

Education in Western Australia: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia

Western Australia. Education Department, 1984 (Chair: Kim Beazley)

Overview of the document

459 page report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia. The Committee were required to examine 14 wide-reaching terms of reference concerning: the nature and relevance of the secondary education curriculum; certification and tertiary selection procedures; issues regarding attracting and retaining teaching staff; community participation in schooling; and the extent to which schools cater for various 'special groups' of students. The document contains 272 recommendations.

Keywords

Secondary education curriculum; relevance of curriculum; breadth of curriculum; literacy and numeracy skills and standards; 'the unit approach'; certification and tertiary entrance arrangements; retention of students; adequacy of provision of course offerings; parent and community involvement in schooling; provision of school resources and facilities; relationships between secondary schools and TAFE institutions; recruitment, retention and promotion of teachers; disadvantaged students; exceptional children; Aboriginal children; children from non-English-speaking backgrounds; disadvantage of girls; disruptive students.

Terms of Reference

The Committee was required to inquire into and report upon education in Western Australia with respect to the following matters:

1. The curriculum offering available to students in primary, secondary and TAFE institutions and its relevance to further education, employment, self esteem and post-school activities.
2. The extent to which the basic skills associated with literacy, numeracy and written and spoken expression are adequately established in primary schools, together with appropriate habits of learning, competence in study and research and attitudes towards continuing education.
3. The adequacy of present certification arrangements for students proceeding through school and the extent to which tertiary admission requirements should be adjusted to enable the curriculum to be diversified to meet the needs of the widest possible community.
4. To encourage the retention of students in educational institutions to the extent necessary to allow adequate development of personal and vocational skills.
5. The adequacy of provision of course offerings, teaching resources and methods and the encouragement of the pursuit of excellence by all students whatever their chosen field of study.
6. The involvement of parents and the community in school-level decision making.
7. The provision of resources in schools to provide for students disadvantaged by home background factors such as poverty, indifference to learning and/or language difficulty.
8. The nature of the relationships between secondary schools and TAFE institutions and the extent to which resources of TAFE intuitions should be used by secondary schools in the development of vocational skills, particularly those required by new technology.
9. The professional participation, development, recruitment and promotion of teachers in such a way as to enhance the education of students and the quality of the professional life of teachers.

10. The degree to which educational facilities are adequate to cope with necessary modifications to curriculum and teaching methods.
11. The extent to which schools and recreational systems associated with education can meet the needs of children who lack parental support and supervision before and after school hours.
12. The extent to which provision for exceptional children, including the handicapped and gifted, is adequate in relation to curriculum and the needs of children and the community.
13. The extent to which the schools are meeting the particular needs of Aborigines and children from non-English speaking backgrounds.
14. In considering all these points the Committee will take a special note of factors which tend to work to the disadvantage of girls.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF THE INQUIRY

Background

- Provides an overview of the background to the inquiry and lists twelve key points which led to its occurrence.

Interpretation of Terms of Reference

- Discusses the issues associated with interpreting the wide-ranging terms of reference.
- Notes that “At the Minister’s request, the Committee was to give emphasis to secondary education, being as it is the level at which students exit from schools and therefore being the level of most immediate concern in the preparation of young people for the workplace, further education or other post-school activities.” (p. 7)

Conduct of the Inquiry

- Canvasses the conduct, organization and operation of the Committee throughout the report process, including how key information was gathered and sub-committees created.

Statement of the Role of School

- Outlines the Committee’s position on the role of schools and provides seven “basic aims” for schools.

Major Conclusions of the Committee

- Outlines the major conclusions of the Committee.
- Notes the following in regards to lower-secondary education:
 - The Committee concludes that the current “system of a narrow “core” or subjects offered at three or four distinct levels, with additional “option” subjects, should be replaced by a “unit system” of education”. (p. 26)
 - Even though the present system has done much to introduce greater flexibility into the curriculum, it has also had unintended outcomes. One is the “sometimes destructive effects of students being labelled as “Advanced”, “Intermediate” or “Basic””(p. 26), as well as general confusion as to “the worth of the Achievement Certificate as a credential for post-school life”. (pp. 26-27)
 - The Committee believes a unit approach has the potential to overcome these problems, increase flexibility in schooling and provide students with more opportunities for programmes better tailored to their abilities.
- Notes the following in regards to the pattern of schooling in Years 11 and 12:
 - The Committee strongly believes “the excessive influence of the Tertiary Admissions Examination must be reduced as soon as possible”. (p. 27)
 - Schools have a “responsibility to provide students with a broad, general and relevant education, to equip them not only for possible tertiary studies but also for post-school life in general”. (p. 27)
 - The curriculum in upper-secondary schooling needs to be more flexible and broad, but should also provide sufficient opportunities for specialization and tertiary admission.
- Notes the following in regards to literacy and numeracy standards:
 - No clear research evidence supports the “growing belief that standards are slipping below acceptable levels and that many students are poorly educated and even unemployable”. (p. 29)
 - Nevertheless, current community and business life requires higher standards than those of the past, and as such, the Committee believes that “current standards, at whatever levels they may be, must be raised significantly”. (p. 29)
 - The Committee believes curriculum courses in training institutions are too theoretical and urges a more practical approach to developing teacher’s skills.
 - “A comprehensive attack must be made on all the problems associated with the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics skills.” (p. 29)

