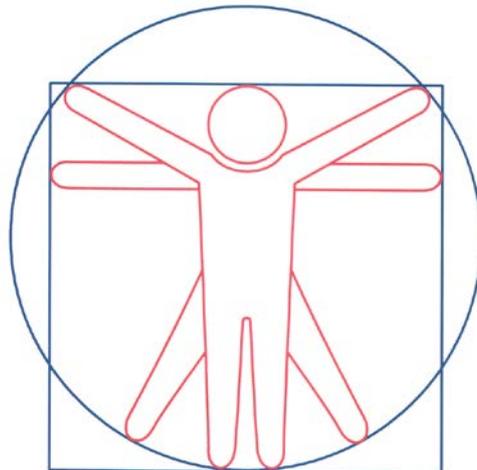


P O L I C Y
September 2009



COGSO

Council of Government
School Organisations

**Northern Territory Council of
Government School Organisations Inc**
www.ntcogso.org.au

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| 5.10 | Indigenous Education Policy | 10 | August 2008 |
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COGSO Policy

Mission Statement

COGSO encourages continual improvement in the provision of quality education outcomes for all students in public education

1. Aims of and Right to Education

- 1.1 Council believes that all individuals have an unalienable right to equal opportunities for education regardless of social, political, economic or personal situation, and that the aims of education should be seen as two fold:
 - 1.1.1 Firstly, that it should provide opportunities and scope for the development and fulfillment of individual personality and potential, fostering at all times self motivation and a sense of self-confidence and personal worth.
 - 1.1.2 Secondly, that education should foster an appreciation of the person in society, and an understanding of the restraints and responsibilities as well as the scope of benefits and opportunities of living in our Australian society.
 - 1.1.3 Within the framework, Council believes that education should foster the following:
 - a) learning of fundamental skills in areas of communication, spoken and written language, number skills, reasoning and spatial relationships
 - b) intellectual development and the acquisition of an inquiring and analytical mind
 - c) development and enjoyment of creative skills
 - d) development of aesthetic appreciation
 - e) development and enjoyment of physical skills
 - f) promotion of health and physical well being
 - g) fostering an understanding of, and sympathy with others
 - h) worthwhile use of leisure
 - i) appreciation and understanding of our economic structure and the adequate preparation for assuming a place in that economy, in the form of vocational guidance and exposure to a wide variety of post school working and living situations

- 1.2 Education should foster development of personal values and an appreciation of society's values.
- 1.3 To fulfill these aims Council believes that government must provide education without prejudice or favour in terms of race, creed, culture or sex.

2. Funding of Education

- 2.1 Council believes that education is a right. It is the responsibility of government to provide and maintain a free universal and public system of education of the highest standard, providing equality of opportunity for every student.
- 2.2 Council believes that from the beginning of pre-school to the end of Year 12 basic education should be fully funded by government grants and free of direct charges to parents.
- 2.3 Council believes that all students who attend a secondary school should be regarded as secondary students for all purposes, especially per capita funding and staffing allocation.
- 2.4 Geographical, demographical and socio-economic disadvantage should be taken into account in the distribution of funds to schools.
- 2.5 Dollar for dollar subsidy should be converted to grant monies, however, while dollar for dollar exists Council believes all funds raised by parent and community groups, including parent contributions should attract this subsidy.
- 2.6 Special funding should be available to provide access to education for all students throughout the Territory where difficulties arise due to isolation, special educational needs, or for any other reason.
- 2.7 Council believes that administration of school funds at school level by School Councils should be encouraged and assisted.
- 2.8 Council believes that each school community should decide whether the level of government funding is sufficient for their particular needs and if not, determine the amount of parent or other contributions necessary to bring funding to a desired level.
- 2.9 Council believes that no student should be educationally disadvantaged as a result of their parent's unwillingness or inability to pay fees.
- 2.10 Government should not provide funds for those non-government schools which are not fully accountable, educationally and financially to government and the wider community and which are not operating on lines consistent with government policy of equality of rights and opportunities.
- 2.11 Council believes that all school requisites should be free of GST or other such taxes.

3. Equality of Opportunity

3.1 Council believes that everyone should have equal opportunities in education to develop fully their own particular potential, and that special means must be available to compensate for any educational disadvantages to ensure everyone is able to take full advantage of these opportunities.

3.2 *Children with Special Needs*

3.2.1 Council recognizes that children with special needs are those whose needs are beyond the normal range, including those who are gifted and talented or emotionally, mentally or physically handicapped.

3.2.2 Council believes that Government and the department responsible for education, should, through pre-service, and inservice training, provide all teachers with the skills to recognize and help the child with special needs.

3.2.3 Council believes that from an early age, regular screening and assessment of children to recognize individual problems and needs, should be part of the education system.

3.2.4 Council believes that it is the responsibility of the department responsible for education, to provide adequate appropriate facilities, services and teaching programs for the care and development of children with special needs.

3.2.5 Council believes that students with special needs are entitled to individual assessment and a negotiated educational program, developed through recognition of the assessed needs of children with special needs. Council supports the commitment to providing:

- a) a range of education options to provide for the curriculum needs of students. The types of educational options available are:
 - inclusion in regular classrooms with consultative support
This type of provision is appropriate for students with special needs who can successfully participate in all or most classroom activities with minimal intervention. A school may seek guidance, advisory and/or therapy consultative support from specialist personnel.
 - inclusion in regular classrooms with additional support
In order for some students with special needs to achieve quality outcomes in their regular classes additional support may need to be provided. This support may be given from a specialist education support teacher, advisory personnel, teacher assistant or part time instructor.

