

Foundations for the Future: A focus for the Administration of Tasmanian Education and the Arts.

Tasmania. Prepared by CRESAP for the Minister for Education and the Arts, 1990

Overview of the document

150 page final report of CRESAP, who were commissioned in June 1990 to conduct an efficiency review of the Department of Education and the Arts. A key recommendation is that the funding and management of schools should be restructured and major responsibility devolved to schools. The Report presents a model of decision-making closer to schools and communities to provide more flexibility and a more equitable distribution of resources.

Keywords

Devolution; school decision making; self-management; resource distribution; equity; flexibility; certification; expanded curricula; quality outcomes; efficiency; structure; continuous K-12 Curriculum.

Terms of Reference

Objective: To review the operation of the Department of Education and the Arts in Tasmania and identify areas in the operation of the Department and the school system where greater efficiencies and cost-effectiveness can be achieved while maintaining the quality of education. The Review shall also examine library and museum facilities and services. Areas of Examination: Management Structure; Teaching Service; Resources; Assets Management; Service Delivery.

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PART A: INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- Covers the background to the Review. Notes that an interim report was presented for public comment and feedback in August and that consultants “could not be unaware” of the context in which the review was occurring, and, furthermore, “could not be unaware of media reports in which speculation ensued about reductions in all the levels of resources available to Government departments”. (p. 2)

1.2 Acknowledgments

- Acknowledges the large number of Departmental staff and stakeholders involved in the Review, as well as the Advisory Committee and staff seconded from the Department to work on the review.

1.3 Tasmanian Education in Perspective

- Notes that over the last five years the number of both primary and secondary teachers has exceeded the national average in terms of teachers relative to enrolments.
- Notes the “over-funding” in relation to out-of-school staffing levels and in the area of building and construction.
- Notes that because of the structure of education in Tasmania, the state has more expensive practices in the way education is delivered, including the inclusion of Year 7 within the secondary sector and the inclusion of pre-school within the system.

1.4 Culture and the Arts in Perspective

- Discusses funding issues.

1.5 Summary Overview

- Notes that the education system has been well resourced over a number of years but that high expenditure does not necessarily equate to good educational outcomes. (p. 5)
- Notes that structural management practice focused on processes not outcomes.
- Argues that the organisational culture is teacher focused rather than student focused. (p. 6)
- Notes that despite high costs of education in Tasmania, there are still unmet needs.
- CRESAP recommends a number of measures that will improve efficiency in the delivery of educational services and states that:
 - “The essential feature of our recommendations is a model which starts from the school and builds outwards. It eliminates the present three region model in favour of an eight district structure which enhances a coherent K-12 education philosophy.” (p. 6)
- Notes that the model presented in this report reduces costs “without curtailing essential services or reducing quality standards.” (p. 7)
- Notes that the model favours decision making closer to the school and community level, providing flexibility and more equitable distribution of resources.

1.6 Implementation

- Notes that the recommendations are significant and that implementation will require time and careful planning.

II. METHODOLOGY

- Notes that this chapter outlines the methodology used to address the terms of reference. Notes that a critical element was the secondment of departmental staff to the Review team and that a variety of data collection methods and analytic techniques were used, including interviews and consultations.

2.1 Consultation

- Notes that the review team consulted widely with schools, head office and regional offices.

2.2 Education

- Identifies the following data collection methods used by CRESAP:
 - A Principal Survey – all Principals were surveyed by questionnaire on teaching staff activities, average class size, and initiatives to improve the use of resources.
 - A Regional Superintendent Survey – all regional Superintendents were surveyed on initiatives to improve use of school and departmental resources.
 - A Departmental Staff Survey – all head office and regional staff were surveyed to provide indicative data on staff activities, especially in terms of the time spent in various work tasks.
 - A Service Users Survey – all school principals and officers in charge of head office and regional office units were surveyed on services they receive from the Department.
 - Visits to twenty eight schools – to establish causes of variation in resource usage between schools; explore the potential for self-management; test organisational structure and options; and explore resource conservation initiatives.

2.3 Culture and the Arts

- Discusses the Review in relation to the library, museum and art gallery.