- “The Committee is concerned particularly with the situation where students are having difficulty acquiring the basic skills are not identified early enough in their school life” (p. 30). Major educational strategies are needed to combat this.
- Notes the following in regards to computer education:
 - “The importance of computer education must be recognized fully. Computer technology now pervades almost all facets of life, including schooling, work, recreation and the home. It is a technology that students need to understand and use early in their school careers and one requiring progressive exposure over the years.” (pp. 30-31)
 - The Committee has concluded that “all schools and school systems should develop and implement policies for computer usage so that all students can benefit from computers and are educated in relation to this form of technology”. (p. 31)
- Notes the following in regards to certification and reporting of student achievement:
 - Recommended changes to lower and upper secondary curriculums have clear implications for certification and school reporting of student achievement. As such, the Committee has concluded that its recommended changes must be accompanied by changes to the present system of certification and reporting of student achievement.
 - The Committee believes a more comprehensive yet simpler system is required, including four basic components: normal school reports, a school-leaver statement, an exit certificate and a confidential reference.
- Notes the following in regards to disadvantaged children in schools:
 - Disadvantaged children include those “with language difficulties, the sexually abused, the poverty stricken, the poorly fed, the educationally unsupported and those lacking proper supervision out of school hours”. (p. 34)
 - “The Committee believes that all schools must make a concerted and structured effort to identify children suffering from one or more of the above disadvantages” (p. 34), but that special resources and services must be made available by the State Government.
- Regarding the handicapped, notes that “...the Committee is firm in its belief that children suffering from these disadvantages should be integrated as far as possible into the normal or usual school setting”. (p. 35)
- Regarding gifted and talented children, notes that the Committee believes “that the provision for gifted and talented children should be broadened and that there should be a variety of educational opportunities from which the parent, the child and the school can select”. (p. 35)
- Notes the following in regards to issues of Aboriginal education:
 - Many Aboriginal parents believe the education system is not relevant to, nor is it meeting the needs of, their children, and that undue stress and hardship are being placed on the family unit by the need for children to leave their communities to attend school elsewhere.
 - “The Committee fully supports the principles of relevance and self-determination in Aboriginal education and its detailed recommendations, shown in Chapter 6, reflect this support.” (p. 36)
 - “The Committee was concerned to learn that the Education Department of Western Australia has no policy statement on Aboriginal education. The Committee believes that this situation must be rectified as soon as possible and that the policy should be based on the principles of generosity, diversity, dignity and self determination.” (p. 36)

- Notes the following in regards to migrant and multicultural education, the education of girls, isolated students and disruptive students:
 - Groups these “special groups” together and notes that “a number of fairly substantial changes are required in the areas of migrant and multicultural education, the education of girls, isolated students and disruptive students”. (pp 36-37)
 - “There seems to be a general acceptance of the need for students to recognize and benefit from the multicultural nature of our community. This holds true for non-sexist approaches to teaching and in curriculum materials, and the special needs of the isolated student are not in dispute.” (p. 37)
 - The Committee has recommended a number of improvements in these areas.

Implementation of Recommendations

- Notes that the Committee was unable to make detailed suggestions for implementing each recommendation but suggests some possible approaches for doing so.

CHAPTER 2: THE CURRICULUM

Introduction

- Emphasizes that the Committee has been concerned with investigating the relevancy of schooling: “The principal concern of the Inquiry has been the extent to which curriculum offerings in schools prepare students for all aspects of life in a community which is changing dramatically in its technology, and in other ways.” (p. 40)
- Discusses various general elements relating to school curriculums, including school environments, the importance of taking into account the expectations of the community as well as those of students, the need for a balanced programme during compulsory schooling and the need to take account of the needs, interests and abilities of students.

Curriculum in Years 8-10

- Provides a general overview of the current curriculum operating in Years 8-10.
- Discusses several issues and shortcomings associated with the current Achievement Certificate system including: widespread perceptions that the system is not able to meet the needs of all students in the light of rapid technological change; the lack of flexibility and the narrowness of the division of subjects into ‘core’ and ‘options’; and the negative effects of labelling students as ‘Basic’, ‘Intermediate’ or ‘Advanced’.
- Notes the “many submissions recommending an expansion of the core curriculum in Years 8-10 by the inclusion of a variety of subject areas” (p. 45) and lists proposed subjects including health education, sex education and computer education. Notes that submissions suggest that to expand subject areas, the present arrangement of core and option subjects will need to change.
- Canvasses evidence from students, which indicated that they perceived considerable dislocation between Years 10 and 11 and outlines four key views on the problem of dislocation which emphasize the need for standards of excellence and challenging learning experiences in lower school.

Components of the Curriculum

- Notes that “In considering all the submissions presented by students, teachers, parents and community groups, it was evident to the Committee that there is a degree of disillusionment with the curriculum offered in Western Australian schools.” (p. 46)

- Argues that while schools are quite successful at introducing most students to the traditional range of academic subjects, there are other areas related to practical and life-skills in which some schools are not meeting the needs of some students.
- Identifies seven broad areas/components to be the basis of a new and relevant curriculum for Western Australian schools: Language and Communication; Social Studies; Mathematics; Science and Technology; Physical and Health Education; Vocational and Personal Awareness and Practical and Creative Arts.
- Notes that the ‘Vocational and Personal Awareness’ component may be regarded a ‘newly identified’ curriculum area.
- States the important need for a shift in emphasis in curriculum materials and their manner of presentation by teachers toward life-skills as a major focus of schooling: “Learning should not be equated only with the acquisition of a body of knowledge – the processes of dealing with and applying this knowledge are of paramount importance.” (p. 52)
- Suggests some desirable life skills under the following categories and examples: Personal skills (e.g. solving moral dilemmas, adaptability, leadership); Social skills (e.g. communication, interpersonal skills); Intellectual skills (e.g. critical analysis, problem solving); Knowledge acquisition skills (e.g. information seeking, organizing, analysis, and synthesis); Environmental skills (e.g. understanding, and interacting with, the environment); Mathematical skills (e.g. interpreting information and maths skills to cope with everyday situations); Creative skills (e.g. artistic, musical, dramatic and literary skills); General living skills (e.g. home management, safety and citizenship); and Computer management skills (e.g. communicating by computer and IT skills).
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 1: That the Achievement Certificate structure of core and option studies be replaced by one in which there are seven curriculum components, as follows: Language and Communication; Social Studies; Mathematics; Science and Technology; Physical and Health Education; Vocational and Personal Awareness and Practical and Creative Arts. (p. 56)
 - Recommendation 2: “That school organization take account of the seven curriculum components and that the Board of Secondary Education, schools and school systems make appropriate organizational changes to ensure that this occurs.” (p. 56)
 - Recommendation 3: “That curriculum revision and teacher development be undertaken to ensure that all subject areas include an emphasis on “life-skills”, including ethical principles.” (p. 56)
 - Recommendation 4: “That a pre-primary to Year 12 Vocational and Personal Awareness syllabus and associated curriculum be developed centrally as an urgent priority.” (p. 56)