- inclusion in regular classrooms with withdrawal support
Schools provided with additional special education support teachers and assistants who provide programming and consultative support for classroom teachers. Some students with special needs may receive support from these staff within the regular classroom and on a withdrawal basis. The students are able to be included in their regular class for some of the programs and also require special programs on a withdrawal basis.
 - special school settings and annexures
Special schools in the NT cater for students with moderate to severe intellectual impairments and/or multiple disabilities. High levels of consultative and additional supports may be required in order for the students to achieve quality educational outcomes for their individual programs.
- b) necessary support services
- c) specialized facilities, equipment and resources
- d) inservice and professional development support for school staff and parent/caregivers
- 3.2.6 Council believes that children in special units should be included as part of primary school numbers when allocation of senior staff is being made in schools.
- 3.3 Council believes that government boarding accommodation should be provided in the Northern Territory so that children are not disadvantaged in their education because of isolation, and to obviate the need for those children to be educated interstate.
- 3.4 Council believes that children in corrective or welfare institutions should not be disadvantaged educationally and that proper provision of classroom accommodation, materials, facilities and teachers should be made by the department responsible for education.
- 3.5 Council believes that Indigenous children have different needs and that Indigenous education needs active support in order to improve education outcomes.
- 3.6 Council believes that Indigenous communities have the right to participate actively in the formation of their education facilities, and the development of curriculum, staffing and school organisation.
- 3.7 Council believes that government should provide a student grant or allowance to ensure that no student is prevented from continuing education beyond the statutory school leaving age because of financial commitments.
- 3.8 Council believes that where students in remote high schools are enrolled with distance education institutions they should receive teacher/tutor support at their local school.
- 3.9 Council believes that opportunities and encouragement should be given to early school leavers who wish to re-enter secondary or tertiary education.
- 3.10 Council believes that education systems and schools have an obligation to provide support for pregnant and parenting students throughout their studies in a nurturing environment at a school of their choice, where they feel comfortable, valued and secure.

4. Organisation of Schooling

- 4.1 Council believes that the education system should be organized in such a way that it provides the opportunity for all students to realize their intellectual and personal potential. Council recognizes that to do this the system must acknowledge the differing needs and aspirations of local communities and cultures, and must compensate for any educational disadvantage experienced by individuals, groups or whole communities.
- 4.2 Council therefore, supports the concept of diversity, flexibility and change, and believes that there is no over-riding reason why uniform organisation of schooling should apply throughout the Northern Territory.
- 4.3 Council believes that all children should be offered a minimum of ten years schooling, and that prior to this they should be offered a period of pre-school education which should include a transition component to provide for preparation for the formal learning situation.
- 4.4 Council believes that decisions regarding the age ranges within schools will depend on local resources and requirements, and should be made in consultation with the parents and communities concerned.

5. Curriculum and Assessment

5.1 Curriculum

- 5.1.1 Council believes that the full development of each individual and their right to personal esteem and dignity regardless of gender, race, creed, culture or financial situation should be the basis of school curriculum.
- 5.1.2 Council believes that curriculum should implement the ideals as listed in section 1, of this policy, Aims of and Right to Education.
- 5.1.3 Council believes that the core curriculum should be the set of basic and essential learnings and experiences which enable all students to take their place in our society.
- 5.1.4 Council believes that the core curriculum should be continually reviewed in light of the changing nature of society.
- 5.1.5 Council believes that the schools should be given the opportunity and encouragement to develop school based curriculum which will provide for the differing needs and aspirations of local communities.
- 5.1.6 Council believes that views of students, parents and other members of the community should be reflected in the aims and content of the NT core and school based curriculum.
- 5.1.7 Council believes that curriculum extensions should be developed to cater for students with special needs and that such extensions should be implemented in the classroom.
- 5.1.8 Council believes classes and teaching programs must be organized in such a way as to enable each student to learn at a rate and in manner to suit their own level of development.
- 5.1.9 Council believes that co-education should be encouraged at all levels. Concepts of 'girls courses' and 'boys courses' within the curriculum should be abandoned.
- 5.1.10 Council believes that maximum use should be made of the community's artists and craftsmen to pass on their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm.
- 5.1.11 Council believes that equipment and aids necessary for implementation of basic school curriculum must be supplied and maintained without cost to parents.
- 5.1.12 Council believes that exposure to a variety of working and living situations is essential in both primary and secondary schools. Careers and employment guidance should be

provided in secondary schools so that students can come to realistic and informed decisions about their ways of earning a living and their life after leaving school.

- 5.1.13 Council believes that there should be developed and established a common curriculum framework for Australian schools.

5.2 Assessment

- 5.2.1 Council believes that assessment of students should be designed to assist teaching staff, parents and students in identifying areas of student weaknesses or strength and in preparing appropriate strategies to deal with the weaknesses or skills so identified.
- 5.2.2 Council believes assessment should be both school-based and system wide and should include a variety of techniques.
- 5.2.3 Schools should be provided with professional support in the development of appropriate assessment techniques.
- 5.2.4 Council believes health, gross, and fine motor skills and well being assessment is critical in the early years.
- 5.2.5 Council believes that assessment procedures should be determined by a body representative of all community interests.
- 5.2.6 Council believes that a coherent national framework on assessment and accreditation should be developed and adopted for students in Australia.

