p. 32)
  - o "It is proposed that existing institutions that are already operating in atypical configurations be used as target institutions for such experimentation and research." (p. 32)
  - o "It is proposed to use a limited number of special projects approved by the State Government in late 1984 to evaluate still other structural options." (p. 32)
  - o "It is proposed to take advantage of other opportunities that may arise to evaluate other structural configurations on a limited basis." (p. 32)
- ➤ Notes that these options have particular relevance to the question: "Are present educational institutions structured to meet the needs of the future?" (p. 33)

4. SUMMARY OF OPTIONS
- ➤ This section summarizes the above options given for focusing public discussion.

Report of the Committee of Review: Education 2000 Submissions

Queensland. Department of Education, Queensland. 1986

Terms of Reference

a) To review all submissions received in response to Education 2000.
b) To furnish advice to the Minister for Education.
c) To provide advice on further courses of action and comments on any alternative propositions which warrant further consideration.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW

➢ Discusses 'Education 2000: Issues and Options for the Future of Education in Queensland – A Discussion Paper'. Notes that it was tabled in Parliament in March 2005 and invited those interested to submit written comments in response and in August 1985, the Minister appointed an Advisory Committee to review the submissions received. Outlines its terms of reference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ Outlines the following recommendations:

General

1) Recommendation 1: "That the report of the Review Committee be published as soon as possible and be made available generally, and particularly to those who made the submissions." (p. 80)
2) Recommendation 2: "That, in view of the queries raised in many of the submissions as to the rationale of the proposals made in *Education 2000*, the Minister for Education

consider publishing a statement of the educational aims and general philosophy underlying the Queensland education system." (p. 80)

Curriculum Issues

3) Recommendation 3: "That continuity be accepted as a desirable criterion to be observed in developing curricula for the various stages of schooling provided that:
   a) it is interpreted mainly in broad terms involving concepts, skills and attitudes which give guidance for teachers, and not as detailed prescription of subject matter;
   b) it is applied throughout all school levels, preschool, the compulsory years and the post-compulsory years;
   c) it is applied in such a way that makes it unnecessary that the stages, P-3, 4-10, 11-12 be organised in separate institutions across the State." (p. 80)

4) Recommendation 4: "That the concept of "relevance" be clarified and defined in any statements of curriculum objectives that are subsequently prepared, and that special attention be given to the following concerns of respondents to *Education 2000*:
   a) the adequacy of curricula in assisting students to participate effectively in their personal, social and civic life outside the workforce;
   b) the adequacy of curricula in preparing students to undertake vocational training in industry and commerce;
   c) the adequacy of curricula in assisting students to undertake study at a tertiary level." (p. 80)

5) Recommendation 5: "That the functional grouping by curriculum of the Years P-3 be supported provided that:
   a) the present early childhood philosophy which is developmentally-based and responsive to young children's needs and interests be the dominant influence;
   b) the present close contact between preschools and parents be encouraged and developed;
   c) appropriate inservice education be available to teachers;
   d) resources of the kind usually found in preschools be available throughout P-3;
   e) the transition to Year 4 be planned with due regard to the principle of continuity referred to in (3) above;
   f) a desirable standard in basic learning skills can be achieved under the informal approach and the ungraded organisation;
   g) further consideration be given to the policy of a flexible intake of pupils to clarify what is proposed, and to ensure that it is acceptable to teachers and parents;
   h) preschool should not be compulsory." (pp. 80-81)

6) Recommendation 6: "That the functional grouping by curriculum of the Years 4-10 be proceeded with only if the following queries are satisfactorily answered:
   a) whether it can be achieved without pressures occurring to change the present structure of primary and secondary schools across the State;
   b) what is the detailed nature of a core curriculum for these years;
   c) what proposals would be made to offer elective subjects;
   d) what degree of flexibility individual schools would have to develop school-based curricula;
   e) what use would be made of specialist staff throughout Years 4-10;
   f) how those students who leave school to enter the workforce after Year 10 would not be disadvantaged." (p. 81)

7) Recommendation 7: "That the proposal that educational programs for post-compulsory secondary and TAFE sectors be developed co-operatively be supported and further explored, particularly as to the most effective and practicable arrangements for achieving it. That in doing so special attention be given to the following issues raised in submissions:

    a) the problems of effectively administering the six program streams for Years 11 and 12 described in *Education 2000*, and possible alternative arrangements; (p. 81)

    b) the uneven access to TAFE across the State;

    c) the relative balance of general and vocational education at this level;

    d) the problem of community acceptance of various types of curricula;

    e) the need to base vocationally-oriented courses on adequate demographic studies and close consultation with industry and commerce;

    f) whether TAFE courses might be adversely affected by being co-ordinated with school courses;

    g) the continued use of existing secondary schools to provide the wider curricula advocated, both because of the likely scarcity of senior colleges and because of the perceived merit of existing secondary school organisation;

    h) the problem of access of non-government schools to TAFE facilities;

    i) the level of resource provision, including counselling services, necessary for the successful co-operative development of educational arrangements, whatever pattern is adopted." (p. 81)

Curriculum Development, Accreditation and Assessment

8) Recommendation 8: "That in view of the wide disparity of opinion on the proposal to establish two curriculum management and accreditation committees, and the level of concern about aspects of it, the Minister for Education review the proposal, with particular attention to the following issues raised in submissions:

    a) the discontinuity that may occur by dissociating lower and upper secondary curricula, particularly in subjects which are usually sequential through all secondary levels;

    b) the adverse impact of the proposal on the Board of Secondary School Studies which, as a statutory body, has responsibilities relating to all Queensland secondary schools, whether State or non-government;

    c) the adverse impact of the proposal on the Department of Primary Curriculum Committee, and local curriculum development arrangements for preschools;

    d) the status of the proposed committees as Department of Education committees or statutory bodies;

    e) the representativeness of the membership of the committees;

    f) the need for curriculum committees to be responsive to an overarching educational philosophy, as well as to one deriving from the nature of the subject itself;

    g) the future of the Junior and Senior Certificates, particularly in relation to the future role of the Board of Secondary School Studies;

    h) the need for a review of the Tertiary Entrance (TE) Score." (p. 82)

Teacher Preparation and Development

➢ Recommendations 9-19 relate to issues of Preservice Teacher Education.
➢ Recommendations 20-22 relate to issues of Inservice Teacher Development.

Staffing Issues
 ➢ Recommendations 23-24.

Communication and Decision-making
 ➢ Recommendations 25-27.

Structures
 ➢ Recommendations 28-35.

Students with Special Educational Needs
 ➢ Recommendations 36-37.

Education 2000 and Students Isolated by Limited Access to Educational Facilities
 ➢ Recommendation 38.

Education 2000 and Non-government Schools
 ➢ Recommendation 39.

Implementation of Education 2000 Proposals
 ➢ Recommendation 40 states that "the Committee is of the opinion that any attempt to implement fully the broad range of ideas discussed in the Discussion Paper would have an undesirable destabilising impact on the system." (p. 86)
 ➢ Recommendation 41 suggests that all significant issues beyond "the more limited immediate objectives" be "explored by procedures which enable all the parties concerned to participate". (p. 86)
 ➢ Recommendation 42 that "a program of priorities, to chart a suitable development plan for the educational system in Queensland, be established." (p. 86)