Subjects in the Curriculum

- Notes that the seven components do not represent subjects in the accepted sense. Rather, each of the components “is the means to develop some of the life-skills seen as central to the needs of the individual”. (pp. 56-57)
- Notes that the components offer opportunities for integrated, inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches to curriculum and that their incorporation may initially cause difficulties in secondary schools, where teachers tend to teach single subjects and where school organization relies upon these subject divisions.
- Argues that “the whole nature of curriculum organization at the school level should be changed so as to make such integration feasible where necessary”. (p. 57)

- Tentatively attempts to allocate some specific themes and subjects to each of the seven components in the curriculum and outlines four key areas which are the joint responsibility of all teachers, regardless of their areas of specialization: Literacy and Numeracy; Computer Awareness; Welfare and Research Skills.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 5: “That all schools be required to develop policy statements which indicate the way in which the identified subjects and topics across the curriculum are to be integrated into the school programme.” (p. 60)
 - Recommendation 6: “That school systems and individual schools adopt an organizational structure that helps promote the co-ordination of the subjects within each of the seven curriculum components.” (p. 60)
 - Recommendation 7: “That all schools and school systems develop and implement policies of computer usage in schools so that all students benefit from the use and experience of computers and are educated in relation to this form of technology.” (p. 60)
- Discusses various aspects of subjects including Languages Other Than English, Religious Studies, Sex Education, Decision-Making, Moral Education and Peace Studies and makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 8: “That appropriate committees be established to develop materials for each curriculum component which integrate, as far as possible, the various subjects within each component.” (p. 65)
 - Recommendation 9: (i) “That sequential curriculum materials be developed where there is obvious need, such as computer science within Science and Technology, sex education within Vocational and Personal Awareness, Aboriginal Studies and Multicultural Studies”; and (ii) “That a co-ordinated approach be taken where appropriate, as, for example, the use of the concept of design education within the Practical and Creative Arts component.” (p. 65)
 - Recommendation 10: “That when schools and school systems review their curriculum in order to formulate the policies required in other recommendations, they should also consider the inclusion of units on moral education, religious studies, and peace studies.” (p. 65)
 - Recommendation 11: That schools and systems promote the study of languages other than English in order to involve more students than at present. (p. 65)

The Unit Approach

- Discusses the current course organization in Years 8-10: courses organized on the basis of one-year duration, with core subjects (typically six periods per week) and option subjects (typically two periods per week). Notes that some schools have varied courses to provide more challenging and appropriate activities for their students but that inflexibilities that exist in the present structure.
- Argues that “the Committee believes that the needs of all students will be met more adequately by abandoning subject courses which currently occupy one full year and replacing the existing system in Year 8-10 with one based on units of study of a shorter duration”. (p. 67)
- Outlines seven key reasons for promoting a unit approach and vertical timetabling.
- Argues that “Student motivation will be enhanced if the aims and objectives of units, the methods of assessment and the place of the unit in the subject sequence are clearly understood. For this reason it should be a requirement that schools make available to students and parents the specifications for each unit to be attempted.” (p. 71)

- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 12: “That all courses should normally be offered as units of study. Each unit should be clearly defined in terms of pre-requisites, course objectives, assessment procedures and options for further study.” (p. 71)
 - Recommendation 13: “That a series of units be designed for each curriculum component. These units should: (i) provide essential knowledge, study skills and attitude development; (ii) ensure sustained and continuous study in areas for which mastery or understanding of sequential material is necessary; (iii) provide the foundations which ensure access to important disciplines to be studied at the upper school level or in TAFE.” (p. 72)
 - Recommendation 14: “That units may be: (i) centrally produced and approved by the Board of Secondary Education; (ii) school or systems produced and approved by the Board of Secondary Education; (iii) school-based.” (p. 72)
 - Recommendation 15: “That unit systems based on both a 30-hour unit and a 24-hour unit be pilot tested. Recommendations of the best alternative, combination or compromise be instituted as soon as possible after the completion of the trial.” (p. 74)
 - Recommendation 16: “That as a minimum requirement during Years 8-10, at any given time each student study at least one unit from each of the curriculum components.” (p. 74)
 - Recommendation 17: “That schools be required to certify that students in Years 8-10 have studied the minimum curriculum requirements specified. The Board of Secondary Education should review minimum requirements from time to time.” (p. 74)
 - Recommendation 18: “That the implementation of all aspects of the unit approach be monitored by the Board of Secondary Education.” (p. 75)
 - Recommendation 19: “That appropriate syllabus committees arrange for the preparation, development and revision of syllabus materials needed to satisfy the requirements of the unit approach.” (p. 76)
 - Recommendation 20: “That while major curriculum development initiatives remain the province of the system rather than the school, provision for system-wide support of school-initiated courses be available.” (p. 76)
 - Recommendation 21: “That curriculum support materials produced by the Education Department through its Paragraphs, such as the Curriculum Branch, the Distance Education Centre, and TAFE, be available to schools on a cost-recovery basis.” (p. 76)
 - Recommendation 22: “That in response to community expectations and because of the changing demands of the workforce, special attention be given to the need to raise the general standards of literacy and numeracy.” (p. 77)
 - Recommendation 23: “That schools be required to supply course outlines for units taught and the assessment procedures used. At the commencement of each unit teachers be required to supply this information to the students taking the unit.” (p. 79)
 - Recommendation 24: “That students and parents have the right to be involved in course selection and schools provide the opportunity for them to exercise this right.” (p. 79)
 - Recommendation 25: “That where a student fails to reach the defined minimum standard of assessment, the particular unit not be credited to the student unless it is subsequently completed satisfactorily.” (p. 79)