5.3 Reporting

- 5.3.1 Council believes parents have the right to be kept informed on their child/ren's progress.
- 5.3.2 Council believes that frequent written reports and parent/teacher interviews should indicate strengths and weaknesses, and what is being done to cater for, or correct, such situations.

5.4 Tertiary Selection

- 5.4.1 Council believes that Tertiary selection needs must not dominate secondary school curriculum and assessment methods.
- 5.4.2 Council believes that there should be national uniformity of tertiary selection criteria.
- 5.4.3 Council believes that NT students should have increased access to tertiary places in the States and Territory.

5.5 Libraries

- 5.5.1 Council endorses as a statement of minimum standards and objectives for library resources facilities and services in government schools, those contained in 'Into the 21st Century, Library and Information Services in Schools. Commonwealth of Australia 1990.'
- 5.5.2 Council believes the provision of staff, space, equipment and library materials should be at levels not less than those proposed in the above publication.
- 5.5.3 Council believes 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.
- 5.5.4 Council believes that the position of teacher librarian is of such importance within the school that it should be an above establishment position.

- 5.5.5 Council 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 of the school and to ensure unrestricted access to the library and its materials to those students.
- 5.5.6 Council favours local, regional, state and national co-operative systems or arrangements that release professional library staff from routine tasks and enables them to engage more fully in direct services to students and teachers.
- 5.5.7 Council believes 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 these ends utilize all available resources, including inter-library loan facilities, computerized information resources and automated library management systems.
- 5.5.8 Council believes 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 throughout the school. These resources should reflect:
- a) 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.
- 5.5.9 Council believes that where a joint school and community library exists priority should be given to the students and teachers needs for access to that library during normal school hours.

5.6 Computer Education

- 5.6.1 Council believes that to become effective participants in our society it is essential that students develop awareness of and familiarity with technological developments and their implications for the individual and society.
- 5.6.2 Council believes 'computer awareness' is the right of every student, irrespective of the availability of computers in school.
- 5.6.3 Council believes that computer education must place emphasis on areas of the curriculum where their use can enhance the teaching/learning process.
- 5.6.4 Council believes that all pre-service teacher training should include courses on computers as teaching/learning aids.

5.7 Peace Education

5.7.1 Council believes education is one means of fostering awareness of the need for peace, which is in the interest of students and society.

5.7.2 Council believes emphasis towards peace in the curriculum should be strived for.

5.7.3 Council believes there should be an emphasis on the development of the kinds of social skills which lead to co-operation and analytical thinking.

5.8 Religious Instruction

5.8.1 Council believes Religious Instruction should not become a subject for inclusion as a formal item in the school curriculum.

a. Council supports implementation of Section 73 of the Regulations of the Education Act

(1) *Subject to this section, the Secretary may make regular provision for religious instruction to be given to the children in attendance at a Government school under such conditions and at such time during which the school is open for instruction as he thinks fit.*

(2) *Upon the request in writing, of the parents of a child or children in attendance at a Government school, the Secretary shall, where he considers it practicable, permit a person who is a minister of religion and is nominated by those parents or a person authorized by such a minister of religion during school hours, to give to the children in attendance at the Government school whose parents wish them to receive religious instruction from that minister of religion or a person authorized by that minister of religion, religious instruction during not less than half an hour in every week when instruction is provided at the school for children, on such days and at such times as the Secretary determines.*

5.9 Middle Years of Schooling Policy

5.9.1 Premise

The Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations believes that the Middle Years of Schooling are a discrete educational bloc, underpinned by Middle Years theory, pedagogy and resources, and that the provision of Middle School premises is not a necessary requirement for the delivery of a successful Middle Years of Schooling program.

COGSO believes that quality Middle Years of Schooling programs are underpinned by the following foundational elements:

- a. facilitate a relevant teaching and learning environment for students in these years of schooling
- b. facilitate access for students from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds
- c. facilitate retention of students from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds
- d. provide access to wide ranging post-school pathways
- e. facilitate parent engagement in their child/ren's learning

- f. facilitate parent participation in school decision making
- g. contribute to and build confidence in the public education system
- h. contribute to and facilitate the concept of neighbourhood schooling

5.9.2 Policy

COGSO believes the following elements are critical to successful Middle Years of Schooling programs:

- a. Implementation and delivery
 - i. A variety of flexible programs which are responsive to the local communities in which they are situated, should be made available to facilitate the implementation and delivery of Middle Years of Schooling Programs.
 - ii. Relevant, high levels of Middle Years of Schooling, resourcing, support and professional development should be provided to all teaching staff, and particularly those in rural and remote NT Government Schools, to ensure quality Middle Years of Schooling teaching practices are implemented.
- b. Family and Community involvement

