



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION

NEW SOUTH WALES

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10 May 2005

Secretary
Standing Committee on Education & Vocational Training
House of Representatives
Parliament of Australia
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: evt.reps@aph.gov.au

RE: INQUIRY INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

CEC,NSW represents 585 NSW Catholic schools which employ 17,695 teachers (head count 2003).

In response to your Standing Committee's inquiry, CEC wishes to place on record, through the attached submission, what it regards as key issues relevant to the Inquiry Terms of Reference.

In particular, CEC identifies the following matters for further exploration by the Inquiry:

- Early implementation of teacher practicums as a strategy to address trainee teacher attrition rates; (see submission at 3)
- The need for teacher education to reflect the pluralism of Australian society; (see submission at 5)
- Consideration of a 'middle years' approach to teacher training as a means of promoting labor market flexibility with respect to the supply of teachers; (see submission at 9)
- The centrality of the practicum to effective teacher training and the need for it to be properly resourced by Government; (see submission at 11)

For further information contact:

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CEC appreciates the opportunity to bring its matters of concern in relation to teacher education to the attention of the Commonwealth Parliament.

Sincerely

Brian Croke
Executive Director

attachment



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ATTACHMENT

SUBMISSION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING:—INQUIRY INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

1. Selecting Students for Teacher Education

Selection criteria should combine the assessment of both:

- academic attributes assessed by Universities Admissions Index; and
- personal attributes, including the capacity to relate to children/teenagers, assessed by interview.

2. Attracting High Quality Students

Factors which need to be addressed include:

- Salary progression after initial years of employment
- Community recognition through credible Accreditation processes, such as those now being developed by the NSW Institute of Teachers
- Study/training incentives through the provision of HECS scholarships

In particular CEC advocates a return to government funded teacher education scholarships, inclusive of living allowances, as prevailed in the 1960's and early 1970's.

3. Attrition Rates

First it is arguable that attrition is not of itself a negative result if the alternative is the continuing engagement of reluctant teacher trainees/teachers.

Research is required to identify reasons for separation both:

- during preservice training
- during the initial five years of teaching.

One strategy to address attrition would be the adoption of flexible pathways for re-entry following separation, so as to provide for second chance training.

Also the expansion of formal government sponsored teacher exchange programs with OECD countries should be considered as a means of addressing international teacher mobility issues.

Early implementation of appropriate teacher practicums could also help address attrition issues. So too could the appointment of experienced practitioner mentors. In NSW this might be achieved through partnerships involving Universities, teacher employers and the Institute of Teachers.

Finally an holistic approach to teacher education will help address attrition issues, see 5 below.

4. University Selection and Recognition of Faculty Members

There is concern that University faculty members are not sufficiently aware of or engaged with contemporary teaching contexts.

Selection of faculty members should take into account:

- Appointment of teachers Accredited by the NSW Institute of Teachers at the level of “Professional Leadership” as temporary faculty members
- A mix of staff with recent school experience and tertiary experience
- ITC skills related to Teaching and Learning
- Knowledge of school management issues e.g. OH&S issues, Child Protection issues
- The ability to apply contemporary student management issues/research/practice
- Salary parity with school-based executive appointments

5. Education Philosophy

Teacher education must reflect the pluralism of Australian society. Schools need to be able to select teachers who can support the ethos and purposes of the school. This is necessary in order that parents may select a school which is congruent with their beliefs and values, including religious beliefs and values.

Consequently teacher education needs to be:

- available from a range of properly accredited providers
- founded on clear understandings of the nature and identity of the children/students who the teachers will teach
- committed to excellence and the realisation of the full potential of all persons
- capable of providing for the:
 - academic
 - emotional
 - physical
 - spiritualdevelopment of the emergent teacher.

Broad, multifactor teacher education should be the aim.

Effective teacher education will, of itself, help address attrition issues, see 3 above.

6. Interaction between Education and Other Faculties

In many ways teacher education requires a synthesis of learning opportunities relating to:

- Education philosophy
- Teaching/Learning practice
- Content/discipline knowledge
- Social understandings

The aim, as noted above, is the holistic development of the teacher.