2.4 Definition of Efficiency

- Notes that “It is essential at this stage to clearly define what we mean by the term ‘efficiency’, and make some relevant comments.” (p. 19)
- States that “We have defined efficiency as the relative usage of resources to achieve a given outcome, with ‘inefficient’ implying greater use of resources to produce the same effect.” (p. 19)
- States that “Inefficient in this Report has been used as a concept to apply equity across a system which has limited resources, and should in no way be read as a criticism of school which have managed to become relatively well resourced or ‘inefficient’.” (p. 20)

PART B: EDUCATION

III. OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM

3.1 Organisational Culture

- Notes that the organisational culture of the Department is characterised by: Professionalism; Personal Relationships (an emphasis on); Process Orientation (as opposed to an outcome or performance orientation); and Resource Management (a belief that resources are bountiful not scarce).
- States that “Ways in which the culture of the Department may be contributing detrimental influences to its operational effectiveness are beliefs that:
 - “More resources will generate more effective outcomes.” (p. 22)
 - “Extensive consultation generates better decisions and better programs.” (p. 22)
 - “Being autonomous and independent in developing our methods and programs is the best way to service Tasmania’s unique educational environment.” (p. 24)
 - “Sustained educational excellence is in large part the result of ongoing development of professional staff.” (p. 24)

3.2 Divisional Structure

- Overviews the divisional structure of the Department.

3.3 Education Administration

- Raises key questions about the efficiency of administration

3.4 Inefficiencies in Education Administration

- Identifies inefficiencies including those in the areas of:
 - Insufficient attention to long-term planning.
 - Inadequate accountability and delegation practices enforced at senior levels.
 - Failure to devolve functions completely resulting in duplication of effort between the Head Office and regions.
 - Unwieldy and cumbersome budgeting process.
 - Duplication of the payroll system.
 - Long and unwieldy approval processes for decisions.
 - Poor, inadequate and incomplete management information systems.

- “Reactive planning processes which fail to fully integrate economic and educational analysis, and educational planning processes which are too academic with issues not clearly prioritised.” (p. 32)
- Lack of clarity and overlap between Education Planning Advisory Unit and Region Directors.
- Lack of top management control of audit function.
- Duplication of financial advisory and accountancy services.
- Inadequate and incomplete property records.
- Inadequate staff development for non-teaching staff.
- Excessive resources being used to support the in-house attainment of post-graduate academic qualifications.
- Duplication in processes such as salary rates and classifications, staff recruitment and transfer, personnel/staff planning, research, curriculum writing and coordination. (pp. 31-33)

3.5 The School System

- Briefly describes the current system and identifies the following school sectors:
 - Primary (kindergarten to year 6).
 - Secondary (year 7 to year 10).
 - Secondary Colleges (years 11 and 12).
 - District High Schools (kindergarten to year 10 in most cases and to year 12 in a few schools).
 - Unlinked kindergartens (unconnected to primary schools).
 - Special schools for students who are physically, intellectually or developmentally impaired. (p. 34)
- Notes that: “Although there is almost unanimous support for a “seamless” K-12 school system among Tasmanian educators, in practice there are significant structural barriers within the system to its realisation.” (p. 34)
- Overviews school enrolment figures, the number of schools, the average school size, asset utilisation, school farms and school staffing.
- Notes the following ‘Trends in Education Management’ relevant to the Review:
 - School Self-Management.
 - Parent and Community Participation.
 - Strategic Management (a greater focus on policy priorities in the context of limited resources and increased demands for public accountability).
 - Formation of Clusters.
 - Incompatible school Week Cycles (changes from 5 day timetable to 6 & 7 day cycles).
 - Expanded Curricula:
 - “A greater variety of subject options and course electives is now available for secondary and secondary college students, incorporating pre-vocational as well as an expanded traditional curriculum.” (p. 46)
 - “An expanded curriculum has put pressure on schools’ use of staff and resources in three ways. First, smaller class sizes result from greater choice in subjects. Secondly, teachers have had to become multi-skilled and/or additional skills have had to be bought by the school. Thirdly, time-tabling has become much more complex.” (p. 46)
 - “Schools have responded to these pressures with a range of initiatives such as the formation of composite or combined classes and vertical grouping of students. However, the Review team has found differences

in the way that schools and secondary colleges have applied themselves to the formation of composite classes and the manner in which subjects are structured and resourced.” (p. 46)

- Certification: “The Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) is being introduced to replace the Higher School Certificate and the School Certificate. Its phased introduction began in 1990 and is planned to be fully operative for year 12 in 1992. It involves standardised criterion-based testing and recording of year 9 to 12 with external examinations in year 12. All students who leave the Tasmanian education system will now receive certificates. An implication of the introduction of TCE is increased workloads in recording and assessment.” (p. 46)