The inclusion of families, School Councils and local communities should be embedded in Middle Years of Schooling policies and programs, to ensure successful teaching and learning outcomes.
- c. Curriculum
 - i. An individual, learner centred, Middle Years of Schooling curriculum should be designed and implemented to meet the needs of all students during these years.
 - ii. Such a curriculum should provide a bridge between the Primary and Senior Secondary years of Schooling.
- d. Pedagogy
 - i. An appropriate range of Middle Years of Schooling pedagogies should be implemented to ensure that students have access to best practice in the teaching and learning environment during these years.
 - ii. It is desirable that Teachers employed in the Middle Years of Schooling undertake a one year specialisation in the Middle Years of Schooling, either as part of their Bachelor of Education, or as an upgrade to their existing Degree.
- e. Staffing

Middle Years of Schooling environments should be staffed by teachers with sound knowledge and experience of, and in, a range of Middle Years pedagogy and practices.
- f. Professional Development
 - i. A high standard of continuing professional development for all Middle Years of Schooling teaching staff, is critical for the delivery of quality Middle Years of Schooling programs.
 - ii. The department responsible for Education in the Northern Territory, should provide intensive professional development support for teachers working in the Middle Years of Schooling teaching and learning environments and ensure that systemic operations support, and provide for the development of, career pathways and advancement.

- g. **Resourcing**
Appropriate levels of resourcing and equipping for all areas of the Middle Years of Schooling curriculum must be provided and maintained at all times to ensure quality learning outcomes.
- h. **Infrastructure**
COGSO believes that infrastructure should be specifically designed to meet the curriculum, the teaching, learning and social/emotional needs of all students and staff of Middle Schools in the Northern Territory.
- i. **Specialist Teachers**
COGSO believes that appropriate levels of specialist teachers, including but not limited to disabilities and languages, should be made available as a key element of successful Middle Years of Schooling practice.

5.10 Indigenous Education Policy

5.10.1 Purpose

This policy aims to:

- provide guidelines for School Councils and schools that encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in education;
- ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in educational decision making;
- provide equality of access for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people to education services;
- achieve equitable and appropriate educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, especially in literacy and numeracy;
- increase understanding of and respect for Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the wider community, including implementation of measures to address prejudice, ignorance and racism;
- extend the teaching of Aboriginal education and Torres Strait Islander education perspectives across the curriculum;
- support the maintenance and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

5.10.2. Definition

An Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who:

- is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- identifies as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;
- is accepted as such by the community in which he/she lives or has lived.

5.10.3. Policy

The Council of Government School Organisations

- Is committed to ensuring that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to high quality education throughout their lives. Quality is characterised by appropriate student teacher ratios and group sizes, appropriately qualified and trained teachers and education workers, and enriching, well equipped, caring and secure environments.

- Affirms its conviction to value the diversity of the cultures and forms of social organisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and commits to the educational development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in light of the imperative contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of Australian society.
- Is dedicated to ensuring that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have local access to a free, publicly funded education system, which affirms cultural identity, and enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to contribute to, and participate in, their own, and broader society.
- Is committed to the principles of self-determination and self-management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and asserts the fundamental democratic right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be involved in decision making to enable them to attempt to rectify the history of neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by both Federal and State/Territory Governments. This right must be applied in all areas of decision making, including educational decision making.
- Believes that proper health care is essential to the learning process and recognises that there is a disproportionately high incidence of poor health amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Such ill - health has adverse impacts on the educational successes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Contributing to this situation is the socio-economic deprivation experienced by a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Emphasises the important role of cooperation and partnerships between Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islanders and the wider Australian community promoting and implementing the goals and activities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

6. School Policy and Rules

6.1 Welfare of Students

- 6.1.1 Council believes it is in the best interest of students and the community at large that each school community develop their own policy, which undertakes to provide for the well being of students. That students may see that as part of a group they must be aware of their responsibilities and the consequences of their actions.
- 6.1.2 Council believes that a student welfare policy should be developed using a collaborative process which involves all groups within the school community.

6.2 Student Welfare Policy Document

- 6.2.1 Council believes that the policy should include:
- a) profile of school community
 - b) statement of philosophy
 - c) comprehensive list of applications of the philosophy to all aspects of school life which may include a statement of regulations governing student behaviour.
 - d) plan of implementation which may include:
 - identification and use of resources
 - wide publicity and active promotion of the policy document
 - plan for ongoing development of policy
- 6.2.2 Council believes that disciplinary methods which incorporate positive encouragement, counseling, promote self esteem and peer group controls are preferred to methods which incorporate the threat of force as a central philosophy.

6.3 Behavioural Control

- 6.3.1 Council does not condone corporal punishment.

6.4 Vandalism

- 6.4.1 Council believes that while vandalism to school property is to be deplored, methods for both prevention and reparation need to be put in place.
- 6.4.2 Council believes that the NT department responsible for education should provide:
- a) security systems such as alarms, lighting and/or patrol checks as appropriate for all schools.
 - b) resources and appropriately qualified and experienced staff to identify and work with students experiencing difficulties which may lead to potentially destructive behaviour.
 - c) funds for repair of vandalized schools or grounds.
- 6.4.3 Council believes that programs similar to Neighbourhood Watch should be implemented where there is support for such programs within the school community.
- 6.4.4 Council believes that where those identified as causing vandalism in schools are students, any penalties for offences should include a form of community service to be negotiated between police, the offender, the offender's family, the vandalized school and its community.