- Recommendation 26: “That where the nature of student performance indicates the desirability of maintaining parallel courses at different levels, the opportunity for transfer between levels be created so far as this is possible. Students have the right to attempt a unit available at the school at a higher level when they can meet the pre-requisites for the study of that unit. (p. 79)
- Recommendation 27: “That subject to meeting the requirements specified, schools be encouraged to plan programmes and timetables suited to the needs of students.” (p. 81)
- Recommendation 28: “That where necessary and where desirable, schools be given assistance to enable them to develop administrative procedures and the storage of records demanded by the new system.” (p. 81)
- Recommendation 29: “That all secondary schools have a senior member of staff designated “coordinator of studies”. This person is to have responsibility for: (i) supervising the counselling procedures which ensure that individual students undertake courses pertinent to their needs; (ii) the custody and maintenance of student records; (iii) the custody and maintenance of unit statements for all units of study offered in a school.” (pp. 81-82)
- Recommendation 30: “That pre-service and inservice professional development programmes and activities be arranged to prepare teachers for the new proposals.” (p. 83)
- Recommendation 31: “That every teacher be expected to assume responsibility for the improvement and maintenance of literacy and numeracy and to exercise this responsibility through personal example and in the assessment of student work. Particular attention should be paid to improving the extent to which students can use text books and reference books for information.” (p. 83)

Curriculum in Years 11-12

- Provides a current overview of the Year 11-12 school system and curriculum organization and notes that the most commonly taken subjects are the Certificate of Secondary Education/Tertiary Admissions Examination (CSE/TAE) subjects, the next most commonly taken are the CSE (General) subjects, which are not examined in the Tertiary Entrances Examinations and a small number of students enrol in one-year Year 11 courses, which are vocationally oriented, such as the Vocational Business Studies course, or the Alternative Upper School course.
- Notes that a key issue regarding course offerings is “the significant influence that tertiary selection procedures have on the subjects offered in the upper school.” (p. 85)
- Notes that retention rates into Year 11 have increased substantially in the last few years, yet very little change has taken place with curriculum offerings and that “the needs of many students who enrol in upper school courses are not being met.” (p. 88)
- Discusses problems with the current arrangements regarding inflexibility.

One-Year Syllabuses for Years 11-12

- Notes that “The Committee is confident that many of the issues addressed above would be resolved by the introduction of a new curriculum structure for courses in Years 11 and 12. It is proposed that existing two-year syllabuses be re-organized into single-year syllabuses and the Tertiary Admissions Examinations should be based on work covered in Year 12 courses only.” (pp. 89-90)
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 32: “That syllabuses for the Certificate of Secondary Education subjects be designed to occupy one year of study instead of two years.” (p. 91)

- Recommendation 33: “That the Tertiary Admissions Examination be based on the Year 12 syllabus in each subject.” (p. 91)
- Recommendation 34: “That schools provide every facility to enable students to restructure their final selections for Year 12 during Year 11 on the basis of their performance and interest. Year 11 should be regarded in part as a time in which students reach the required achievement levels for a suitable variety of choices for Year 12 subjects.” (p. 92)

Schools and Technical and Further Education (TAFE)

- Discusses the extent to which TAFE resources should be used in secondary schools to develop vocational skills.
- Highlights that for many students the present post-secondary curriculum is not a relevant one and discusses ways that schools are attempting to better cater for students vocationally.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 35: “That, subject to approval by the school and college principals concerned, secondary students be permitted to enrol in TAFE day and evening classes.” (p. 99)
 - Recommendation 36: “That, subject to the approval of the relevant TAFE superintendents, co-operative arrangements be made for TAFE courses to be taught on contract from TAFE in high schools.” (p. 99)
 - Recommendation 37: “That TAFE subjects studied as part of a combined secondary/TAFE programme, and assessed to the satisfaction of TAFE, be accredited by TAFE for exemption or credit in appropriate TAFE certificate and diploma courses.” (p. 99)
 - Recommendation 38: “That, subject to approval by the school principal, students of post-compulsory age be permitted to enrol on a part time basis at a secondary school.” (p. 99)
 - Recommendation 39: “That the Education Department of Western Australia make a deliberate and sustained attempt to raise the visibility of TAFE in schools, and to encourage teachers and students to recognize the importance of the vocational, education and training opportunities available in TAFE, as substantial alternatives to Years 11 and 12.” (p. 100)
 - Recommendation 40: “That provisions be made for systematic inservicing of secondary and TAFE teachers and guidance/counselling personnel, to improve mutual understanding and to ensure that guidance of students and parents in respect of TAFE options is well founded.” (p. 100)
 - Recommendation 41: “That specific or special-purpose funding arrangements be made for the establishment of co-operative and joint schools-TAFE programmes, and for the necessary inservice training of teachers and guidance personnel in schools and TAFE, and that the recurrent funding for such programmes be maintained on a legislated-programme basis.” (p. 100)
 - Recommendation 42: “That a co-ordinated procedure for annual TAFE admissions be established to enable secondary school students to apply for entry for a place in a TAFE programme or institution in the preceding year, and to be notified of a place being granted or denied before the commencement of the subsequent school year.” (p. 101)

TAFE Provisions in Country Areas

- Provides an overview of the current TAFE and technical centres in rural Western Australia and outlines some problems with current provisions.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 43: “That the Government establish a comprehensive forward plan for the medium and long-term development of post-secondary education and training facilities in country areas, including consideration of the need for: (i) the progressive up-grading of present Technical Education Centres to full-time centres offering TAFE vocational education and training, as well as adult education; (ii) commitment to an expanded building programme aimed at establishing a network of TAFE facilities similar in concept to those established at Collie and Esperance, linked with local high schools, and placed in strategic locations to provide an intermediate TAFE resource between TAFE colleges in the larger towns and TAFE centres in smaller towns; (iii) the establishment of student residential accommodation in each of the major country population centres to facilitate country students taking or finishing courses at the TAFE colleges in those towns; (iv) expansion of the TAFE fleet to mobile resources to enable more remote communities to have access to sophisticated plant and equipment, and teaching resources; (v) extension of the TAFE Rural Scheme of community-based technical and further education; and (vi) active encouragement of the formation of country regional post-secondary education advisory and planning committees throughout the state.” (pp. 105-106)
 - Recommendation 45: “That the Education Department and all other TAFE authorities explore the possibilities for combined course arrangements to enable secondary students in country areas to undertake studies in TAFE colleges located in the major country centres.” (p. 107)
 - Recommendation 46: “That a special project group from the Technical Extension Service and Distance Education Centre be established to develop joint school-TAFE extension courses and associated teaching support materials for country students.” (p. 107)
 - Recommendation 47: “That the experiment in establishing the senior colleges be carefully reviewed, taking into consideration: (i) their effects on the TAFE sector; (ii) the need for rational coordination in the post-compulsory sector; (iii) their adequacy in providing for re-entry into education, for those who have left school; and (iv) their capacity to fulfil the educational needs of young unemployed people.” (p. 108)
 - Recommendation 48: “That the current arrangements for the offering of TAE subjects be reviewed by the Education Department of Western Australia, so as to provide more ready access for people whose needs are not currently being met by the two senior colleges.” (p. 108)

Curriculum Organization in Primary Schools

- Discusses the primary school curriculum.