IV. THE PROPOSED MODEL

4.1 Background

- Notes that the Review began with a focus on the purpose of the education system as defined by its stakeholders, “to provide an integrated and comprehensive K-12 education to Tasmanian children, producing educational outcomes to meet the expectations of the community”. (p. 47)
- Notes that this education “is largely produced by teachers in the classroom.” (p. 47)
- Notes that the superstructure “to support teachers in providing this education and to ensure equity, quality outcomes, effectiveness and efficiency across the system” was then considered. (p. 47)
- Argues that there are systematic inefficiencies in the Tasmanian system.
- Notes that the philosophical view adopted is that “devolution of responsibility to the maximum extent possible is inherently good” (p. 47) providing educational and economic benefits.
- Notes that devolution requires appropriate systems of authority and accountability and tolerance of ambiguity and flexibility within the system.

4.2 Guiding Principles

- Identifies the following as guiding principles for the new model:
 - Cultural Principles:
 - Enrichment – a “whole child” approach.
 - Excellence – optimum use of resources to create quality outcomes.
 - Social Justice – no child shall suffer educational deprivation.
 - Relationships (within school and between school and parents) are paramount to quality of teaching and learning.
 - Consultation (prior to making major decisions).
 - The trend towards self-management of schools should be continued.
 - A system allowing for school councils should be established.
 - Organisational Principles:
 - The system should be focused on educational need, and on schools and pupils.
 - The structure should support efficient procedures.
 - The structure “should reflect that schools are community based educational organisations” and should address the needs of the community. (p. 49)
 - Education should liaise with other state service organisations.
 - The structure should provide a “sensible balance between central policy direction and local decision making”. (p. 50)

- System Principles:
 - The structure should reflect a continuous K-12 Curriculum.
 - Schools should have sufficient control over resources.
 - Central office should set major educational goals which schools implement according to local needs.
 - The system should specify outcomes.
 - Interrelationships between school and community should be recognised.
- Resource Management Principles:
 - Makes a number of points about resources and administrative functions.

4.3 Structural Options

- Presents four structural options with notes as to why three of those were rejected.
- Overviews key features of the recommended “multi-district model” including:
 - The establishment of eight districts – each with a secondary college and district superintendent.
 - That schools will be encouraged to establish formal links with their school communities.
 - That “Curriculum will be scaled down and re-focused, to better correspond to the size of the system.” (p. 53)
 - Describes the management model, how teaching staff will be allocated, and how schools will be funded.
- Notes the following benefits of the multi-district model:
 - It maximizes the benefits of devolution.
 - Teacher and special staff allocation are responsive to local need.
 - Resource trade-offs are explicit and visible.
 - Each district provides a coherent K-12 system.
 - Districts are small enough to provide leadership and quality control.
 - It involves a larger pool of broad leadership which leads to senior management talent development.
- Concludes that “Adoption of the multi-district model will require a radically different internal audit function and appropriate procedures to ensure compatibility of education standards between districts.” (p. 54)

V. IMPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Summarises the recommendations which arise from the Review as follows.

5.1 Schools

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - The funding and management of schools should be restructured. Schools should be funded on a per-pupil basis, and a self-managed school concept should be adopted. (p. 55)
 - Small school operations should be a local school community decision and such schools should be advised on how their viability may be improved. (p. 57)
 - Special education schools should be included within districts, with current support. (p. 59)

- Distance education services should be devolved to districts and can supplement or supplant small school operations. (p. 60)
- Districts should be organised to provide K-12 clusters. (p. 60)
- Each school should have a school council with significant input into the school. (p. 60)
- Under self-management of schools, the balance of the principal's role would be changed. Lists the responsibilities of principals under the devolution model – including leadership, accountability, support, management of personnel, finances and facilities. (p. 61)
- Class size standards should be established and program offerings modified to maintain efficient secondary school operations. (p. 62)
- Geographic management of enrolments should be used when necessary. (p. 62)
- Most unlinked kindergartens should be linked with a primary school for administrative purposes, but co-location should be a local decision. (p. 63)
- Centres of Excellence in agricultural/rural studies should be established and school farms closed (p. 63)
- The Department should negotiate new conditions for cleaners and ground staff with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union to significantly reduce the cost of cleaning. If agreement cannot be reached, cleaning should be contracted out (p. 64)
- All non-teaching staff should be funded through the combined funds scheme, and authority devolved to the school in 1992 subject to normal state service conditions (p. 65)
- Energy costs should be devolved to schools at a lower than current costs (p. 65)