- 6.4.5 Council believes those found to be responsible for causing vandalism to a school should be made responsible for the cost of replacement and/or repair to a negotiated value.
- 6.4.6 Council believes that counseling procedures should be set in place to help not only the young people who have been found guilty of vandalism, and their families, but those who have been affected by it.

7. Parents, Students, the Community and Councils

7.1 Parent's Rights and Responsibilities

- 7.1.1 Parents are legally and morally responsible for the upbringing of their children throughout their years at school.
- 7.1.2 Council believes that parents have the right to be informed, consulted, involved and to participate in all matters relating to their children's education.
- 7.1.3 In particular, parents have the right to:
- a) access to the Principal, teachers and all other professionals involved with their child/ren
 - b) regular reports on the progress of their child and the right of reply.
 - c) express and have taken into account, a point on any education experience organized by the school which affects the child's educational or social development
 - d) full information on any educational, physiological, psychiatric, medical, or dental assessment.
 - e) have access to a student's records which may be restricted to parents and legal guardians, Principals and class teachers. Others who require access to a student's records must obtain consent from at least two (2) of those mentioned above, one of whom shall be the legal parent or guardian.
 - f) be informed and to have counsel of their own selection in any assessment for placement, either in a special or general education setting.
 - g) the right of appeal (with counsel) against any placement, whether in a general or special education setting, and the right to request a review and/or alternative placement.
 - h) withdraw the child from a course to which the parent has a conscientious objection.
 - i) representation, either by election by all parents involved or by nominating through the national, state, or local school parent organisation to all decision making bodies.

- 7.1.4 In addition to the rights as outlined in 7.1.3, parents have associated responsibilities, in particular to:
- a) ensure their child/ren attend school for the prescribed time.
 - b) ensure they give their child/ren a positive attitude towards the school experience.
 - c) instill in their child/ren a sense of self respect and self esteem and respect for the property and persons of others.
 - d) instill in their child/ren an understanding of, and respect for, self discipline and responsibility for their own actions.
 - e) help their child/ren gain the utmost benefit from the education process by taking an interest in the education being given to the child.

7.2 Student's Rights and Responsibilities

- 7.2.1 Council believes that children who are students in government schools have certain rights and responsibilities. All students have a right to:
- a) access to schools which:
 - meet individual needs
 - respond to different backgrounds
 - respect their dignity as young people
 - enable them to overcome personal handicaps
 - enable them to develop to their full potential
 - care about children's futures
 - b) exercise progressive responsibility for the tasks they undertake within their schooling and the effect of their choices on themselves and others
 - c) consistent with b), to be informed about:
 - what they could get from each learning program, how to select courses best suited to individual needs, and how their decisions about school courses will open or limit opportunities for their adult and working life
 - the purpose and usefulness of any testing or assessment program
 - their legal rights and any consequent responsibilities within schools and the community at large,

- d) to be involved in:
 - school selection
 - school aims
 - school rules
 - the use of their personal school records
 - evaluating the school's success in meeting their needs,
- e) to expect that assessments of an individual student's ability should be for information between teacher, student and parents (or guardians) and not be made available to outside interests without prior approval of the student and/or parents or guardians.

7.2.2 Consistent with the above rights, students in the Government education system must also take responsibility for:

- a) their own actions,
- b) making their best effort to gain the maximum benefit from education by co-operating in their own physical, intellectual and social development,
- c) treating other members of the school community and their property, with respect,
- d) contributing to the development of a happy and effective learning environment.

7.3 Community Involvement

7.3.1 Council believes that a healthy 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. Each School Council focuses on what is 'best' for its students within its community.

7.3.2 Council believes a healthy collaborative school community exists where:

- members of the school community are open, honest and willing to work collaboratively and share ideas and responsibilities, including that of school management
- the whole school community cooperates both internally and with outside parties
- there is an enthusiastic, vibrant and positive environment for its members
- the School Council acknowledges and fulfils its roles and responsibilities
- the Principal is committed to School Council governance and active student and parent participation
- a partnership exists between students, teaching staff and parents developed through the School Council
- there is an openness where members of the school community feel free, and empowered, to contribute in many ways to the organisation of the school
- 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

- the school community values its students and continually strives to enhance their learning outcomes and opportunities
- students are actively encouraged to achieve their full potential
- there is a team of committed and enthusiastic teachers
- there is an ability to share not only successes, but also problems and their solutions
- the school community promotes healthy lifestyles and addresses the health and well-being of its members.

- 7.3.3 Council believes that the effectiveness of school education depends to a large extent on parental and community attitudes to education. Council therefore believes that Departmental officers, principals and teachers must actively encourage parent and community involvement in the education process.
- 7.3.4 Council believes that parents should be eligible for election to membership of school councils for as long as they have a child in the school.
- 7.3.5 Council believes that Industrial Relations matters relating to all employees employed within the NT Government Schools are, and should remain, the responsibility of the NT Government.
- 7.3.6 Council believes that the Government should provide adequate funds to enable parents, teachers and community representatives to hold conferences and attend in-service courses and meetings so that the decisions they make are based on adequate information and reflect the views of the communities which they serve.