Student Transition from Primary School to Secondary School

- Discusses issues of transition from primary to secondary schooling concerning differences between the two schooling environments and issues regarding the self-esteem of students as a result of transition.
- Makes the following recommendations:

- Recommendation 52: “That children transfer from primary school to secondary school at the end of Year 7 as is currently the case and that close attention be given to the process of transition.” (p. 116)
- Recommendation 53: “That each secondary school develop transition programmed to include: (i) collection of relevant data and student performance record from contributory primary schools; (ii) visits by appropriate teachers to the contributory primary schools; (iii) a structured induction programme for all Year 8 students.” (pp. 120-121)
- Recommendation 55: “That, where appropriate, new syllabuses be developed on the basis of sequential progress through primary and secondary schooling, as has been achieved in the pre-primary to Year 10 Social Studies Syllabus.” (p. 121)

Literacy and Numeracy

- Discusses the extent to which basic skills associated with literacy and numeracy are established in primary schools.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 65: “That in the interpretation and implementation of the English syllabuses in the secondary school, more emphasis be placed on functional English.” (p. 146)
 - Recommendation 66: “That, in the teaching of English, more emphasis that is common at the present be placed on formal and informal testing to monitor the attainment of literacy in states course objectives.” (p. 147)

Pastoral Care and Self-Esteem

- Notes that the focus here is on secondary schools and recommends that “all schools provide a structure for pastoral care and encourages schools to examine the various possibilities presented here as a basis for stronger policies and practices”. (pp. 152-153)
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 67: “That all schools be able to describe clearly the structure chosen for the administration of pastoral care.” (p. 153)
 - Recommendation 68: “That provision be made in the timetable for a time and place for the pastoral groups to meet, thus allowing those responsible for the groups to have a means of access to the individuals.” (p. 153)
 - Recommendation 48: “That pastoral care groups be small enough to allow individual students to be known well by the member of staff who has responsibility for the group.” (p. 153)
 - Recommendations 70-72 concerning staffing arrangements for pastoral care.
 - Recommendation 73: “That pre-service teacher training courses include preparation for, and instruction in, the exercise of pastoral care.” (p. 155)
 - Recommendation 74: “That employing authorities provide inservice training for school personnel prior to their operating as pastoral care teachers.” (p. 155)
 - Recommendation 75: “That all teachers have access to professional development activities to assist them to undertake general pastoral care duties. Teachers with special pastoral care duties should have access to professional development activities to assist them to undertake those duties.” (p. 156).
 - Recommendation 76: “That schools provide a sufficient range of activities of different types to increase the chance of individual students finding areas in which they can succeed and so gain in self-worth and confidence. If students are involved in community activities, liaison between school and community should

be close enough to allow a student's achievement to be known and recognized at school." (p. 156)

- Recommendation 77: "That in cases where there is a conviction of need, Government schools appoint chaplains." (p. 157)

Conclusion

- Notes that significant changes have been recommended, in order for school to remain relevant in today's rapidly changing world and enhance flexibility in the curriculum.

CHAPTER 3: CERTIFICATION AND TERTIARY SELECTION

Introduction

- Discusses certification arrangements and tertiary selection and notes that enrolment patterns have changed substantially in the last twenty years with rising enrolments beyond Year 10 along with an accompanying increase in students leaving before the end of Year 12: "Currently, more than one-third of the students who return to Year 11 leave school before the end of Year 12. These students are clearly not well served by current curriculum and certification arrangements. These and other related factors have highlighted the need for a reconsideration of the whole area of certification." (p. 161)

School Reports

- Provide an overview of the current forms of documentation available to students and outlines problems with it including confidentiality, different reporting scales and relevance.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 78: "That all secondary schools provide school leaver statements for their students and that these statements contain at least the following components: (i) a transcript of achievement; (ii) a statement of participation; (iii) an open reference; (iv) evidence of authenticity." (p. 164)
 - Recommendation 79: (i) "That schools continue to provide, on a regular basis, confidential school reports to parents and students"; and (ii) "that all secondary schools provide, when requested to do so, confidential references." (p. 165)

Certification

- Reiterates "the unsatisfactory nature of current certification arrangements" (p. 165) and sets out the criteria that a public certification scheme should satisfy.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 80: "That public certification of secondary schooling be by means of a single certificate issued to each student at some time after the student leaves secondary school." (p. 166)
 - Recommendation 81: "That this certificate be called the Certificate of Secondary Education." (p. 166)
 - Recommendation 82: "That the Certificate of Secondary Education report achievement from Year 9 onwards and that Year 8 be regarded as a transition year." (p. 167)

Moderation

- Discusses moderation, notes several processes by which school assessments can be moderated to achieve comparability and makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 83: "That the Board of Secondary Education moderate assessments in all assessed subjects, with the form of moderation being

dependent on such factors as the nature of the subject being moderated and the number of students taking the subject.” (p. 168)

- Recommendation 84: “That the Board of Secondary Education and the Education Department continue to co-operate in the development of item-bank moderation procedures.” (p. 168)
- Recommendation 85: “That the Board of Secondary Education consider the adoption of a statistical model that would enable the Board to vary its Statewide distribution in accord with variations in student achievement.” (p. 169)