5.2 Districts

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - The schools should be organised into eight K-12 Districts for effective educational leadership and operational management. (p. 66)
 - Staff resources for discretionary/special programs should be obtained from the base staffing allocation. (p. 71)
 - Class contact hours parity between colleges and high schools should be introduced. (p. 71)
 - Primary and secondary teaching staff should be allocated to districts on a per pupil basis. (p. 72)
 - Changes should be sought in conditions for teachers on leave without pay. (p. 73)

5.3 Curriculum Services

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - The Curriculum Services Branch should be streamlined with a focus on essential services. (p. 74)
 - The setting of curriculum priorities should be the responsibility of the Director of Curriculum, with oversight by the Deputy Secretary (Education). (p. 76)
 - Flexibility in the management of resources will be crucial to the operation of the Curriculum Services Branch. (p. 77)

5.4 Planning

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - A Planning Unit should be established, reporting to the Deputy Secretary (Education), to ensure state-wide focus, direction and accountability. (p. 78)
 - Student Services Branch should be disbanded, and Commonwealth tied funds should be used for school-based implementation to the maximum extent possible. (p. 80)
 - The Department should establish an Education Policy Framework within a Government Social Justice Strategy. (p. 81)

5.6 Other Education Division Issues

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - The Centre for Advanced Teaching Studies (CATS) should be discontinued. (p. 82)
 - The Education Division Management Group should hold monthly meetings. (p. 83)
 - An hierarchical system of brief monthly reports should be used to monitor system characteristics and issues. (p. 83)
 - Living Away From Home Allowance should be retained for secondary students but abolished for tertiary students. (p. 83)
 - Strict and enforceable guidelines should be established covering the issue of corporate sponsorship for schools. (p. 85)

5.7 Facilities

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - The water supply function should wind back to a small group with no warehousing function. (p. 86)
 - The Building and Property Section should be scaled down. (p. 86)
 - The supply and property functions should be amalgamated and coordinated. (p. 87)
 - A budget for major maintenance items should be held at the Head Office and be administered by property. (p. 87)
 - Teacher houses should be better controlled and the number of houses progressively reduced. (p. 87)
 - The teacher housing maintenance budget should be devolved to the relevant schools on an equitable basis. (p. 88)

5.8 The Elizabeth Computing Centre

- Recommends that the Computing Branch be scaled down and re-focused (p. 88) and that the management information systems used by the Department be upgraded or replaced. (p. 89)

5.9 Personnel

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - A strong Human Resources Development (HRD) function should be established. (p. 90)
 - The Personnel Branch should establish an HRD section. (p. 91)
 - Personnel should increase resources applied to industrial relations. (p. 92)
 - The number of levels of supervision should be reduced in the personnel branch. (p. 92)

- Staff involved in the developing or re-developing HR management information systems should be costed as part of the project and re-deployed when the project is implemented. (p. 92)
- Authorisation for some personnel-related tasks should be delegated to principals and section heads (p. 93)
- The process of integrating the salaries and personnel sub-sections should be continued. (p. 93)
- Salary administration should be completely overhauled, and the feasibility of using an external contractor evaluated. (p. 94)
- An ongoing emphasis on organisational design and review is required but there should be a greater emphasis on maintaining accurate records of the Department's resources in future. (p. 94)
- The Office Services Section should be re-structured and scaled down to reflect the reduction in Head Office staffing. (p. 95)

5.10 Finance

- Recommends that the accounts section be scaled down to reflect the devolution of school accounts (p. 96) and the Department implement the financial management improvement system. (p. 97)

5.11 Other Corporate Service Issues

- Makes a number of recommendations regarding internal auditing.

5.12 Assets

- Makes recommendations relating to the control of assets.

5.13 Other Programs

- Recommends that the Learn to Swim Program be re-structured, the Department seek alternatives to the in-house provision of hostel accommodation and that outdoor education centres be centrally managed and operated on a cost recovery basis wherever possible. (p. 100)

5.14 The Tasmanian Schools Board (TSB)

- Recommends that the TSB should cease activities related to year 9 and possibly year 10 and that it should develop links with employers. (p. 102)

5.15 The Tasmanian Education Council

- Makes no recommendations.

PART C: CULTURE AND THE ARTS

VI. CULTURE AND THE ARTS

- Overviews the findings of the review of Culture and the Arts and makes recommendations for reform in relation to its administration.