- 7.3.7 Council believes that the education system and schools should be accountable to the communities which they serve. Council therefore believes that school and system wide appraisals, with community representatives, should be undertaken at regular intervals.
- 7.3.8 Council believes an express intention of Devolution is to increase parent and community involvement in Education. Therefore school councils must be made aware of, be able to view, and where appropriate, receive copies of, any report, document, comment or other information which relates to any area of responsibility of a school councils as defined by the Education Act and the School Council Regulations particularly including education issues; finances; student, teacher or community safety or health and employment (other than where an individual's right to confidentiality takes priority).

7.4 School Councils

- 7.4.1 Council believes that school councils should be supported in moves to assume functions available to them under the Education Act and take an increasingly significant role in school based decision-making including:
- a) control over grounds maintenance, cleaning contracts, minor new works, and repairs and maintenance,
 - b) contributing to the development of school-based curriculum,
 - c) school council representation on the selection panel for the position of principal and assistant principal,
 - d) school council representation on the selection panel for school secretary/registrar and all other ancillary staff,
 - e) development of a school policy document which includes:
 - description of the school's community
 - the philosophy of the school
 - long term aims, intentions and aspirations
 - objectives
 - specific plan of action to achieve the aims, especially in areas of organisation and curriculum
 - plan for ongoing review and evaluation of policy document.

- 7.4.2 Council supports the provision of professional development, by accredited educational authorities, for all members of school councils, on an on-going basis.

This should include, inter alia:

- application of the Education (Colleges and School Councils) Regulations and the Partners in Education, Parent Policy;
- strategies that support councils in working as a team and skills for effective group representation;
- school governance and the role of the council in the school decision-making processes;
- working collaboratively with students, parents, teachers, departmental staff, the NT Principals' Association, the AEU, COGSO, and the wider community;
- planning, implementation and review of Action Plans for School Improvement (APSI);
- human resource management;
- assessing curriculum needs;
- financial management;
- information technology (IT) systems.

7.5 Selection Panels

- 7.5.1 Council believes that

- a) for school based selection panels

6 a parent nominated by parent members of the school council should chair the panels, and

7 the panels should be held in a neutral environment.

- b) COGSO should continue to provide a parent nominee to chair panels for non schools office based schools functions.

7.6 Choice of Education

- 7.6.1 Council believes that there should be no zoning of schools and that parents should, so far as is practicable, be allowed to choose which school their children attend.

- 7.6.2 Council believes that the Government should encourage diversity of educational methods and programs both between and within schools so as to provide parents and students with as wide a choice as possible.

- 7.6.3 Council believes that the Government must make additional resources including staff available to schools in small towns and remote communities so as to provide as wide an educational experience for students in those areas as is available in larger communities.

7.7 Representation

- 7.7.1 Council believes that sitting fees should be paid to parent representatives called to sit on Education Department Committees, Ministerial/Education Department working parties and statutory bodies with paid departmental representatives.

7.8 Student Representation

- 7.8.1 Council believes that the public education system serves to guide students to explore all facets of decision making so that in future they may contribute and participate in the life of the community.
- 7.8.2 Council believes therefore that student representatives must be given the opportunity to take part in formal decision making at all levels of the education system.
- 7.8.3 Council believes that the formal decision making process in which student representatives take part should model the democratic process.
- 7.8.4 Council believes that at secondary education level, the student body should be given administrative and moral support to facilitate their participation in school based decision making.
- 7.8.5 Council believes that primary schools should encourage students from their earliest years at school to progressively become involved in decision making.
- 7.8.6 Council believes that primary school councils should develop strategies for taking account of the interests and views of their student body.

8. Pre-School Education

- 8.1 Council believes that the quality of a child's learning experiences and personal relationships in the first five years of life will have a direct effect on his intellectual development, emotional stability and future educational achievement.
- 8.2 Council believes that the child who has had quality pre-school education is better equipped to begin formal education, and that every child should have the opportunity to take advantage of this in the twelve months prior to the commencement of formal schooling.
- 8.3 Council believes that parents should be positively encouraged to enrol their child/children at pre-school, especially those children for whom English is their second language.
- 8.4 Council believes that pre-school education is particularly important for Aboriginal children and that every effort should be made to ensure that pre-schools are established and maintained in Aboriginal communities.
- 8.5 Council believes that pre-school programs should be available to isolated children in the form of correspondence material, and where practical, by School of the Air broadcasts.

- 8.6 Council believes that it is essential to involve parents in pre-school education and to familiarise them with its aims and methods.
- 8.7 Council believes that liaison between pre-school teachers and teachers involved in the early childhood area of the primary school is essential.
- 8.8 Funding
- 8.8.1 Council believes that basic pre-school education should be fully funded by government grants and free of direct charges to parents.
- 8.8.2 Council believes that each pre-school community should decide whether the level of government funding is sufficient for their particular needs and determine the amount of school fees and/or other parent contributions necessary to bring funding to the desired level.
- 8.8.3 Council believes that no child should be denied access to pre-school as a result of their parent's inability to pay fees.

9. Life Long Education

- 9.1 Council believes that there is an ever increasing need for suitable educational resources and opportunities to be made available to people throughout their lives.
- 9.2 Council recognises that employers, industry groups, professional associations and other non-government bodies have a responsibility to maintain an overview of all educational requirements and to encourage and assist in the provision of facilities for education where necessary.