Grading System

- Discusses the difference in the reporting scales used in lower secondary school in both option and core subjects, the inconsistencies and current award systems for both subject types and the difficulties of standards-referenced and criterion-referenced systems.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 86: (i) “That achievement be reported as an overall year result obtained, where necessary, as a composite of a set of term results”; and (ii) “that to avoid unnecessary proliferation of separate subject names the Board of Secondary Education develop a set of generic titles under which achievement in all the various subject areas can be reported.” (p. 172)
 - Recommendation 87: “That a student’s Certificate of Secondary Education show the number of units of each subject that the student has studied in each year.” (p. 172)
 - Recommendation 88: (i) “That the Board of Secondary Education define the literacy competencies student should have by the end of Years 10, 11, and 12; (ii) That schools decide whether students have adequate literacy skills, but that the Board of Secondary Education, having responsibility for comparability of assessments, should provide assessment support materials and guidelines for the assessments; (iii) That it should not be necessary for all students to undertake separate literacy courses in order to qualify as having reached an adequate standard in these skills; (iv) That the Board of Secondary Education undertakes the development and implementation of these proposals.” (pp. 173-174)
 - Recommendation 89: “That the Board of Secondary Education consider whether a statement of mathematical competence should be included on each student’s Certificate of Secondary Education.” (p. 174)

High School Graduation

- Discusses graduation and makes the following recommendation:
 - Recommendation 90: (i) That to qualify for high school graduation a student must: (a) earn 60 Year 11 and Year 12 credits; (b) have 18 of these 60 credits at the end of Year 12 level; (c) have at least 6 credits from each of the following areas: language and communication, mathematics, science and technology and social studies; (d) have demonstrated satisfactory literacy competence at the Year 12 level; (ii) That the initial set of subjects from which units can be chosen include all of the current TAE subjects, all of the CSE (General) subjects and approved TAFE subjects; and (iii) That the Year 12 Certificate Secondary Education for any student completing all the requirements listed above in (i) include a statement that the student has completed the requirements for high school graduation. (p. 175)

Tertiary Selection

- Notes the considerable overlap between the Committee's brief and that of the Working Party chaired by Barry McGaw with regards to tertiary admission requirements and reports on the yet-to-be-published findings of the Working Party.

CHAPTER 4: TEACHING STAFF

- Discusses teaching staff in terms of attracting potential teachers, teacher preparation courses, performance, evaluation and promotion, and makes Recommendations 91-153 in relation to these matters.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLING

- Discusses the advantages and disadvantages of greater community participation in schooling, how participation should be managed and community use of school facilities and outlines Recommendations 154-168.

CHAPTER 6: SPECIAL GROUPS

Introduction

- Notes the terms of reference devoted to the adequacy of educational provisions for "special groups" of students and that these include "students disadvantaged by home background factors, the disabled and educationally handicapped, the gifted and talented, Aborigines, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, girls, students living in isolated circumstances and disruptive children." (p. 287)
- Argues that "The problems and opportunities for special groups of students need to be tackled and resourced largely at the school level, with appropriate support and co-ordination from regional and central authorities, and Government agencies [as]... provision for special groups is too-heavily centralized and uncoordinated." (p. 288)

Educational Disadvantage and Home Background

- Overview of various types of disadvantage concerning home background and makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 169: "That each school establishes a policy and regular programmes and procedures for understanding the social composition and home backgrounds of its student body, and that this information be disseminated and discussed with all staff by way of school-based induction and inservice programmes." (p. 291)
 - Recommendation 170: "That the quality of school and classroom policies, programmes and procedures to improve the outcomes of schooling for students from disadvantaged home backgrounds be a criterion for school, principal and staff performance appraisal." (p. 292)
 - Recommendation 171: "That the regional offices strengthen their assistance to schools and communities in the development, implementation and review of educational policies in relation to students from disadvantaged home backgrounds." (p. 293)
 - Recommendation 172: "That, where appropriate, the quality of services to schools in regard to reducing educational disadvantage due to home background factors be a criterion for regional office and regional office staff performance appraisal." (p. 294)
 - Recommendation 173: "That education systems provide their regional offices, where appropriate, and their schools, with support and assistance such as advisory staff and special appointments, resources, research information and

inservice programmes to improve the outcomes of schooling for students from disadvantaged home backgrounds.” (p. 294)

- Recommendation 174: “That consideration be given by education systems and authorities to joint efforts for improving the outcomes of schooling for students from disadvantaged home backgrounds.” (p. 295)
- Recommendations 175-178 concerning funding and financial assistance to parents and students from disadvantaged home backgrounds.
- Recommendation 179: “That school authorities, local government authorities and school communities co-operate to make better use of school facilities in areas where out-of-school-care organizations are providing, or intend to provide, support for children who do not have parental supervision before or after school hours.” (p. 297)

The Disabled and Educationally Handicapped

- Defines the term ‘handicapped’ and discusses various current research positions on handicapped young people and schooling and foregrounds the benefits of ‘integration’.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 180: “That provision be made throughout Western Australia for children who are disabled and educationally handicapped to be educated in the normal school setting with children not so affected, provided that: (i) the school’s resources can be adapted to these needs; (ii) the educational needs of the children with whom they are to be educated are not adversely affected; (iii) proper consideration is given to the use of public resources; (iv) the wishes of parents and other members of the school community are properly considered.” (p. 301)
 - Recommendation 181: “That for some of those children who are severely handicapped or who suffer multiple handicaps, there be provision in the special schools located on a regular school site or in special units within regular schools. Due attention must be paid to the wishes of the parents of the children and other members of the school community, and to the efficient use of public resources.” (p. 302)
 - Recommendation 182: “That, in the light of the principle of integration, existing special education provisions be reviewed and evaluated prior to transfer to normal school sites, to ensure that they adequately meet the needs of the disabled and educationally handicapped.” (p. 302)
 - Recommendations 183-186 relating to arrangements for integration and covering aspects such as facilities, services, staffing and screening procedures.
 - Recommendations 187-193 relating to the need for more career opportunities, training in pre-service tertiary courses, in-service professional development courses and other qualifications for teachers regarding special education.
 - Recommendation 194 outlining the need for parental involvement and participation in decisions regarding the schooling of handicapped children.
 - Recommendation 195: “That the essential skills in literacy and numeracy have appropriate emphasis in the curricula of all special schools and units for the disabled and educationally handicapped.” (p. 309)
 - Recommendation 196: “That, in collaboration with the Special Education Branch, the Curriculum Branch, Audio-Visual Branch and the Schools Computing Branch of the Education Department of Western Australia develop courses, programmes, materials and special equipment to suit the needs of the

disabled and educationally handicapped, and that adequate resources be provided.” (p. 309)