To this end, and within course time constraints, trainee teachers should have the opportunity to study across faculties, in addition to core educational studies. Cross faculty study could include:

- Disciplines e.g. Science, Economics
- Relevant professional studies e.g. law, psychology, health studies, administration, statistics.

Education faculties should ensure that questions of what constitutes best practice teaching and learning are addressed in the training of each student teacher.

It is critically important that sufficient time is provided for a range of practicum experiences.

HECS arrangements, including scholarships, should be designed to facilitate cross faculty study.

7. Examine the Preparation of Primary and Secondary Teaching Graduates

CEC supports the framework for teacher development as adopted by the NSW Institute of Teachers. That is CEC supports professional preparation through:

➤ **Three Domains:**

- Professional Knowledge
- Professional Practice
- Professional Commitment

and;

➤ **Seven Elements:**

- Teachers know their subject/content and how to teach that content to their students
- Teachers know their students and how students learn
- Teachers plan, assess and report for effective learning
- Teachers communicate effectively with their students
- Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills
- Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice
- Teachers are actively engaged members of their profession and the wider community.

In this context CEC agrees that the following matters as identified by the Standing Committee require particular development during the preparation of trainee teachers:

- application of ICT to teaching and learning in the classroom
- classroom management skills
- effective teaching of literacy and numeracy skills to all children
- effective use of educational performance data

CEC believes that a key strategy for the realisation of these goals is the further development of adequate practicum experiences for trainee teachers.

8. Examine the role and input of schools and their staff to the preparation of trainee teachers

As noted CEC strongly believes in the need to reinvigorate the practicum experience for all trainee teachers.

Also as recognised through the establishment of the NSW Institute of Teachers the formation of the new teacher also needs to be pursued during the early years of employment. It is unrealistic to assume that teachers can be fully “formed” at the point of exit from pre-service education.

In this context CEC supports the implementation of NSW Institute of Teachers model which seeks to directly involve schools and their teachers in an ongoing process of teacher professional growth. For NSW teachers this growth will proceed through four stages: Graduate teacher, Professional Competence, Professional Accomplishment, Professional Leadership.

Commonwealth authorities can assist this process by synchronising initiatives such as AQTP with State based teacher accreditation processes. Also NIQTSL should be developed in a manner complementary to the aims and processes of the NSW Institute of Teachers.

9. Investigate the appropriateness of the current split between Primary and Secondary education training

While the separate development of Primary and Secondary teachers should be maintained, some opportunities for combining primary and secondary teacher training courses should be revisited. While some of the needs of primary and secondary teachers are different the theoretical basis of many issues, such as behaviour management, are the same.

The re-emergence of the Middle School approach in recent years is indicative of the overlapping needs of primary and secondary school teaching.

Catholic teacher educators have in the past engaged with “middle years” approaches to teacher education. This historical experience identified the following implementation issues:

- the need for multiple practicums related to both primary and secondary school settings
- the need to ensure appropriate levels of subject/content knowledge relevant to syllabus requirements, especially for secondary teachers.

A middle years approach could promote labour market flexibility with respect to the supply of teachers. Current data suggest an over supply of primary teachers, while shortages persist in the secondary years. Opportunities for integrated approaches to Primary/Secondary training would help promote labour force mobility for new teachers.

In addition specific recruitment strategies are needed to address the developing shortage of secondary Science and Maths teachers. UAI and HECS incentives should be provided.

10. Examine the construction, delivery and resourcing of ongoing professional learning for teachers already in the work force

In NSW ongoing professional development needs to be directly linked to the NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation levels and processes.

Consequently future Commonwealth initiatives in this area need to be properly co-ordinated with State-based Accreditation requirements both in respect of:

- Teacher Accreditation by the NSW Institute of Teachers
- Accreditation of programs of recognised Professional Development by the NSW Institute of Teachers.

11. Examine the adequacy of the funding of teacher training courses by university administration

CEC is of the clear view that the critical teacher training funding priority is the proper resourcing of the practicum experience for trainee teachers.

The practicum needs to:

- commence early in the university experience
- be replicated in a number of different school contexts
- allow teachers to experience both Primary and Secondary teaching settings.