10. Health

- 10.1 Council believes that no child's educational progress should be impeded through lack of proper health care.
- 10.2 Council believes that comprehensive health screening of students, particularly vision and hearing testing, should take place every two years throughout the primary years of schooling.
- 10.3 Council believes that the Health and Education Departments should co-operate to develop community health services to provide preventative and corrective health care for all children. To this end, they should provide services to schools by community health nurses, dentists and dental therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and other specialist staff as necessary.
- 10.4 Council believes that staff in all schools should be encouraged to gain and maintain their First Aid Certificate and any necessary expenses should be met by the Department of Education.
- 10.5 Council believes that decisions on the placement of condom vending machines in schools should be made by the community of an individual school.
- 10.6 Council believes schools have a role to play in encouraging moderation in the use of alcohol and can demonstrate this by ensuring some school functions are alcohol-free.

10.7 Drug Education

- 10.7.1 Council believes the goal of drug education in schools should be consistent with the definition of harm minimisation in the national Drug Strategy which accepts that interventions will reduce the risk of harm associated with drug use without necessary eliminating it can have important benefits.
- 10.7.2 Council believes drug education is best taught in the context of the school health curriculum.
- 10.7.3 Council believes drug education should commence in the primary years, be sequenced over time and be supported by relevant policies.
- 10.7.4 Council believes drug education programs need to be based on research, effective curriculum practice and identified student needs.
- 10.7.5 Council believes 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.
- 10.7.6 Council believes a comprehensive drug education program, embracing harm minimisation strategies, should also address interventions, including counseling services and referral procedures.
- 10.7.7 Council believes a clear statement of what a drug education program is expected to achieve is critical.
- 10.7.8 Council believes 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.
- 10.7.9 Council believes mechanisms should be developed to involve students, parents and the wider community in both the planning and implementation stages of a drug education policy.
- 10.7.10 Council believes ongoing professional development for teachers is an essential part of an effective drug education program.

11. Teachers

11.1 Qualities of Teachers

- 11.1.1 Council believes that the quality of education is directly related to the quality of teachers.
- 11.1.2 Council believes that personal qualities and vocational aptitude are as important as professional knowledge and skill.
- 11.1.3 Council believes that teachers should be competent, tolerant, aware of community expectations of education, observant of school policy/philosophy, honest in assessing and reporting of student's progress and involved with the local community.
- 11.1.4 Council believes that teachers selected or recruited for the Northern Territory be proficient in literacy, numeracy, communication ability, have empathy with the school community and be compatible with the likely school environment.
- 11.1.5 Council believes that first year teachers should only be posted to one teacher schools if they have relevant skills and experience.
- 11.1.6 Council believes teachers going into an Aboriginal school for the first time:
 - a) should do an Aboriginal/Cross Cultural orientation course similar to that offered by the Institute of Aboriginal Development before starting at the school,
 - b) should have a basic and satisfactory understanding of Aboriginal culture and,
 - c) should be given adequate preparation for the physical and social conditions in which they will be required to live and work.
- 11.1.7 Council believes that there should be a formal registration process for Northern Territory teachers, as part of a national register. This should include a formal check of qualifications and criminal record, as currently is carried out for new Northern Territory recruits.

11.2 Teacher Training

- 11.2.1 Council believes that the highest standards should be maintained in the selection and training of potential teachers and that mature age students and students with experience outside education should be encouraged to train as teachers.
- 11.2.2 Council believes that teacher training should include:
 - adequate appreciation for the teaching of basic language literacy and numeracy skills.
- 11.2.3 Council believes that first aid should be a component of pre-service teacher training.

11.3 Professional Development

- 11.3.1 Council believes that the Department should provide adequate relief staff to cover all teacher absences.
- 11.3.2 Council believes that teaching is a profession and requires recognition as such by government and the community. It also believes that as such there is a need for teachers to maintain their own professional standards and integrity.
- 11.3.3 Council believes that the Territory and/or Commonwealth Government should make resources available for the in-service training of teachers.
- 11.3.4 Council believes rural and remote schools outside Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs urban areas should receive additional funds to enable teachers in those schools to attend in-services and professional development.
- 11.3.5 Council believes that teachers should be encouraged to undertake in-service training out of class contact hours and during stand-down times.
- 11.3.6 Council calls for in-service training on the role of parents in the education process and the teaching of communication skills which will enable teachers and administrators within the Education Department to relate more effectively to parents and the wider community.
- 11.3.7 Council believes that teachers in rural communities and on stations should be provided with quality housing to encourage greater retention of teachers in these areas.
- 11.3.8 Council believes that Whole School Development Days should be provided for professional development purposes for all staff.

11.4 Staffing levels

- 11.4.1 Council believes that the special needs of individual schools should be considered in determining staffing levels and formulae.
- 11.4.2 Council believes that a maximum pupil/teacher ratio of 25:1 should be adopted for primary schools, and that this ratio be calculated on the basis of numbers of children to classroom teachers and not to the total school staffing roll.
- 11.4.3 Council believes that the Migrant Education formula should be adopted for staffing rural and remote schools.
- 11.4.4 Council believes that retention of teachers should be facilitated by enhancing job satisfaction through parental support and an improved in-school career structure.
- 11.4.5 Council believes that where teachers give insufficient notice of resignation a system of penalties should apply.