- Recommendation 201: “That the disabled and educationally handicapped, as all other children, receive as a right an education which will enable them to cope at a level commensurate with their ability and lead an independent life to the degree that is possible, and that this right be incorporated into the Education Act.” (p. 311)

The Gifted and Talented

- Provides a brief overview of current programmes in place to cater for gifted and talented children and discusses how special provision for intellectually talented children is contentious. Notes that “After consideration of all the evidence...the Committee reached the view that the special needs of gifted and talented children must be recognized and catered for.” (p. 315)
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 202: “That gifted and talented children have the right to programmes and right of access to them, to meet their special needs.” (p. 315)
 - Recommendation 203: “That in the provision of programmes to meet the needs of gifted and talented children there be flexibility and a range of approaches, such as: (i) designated schools catering for children with special aptitudes, e.g. music, ballet and other performing arts, languages, mathematics, gymnastics, trade skills, arts, sciences; (ii) flexible school timetables to take full advantage of the unit approach to the curriculum, acceleration, cross-grading and cross-setting; (iii) independent study by students on an agreed programme (especially at the upper secondary school level) using the school’s resources and community facilities; (iv) special classes within primary and secondary schools, and TAFE colleges; (v) special provisions of self directed programmes, materials and equipment for individuals or small groups in special circumstances, e.g. the isolated child, the transient child, the hospitalized child and for all children experiencing difficulties in gaining access to “mainstream” programmes.” (pp. 316-317)
 - Recommendation 204: “That, to allow for a greater range of approaches and parental choice in the matter of gifted and talented programmes, schools be appropriately de-zoned.” (p. 317)
 - Recommendation 205: “That meeting the needs of the gifted and talented be part of every school’s policy and that programmes in operation be evaluated on a regular basis.” (p. 318)
 - Recommendation 206: “That procedures used to identify giftedness and talent provide equal opportunity for all children to display their gifts and talents, irrespective of: (i) linguistic and cultural differences; (ii) gender; (iii) home background; (iv); degree of isolation; (v) poverty.” (p. 319)
 - Recommendation 207: “That a range of information be used to identify giftedness and talent.” (p. 319)
 - Recommendation 208: “That continuing procedures be implemented at the lower secondary level to identify gifted and talented children not identified earlier.” (p. 319)
 - Recommendation 210: “That the Curriculum Branch of the Education Department of Western Australia develop courses and materials for gifted and talented children.” (p. 320)

- Recommendation 211: “That materials, equipment and facilities developed for gifted and talented children be available as cost to all children whose special needs can be met by having access to such resources.” (p. 321)
- Recommendation 212: “That professional development activities in schools and regional centres deal with the education of the gifted and talented.” (p. 321)
- Recommendation 214: “That there be on-going research and evaluation aimed at improving the education of the gifted and talented.” (p. 322)
- Recommendation 215: “That universities, colleges of advanced education and technical colleges co-operate further with schools in the early admission of gifted and talented children to full-time post-secondary education, or to an appropriate tertiary subject for which they have qualified while still remaining at school.” (p. 322)
- Recommendation 216: “That teacher education undergraduate and post-graduate courses give specific instruction on the education of gifted and talented children to all pre-service trainees, and that institutions provide post-graduate courses in the area.” (p. 322)

Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Studies

- Notes that issues of Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Studies have reached a critical point and that new and creative paths need to be established and the principles of greater relevance and self-determination in Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Studies need to be put into practice. Discusses the disadvantages facing Aboriginal students and the gaps in arrangements for decision making. Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 217: “That the structure and roles of Aboriginal Committees on Education be continued and strengthened.” (p. 324)
 - Recommendation 218: “That education systems involve Aboriginal people at senior decision-making levels.” (p. 325)
 - Recommendation 219: “That educational systems, in consultation with the State Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, develop and publicise policies in regard to Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Studies. These policies should give due regard to: (i) the employment of trained Aboriginal teacher-aides and teachers, with various forms of training from one year to three or more years being available in training institutions, and with some training opportunities being available in country centres; (ii) the encouragement of bilingual education, by offering Aboriginal languages in schools, by using Aboriginal languages as a teaching medium in conjunction with English by teaching English as a second language to students whose first language in Aboriginal or a Kriol; (iii) the provision of information and advice to Aboriginal communities and groups that wish to develop their own schools; (iv) the need to improve attendance and retention rates of Aboriginal students; (v) the involvement of linguistics in the co-ordination and development of education for Aboriginal students.” (p. 328)
 - Recommendation 220: “That education authorities and institutions, in association with various Aboriginal consultative bodies: (i) develop Aboriginal Studies materials for the pre-primary-to-Year 12 curriculum; (ii) develop for use in schools with Aboriginal students, approved courses which are in accord with what is known of Aboriginal learning styles, language and culture; (iii) conduct research in areas critical to Aboriginal Education.” (p. 330)
 - Recommendation 221: “That all teacher education pre-service courses include components of Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal Studies.” (p. 330)

