

Foundation for the Future: A declaration for South Australian public education and children's services

South Australia. Department of Education and Children's Services, 1997

Overview of the document

16 page declaration of five strategic directions for public education and care in South Australia to the Year 2010, based on a set of intrinsic and enduring values and principles.

Keywords

Values; strategic directions; individual and society; diversity; community; enterprise; global citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

- States that “The prime purpose of public education and care is to develop all dimensions of the human intellect so that our children and students can help make Australia a more democratic, cohesive, socially responsible, culturally rich, ecologically sustainable and internationally competitive nation.”
- Notes that “The declaration is based on a set of intrinsic and enduring values. These are:
 1. trust
 2. honesty
 3. integrity
 4. responsibility
 5. equity
 6. respect
 7. caring
 8. fairness
 9. diligence
 10. excellence.”
- Notes that “Our learning, teaching and care programs are underpinned by our commitment to the following principles:
 1. a constant focus on quality and standards
 2. equity and access
 3. accountability
 4. partnerships.”

- Notes that this declaration establishes five strategic directions for public education and care in South Australia to the Year 2010.
- Identifies these strategic directions as follows:
 1. “developing the individual and society
 2. achieving unity through diversity
 3. strengthening community
 4. creating a spirit of enterprise
 5. becoming global citizens.”
- The remainder of the document discusses these strategies and enumerates the challenges presented.

1. DEVELOPING THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY.

- States that “While education is a continuing process of developing knowledge and skills, it is also about personal development and building positive relationships among individuals, groups and nations.”
- Suggests that “traditional disciplines are no longer as relevant in meeting the challenges of the modern world.”
- Argues that “For public education and care, the challenge is to:
 - recognise , nurture and build upon the needs, interests and experiences of all individuals so they become autonomous and interdependent learners
 - provide services based on respect for the individual and on the importance of personal identity and self-esteem and which meet an increasing diversity of individual and family needs
 - support further the crucial role of parents, carers and teachers in children’s intellectual, physical, social and moral development
 - promote and support a culture of success by acknowledging diligence, talent and the achievement of excellence
 - maintain our focus on the early years to support children’s development and ensure that children achieve literacy and numeracy skills as well as other competencies and attitudes essential for successful lifelong learning
 - focus on the use of technology to amplify, extend and transform learning
 - provide opportunities for students to develop aesthetic appreciation and understand the ways in which artistic and creative endeavours contribute to society
 - establish standards, monitor, account for and seek continuous improvement in the performance of our learners and of our organisation
 - monitor curriculum at classroom level to ensure breadth, appropriateness and quality.”

2. ACHIEVING UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY.

- Stats that “In South Australia we have worked to promote a view of diversity that is based on openness, honest expression, respect for others and the Australian ethos of a ‘fair go’ for all.”
- Notes that “We recognise the fundamental importance of unity and the need to build a progressive, cohesive and harmonious society through a commitment to overarching shared values. At the same time we foster and promote the maintenance of core aspects of culture such as language, family tradition or spiritual beliefs.”

- Notes that “Through our system we have a responsibility to develop and implement equity standards to guide service delivery and present a broad picture of how well we are meeting our obligations in relation to the desired outcomes of educations and care.”
- Argues that “For public education and care, the challenge is to:
 - fulfil our individual and collective responsibility to confront prejudice, eliminate discrimination and address the implications of gender and race relations, socio-economic circumstances, location, ability and cultural and linguistic diversity in learning, teaching and care
 - promote unity within our society and support and use the diversity that students bring to learning, as well as the diversity that exists more broadly in our organisation and the communities we serve
 - target resources and support where necessary to allow all children and students to achieve full benefit from our services
 - extend our partnerships with families, carers, teachers and staff, community organisations and interagency support services to address the intellectual, social, emotional and physical needs of students
 - provide programs and opportunities which will assist children and students to develop their special interests and talents
 - collect, analyse and report on a range of quantitative and qualitative data, using the results to examine and modify our structures and programs to ensure that they are equitable and successful in achieving agreed objectives.”

3. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY.

- States that “For public education and care, the challenge is to:
 - promote and support the important role that children’s services and schools have in contributing to the overall life and vitality of communities
 - support children’s services and schools in recognising and using the potential resources that exist within communities for learning, teaching and care
 - provide flexible and learning environments in which students can become active and informed citizens at the local, state, national and international level
 - provide education and care services that are responsive to emerging local community and regional development needs within agreed frameworks of accountability
 - promote and support a shared responsibility and obligation for providing public education and care through integrated approaches to service delivery in collaboration with community organisations, government agencies, business, industry and the tertiary sector
 - promote and support the development of centres and schools as resources for learning both in the local community and beyond the boundaries of the ‘neighbourhood’.”

4. CREATING A SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE.

- States that “For public education and care, the challenge is to:
 - promote and support flexible ways of delivering curriculum and services to meet the changing needs of learners and the work-related needs of families
 - support all students to develop skills for living and for adult life

- provide programs which enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to identify and attain their career objectives and ensure flexible pathways to further learning and the world of work
- foster the development of effective work habits and attitudes, and flexibility in dealing with change in the workplace and in the wider community
- develop strategic alliances with community organisations, government, regional development authorities, small business, industry and the tertiary sector to promote and support flexible learning arrangements and create employment opportunities for all
- strengthen our capacity to provide leadership in education and care through advocacy, research, interaction and exchange between centres, schools and the wider community at local, national and international levels
- promote and support, across our organisation, a balanced and sustainable approach to study, work, family and everyday life.”

5. BECOMING GLOBAL CITIZENS.

- States that “For public education and care, the challenge is to:
 - provide opportunities for students to develop civic values and have an appreciation of local, national and international issues so they become informed voters and citizens
 - create learning and teaching environments that reflect ecologically sustainable practices and that enable all students to be environmentally active and committed global citizens
 - create opportunities for developing qualities such as confidence, leadership, integrity and courage and provide environments in which future leaders can flourish
 - support children’s and students’ understanding of other cultures through the learning of languages
 - make use of the exciting opportunities and different perspectives that emerging technologies will offer
 - foster new optimism about the future, and teach students so that they have the knowledge, aptitudes and understandings which will allow them to take purposeful action for the benefit of all.”

CONCLUSION

- Concludes as follows: “The declaration provides the basis for us all to work towards a society which recognises and affirms the infinite variety of human potential within it. It is another step in achieving broad agreement about the way forward. It is part of a continuing process of review and reflection, of refining and clarifying our unity of purpose in bringing high quality public education and children’s services to the South Australian community.”