- 11.4.6 (a) Council believes that sufficient ancillary support staff should be provided to enable teachers to adequately carry out their teaching duties.
- (b) That further to the current Policy Item 11.4.6 (a) the following addition be made:
- That one full time ancillary support staff be provided for each and every pre-compulsory class in NT Government Schools.
- 11.4.7 Council believes funding for education should cover employment of relief aides in pre-schools according to needs.
- 11.4.8 Council believes that teachers leaving partway through a term have an overlapping period with an incoming teacher to allow a continuity in the classroom.
- 11.4.9 Council believes that a fair and equitable staffing allocation should be used to determine the number of staff to which each school is entitled and believes:
- a) in the event of declining student enrolment, teachers should only be withdrawn at the end of the semester or the year, whichever is justified on educational grounds,
- b) in the event of increasing student enrolment, additional staff should be appointed immediately.
- 11.4.10 Council believes all Primary Schools must be provided with specialist Physical Education Teachers and that this position should be above establishment.
- 11.4.11 Council believes all Primary Schools must be provided with a specialist Languages Other Than English (LOTE) teacher and that this position should be above establishment.

12. Buildings, Grounds and Facilities

- 12.1 Council believes that the environment within which teachers work and students learn has a significant effect on the learning process, and that the Government should build, equip and maintain schools which provide a pleasant environment conducive to learning.
- 12.2 Council believes that all Northern Territory schools should be provided with basic sporting facilities, to be determined after consultation with their school councils.
- 12.3 Council believes that the addition or alteration to, or refurbishing of an existing school should be undertaken in direct consultation with the school council or parent/teacher association of that school.
- 12.4 Council believes that the school grounds should allow for the full development of student recreational and sporting activities.
- 12.5 Council believes that facilities should be available in schools to make use of electronic media in education.
- 12.6 Council believes that school buildings, grounds and facilities should always be maintained at a standard acceptable to the school community.
- 12.7 Council believes that there should be a register of all asbestos installations in schools in the Northern Territory and that where asbestos is in an unstable condition it should be removed but only by suitably qualified trades persons trained in asbestos removal. Stable asbestos installations should be left in location, appropriately labeled, and monitored on a yearly basis.

12.8 New Schools

- 12.8.1 Council believes that part of the initial process of planning a new school should be the formation of an interim school council to facilitate through consultation with the entire school community during all stages of the school development, i.e.
 - a) site planning
 - b) planning principal and principal
 - c) school curriculum
 - d) financial negotiation and management
 - e) design of facilities and management
 - f) timing of a new school opening.
- 12.8.2 Council believes that interim school councils should be legislated for, enabling them to actively take part in all stages of negotiation, design, maintenance and implementation of the new school.

12.9 School Closures

12.9.1 Council :

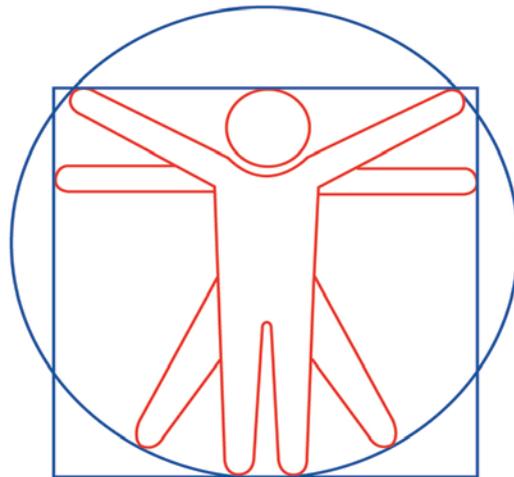
believes the neighbourhood school is an essential feature of a Public Education system which provides structural support to:

- 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; and
- d) ensuring safe access of students to schools.

12.9.2 Council:

- a) believes it is a fundamental obligation of Government to provide Government schools when and where they are needed, and keep them open for as long as they are needed;
- b) opposes school closures except in circumstances where changes in land use and residential population result in the loss of a link between the school and its local community;
- c) believes there can be no across-the-board criteria for school closures;
- d) believes that where school closures are mooted:
 - there should be full, proper, open and public consultation with the school communities affected namely the school proposed for closure and the school or schools likely to receive displaced students as well as peak parent and teacher organisations and other community groups over a minimum period of twelve months
 - if a decision is made to close a school at least 12 months notice should then be given of the proposed closure, with closure being effected only on completion of the school year

- A fact-finding working party comprising the Department of Education's Deputy Secretary (School Policy), demographer and appropriate Superintendent, a representative of each of the NT COGSO and the NT Teachers Federation, and from each school affected by the closure a parent representative of the school council and the principal should be established to inquire into the proposed school closure and undertake an 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 to, 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,
- The impact study and recommendations regarding prospective school closure should, upon completion, be presented to the Government and the School Councils of the affected schools
- An appeals mechanism, independent of government and jointly agreed to by the Department of Education and NT COGSO, should be established to adjudicate any disputed decision,
- A post rationalisation review should be conducted by a representative committee 12 months after the process is implemented and a public report issued;
- in the event that an independent review findings is that the school should remain open, no further review for school closure should take place within three years, except where the relevant school community seeks such a review; and
- In the event of closure of schools and the land on which they are sited are public assets which should not be sold but should remain in public ownership and be used in such a way as to provide continuing educational advantage.



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