- Recommendation 222: “That pre-service and inservice courses be made available to assist teachers of Aboriginal students to adapt curriculum materials and teaching approaches to suit the needs of Aboriginal children, and that where appropriate Aboriginal people assist in these activities.” (p. 331)
- Recommendation 223: “That secondary/TAFE access and transition courses be developed to cater for Aboriginal students in the age range 14-18 years.” (p. 331)
- Recommendation 224: “That Aboriginal liaison officers be available in every country education region, and in the metropolitan area, to liaise between parents and schools.” (p. 332)
- Recommendation 225: “That advisory teachers with experience in Aboriginal Education and a knowledge of Aboriginal Studies be available in each education region.” (p. 332)
- Recommendation 226: “That procedures be established for the staffing of schools that have a significant Aboriginal enrolment. These procedures should include: (i) appointment of teachers with specialist training and/or experience; (ii) special promotional opportunities for teachers who specialise in Aboriginal education; (iii) allowances for isolation and remoteness.” (p. 333)
- Recommendation 227: “That the appointment of Aboriginal teacher aides be extended to secondary schools with significant needs.” (p. 333)
- Recommendation 228: “That an additional senior staff member, or members, be appointed within the Education Department of Western Australia with special responsibilities for the education of secondary age Aboriginal children.” (p. 334)
- Recommendation 229: “That guidance officers and career counsellors in schools that have significant numbers of Aboriginal students be trained to give vocational counselling to these students.” (p. 334)
- Recommendation 230: “That inservice training be provided for guidance officers and career education teachers appointed to schools that have significant numbers of Aboriginal students.” (p. 334)
- Recommendation 231: “That the purpose and operation of “project” classes be reviewed fully.” (p. 335)
- Recommendation 232: “That regular evaluation of programmes for Aboriginal students be undertaken.” (p. 335)

Migrant Education and Multicultural Education

- Notes that the needs of children from non-English-speaking backgrounds are related to the broader issue of multicultural education and that the needs of migrant children from non-English-speaking backgrounds are many and varied, with the most immediate being to acquire the English language as soon as possible after arriving in Western Australia.
- Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 233: “That school authorities and systems provide ways and means for schools to identify and assist students who need to be taught English as a second language, and develop and apply detailed and bias-free procedures for assessing their intellectual ability.” (p. 337)
 - Recommendation 234: “That schools utilize parent and community resources for implementing school-based induction and inservice programmes for teachers to meet the needs of children from non-English speaking backgrounds.” (p. 338)
 - Recommendation 235: “That school systems and authorities explore ways of sharing information, personnel, programmes and materials to do with migrant education, and examine the possibility of appointing joint ethnic liaison officers.” (p. 338)

- Recommendation 236: “That schools, with assistance from their respective authorities, identify the level of need for the teaching of the languages of ethnic communities, and respond appropriately.” (p. 339)
- Recommendation 237: “That a Government working-party be established to recommend on ways of improving co-ordination of educational, health and social services for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds.” (p. 339)
- Recommendation 238: “That pre-service teacher education courses develop in trainee teachers a recognition of the educational implications of our multicultural community.” (p. 340)
- Recommendation 239: “That schools authorities and schools work to eliminate race prejudice and forms of stereotyping and to promote respect for all people.” (p. 340)
- Recommendation 240: “That schools develop and review their policies and procedures for operating in a multicultural context, and that these form a part of school and personnel performance appraisal.” (p. 340)

The Education of Girls

- Discusses concerns that the relationship between schooling, employment and post-school life is less satisfactory for girls than it is for boys. Notes that women’s economic responsibilities are increasing and women who are not equipped by their education to cope with these responsibilities risk remaining dependent on others. Discusses sex-stereotyping in the curriculum. Makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 241: “That curriculum opportunities be provided to ensure that all students from pre-primary to Year 12 are introduced to areas stereotyped previously as girls’ or boys’ study areas.” (p. 342)
 - Recommendation 242: “That effective procedures be developed to monitor and review new and existing curriculum materials, with a view to eliminating sex-stereotyping from all school curricula.” (p. 343)
 - Recommendation 243: “That inservice programmes and guidelines to eliminate sex-stereotyping be provided for all personnel engaged centrally in curriculum development.” (p. 343)
 - Recommendation 244: “That programmes be developed and implemented at the primary and secondary school levels to heighten students’ awareness of the limiting effects of accepting sexist advice in relation to their subject and career choices.” (p. 344)
 - Recommendation 245: “That inservice programmes and guidelines be provided for teachers and guidance staff in the primary, secondary and TAFE sectors to heighten their awareness of the limiting effect of sexist advice on students’ subject choices and career alternatives.” (p. 345)
 - Recommendation 246: “That pre-service and inservice programmes be provided for teachers to assist them in analyzing their own beliefs and classroom behaviour and to enable them to develop skills in creating and maintaining a non-sexist environment.” (p. 345)
 - Recommendation 247: “That inservice programmes and guidelines be provided for school principals, deputy principals and senior administrative staff to enable them to develop awareness of, and skills for, eradicating sex-stereotyping and sexual harassment in their schools, where it exists.” (p. 346)
 - Recommendation 248: “That programmes be developed and implemented to heighten community awareness of the limiting effects of sexist advice and expectations on young people and on society.” (p. 347)

- Recommendations 249-252 concerning equal opportunity policies.

The Education of Isolated Children

- Notes the varied educational needs of isolated children and that “The challenge is to minimize the educational effects of isolation, while recognizing that true equal opportunity for every child in the State is not possible.” (p. 350)
- Provides a brief overview of current programmes in place for isolated children and makes the following recommendations:
 - Recommendation 253: “That the Distance Education centre of the Education Department of Western Australia be provided with the resources necessary to maintain and expand the range and level of services which it provides currently.” (p. 352)
 - Recommendation 254: “That future curriculum development work conducted within the Education Department of Western Australia include the development of a broader range of units which can be used by isolated students.” (p. 352)
 - Recommendation 256: “That encouragement be given to a variety of methods for instruction and to making more widely available to all schools correspondence and other materials developed for isolated students.” (p. 353)
 - Recommendation 257: “That there be more effective co-ordination of the production programmes of the Education Department of Western Australia’s Distance Education Centre and the Curriculum and Audio-Visual Branches.” (p. 353)
 - Recommendation 258: “That special encouragement and assistance be given to country schools to develop school-to-work and school-to-post secondary education transition courses, including components of careers education and work experience.” (p. 354)
 - Recommendations 259-260 concerning issues with regards to staffing provisions in rural and isolated schools.
 - Recommendation 264: “That tertiary institutions provide undergraduate and post-graduate programmes on rural education, as part of their offerings in teacher education.” (p. 358)

Disruptive Students

- Notes issues with regards to disruptive students and student behaviour and outlines Recommendations 265-272.