



AAPAE NEWSLETTER NO 2

27th MARCH 2003

TESTING TIMES by Cecelia Bradley

AAPAE Schools in NSW are faced with the possibility of more regulation, financial and educational accountability to the government as a result of

Warren Grimshaw's REVIEW of NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS in NSW: REPORT 1

The existence, as well as the contents of this Report highlights a major problem for our schools as the testing times continue to occupy the attention and energies of all those involved..

They were not involved in the consultations nor did they or AAPAE have an opportunity to make submissions. How did this happen? How do we get to be included in the loop when decisions which directly affect us are being made by others? The list of submissions and consultations to the review includes representatives from various independent, religious schools and organizations and of course the Association of Independent Schools, but not one of our schools is mentioned. I have checked with one of the schools and they did not receive any notification. AAPAE did not know about it till recently and the report was tabled in 2002 . The legislation to implement the recommendations is soon to be circulated. It may our only chance to have any consultation or input before it is enacted. Grimshaw has acquired time to write a second report to cover financial and funding matters specifically, so we now have the opportunity to find ways to be heard and hopefully to give some feedback on the first report before the government sets it in legislation.

The Report stresses the desire for

QUALITY of schools,

RIGOROUS STANDARDS

HIGHER STANDARDS of REPORTING to Government

GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY for STATE FUNDING

COLLABORATIVE CROSS-SECTORAL PLANNING and

IMPROVED CO-OPERATION between government and non- government schools and systems.

The latter two points seem to be positive notions but indicate an attraction and a tendency for more convergence of the two systems bringing financial educationally and regulatory sameness. The AIS response noted that the report seems based on the premise that something is wrong and needs to be fixed.

The **CONCERNS** I wish to highlight are as follows.

There is a recommendation that schools base their programmes on the **CONTENT** and **OUTCOMES** of the Board of Studies Syllabuses. They do at least allow for schools with particular philosophical or religious objections to the total use of Board of Studies materials to use other

materials, but they have to ensure that their alternative programme “addresses the development needs of the students and assists students to achieve their educational potential” Rec 2 (h)
One of the significant recommendations for AAPAE schools is that all schools in receipt of public funding from the NSW Government should be part of the SAME PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK. In the hierarchy of objectives of this process there is the minister, the government, the people of the state and the parents. There is no mention of the very people whom this most directly affects,- THE KIDS! This will be in addition to the already comprehensive accountability to the Federal Government. There will be a requirement to report to the community according to the same core indicators as the public schools use, and these will be performance in **statewide literacy and numeracy tests and public examinations:**
teaching standards

retention rates in high schools

enrolment policies and profiles

student welfare and discipline policies

complaints and grievances resolution policies

school improvement targets and

summary financial information from all sources and expenditure. (Ed&Fin Reporting Rec No5)

The report recommends the expansion of the Minister’s Report to Parliament on the quality of all schools and this should include as well as HSC and School Certificate:

BASIC SKILLS TESTS such as those used to report to the Commonwealth on national Literacy and numeracy bench marks

Performance trends would be reported **COMPARING** current year with previous years

“OVER TIME NEW AREAS OF REPORTING could be included AS ADDITIONAL STATEWIDE TESTS COME ON STREAM”

The requirements for setting up new schools is also included in this report and is another whole subject in itself.

There is also a recommendation to change the Administrative structure by setting up a NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL as a statutory body with direct reporting relationship to the Minister.

For more information see www.det.nsw.edu.au/review/ngsreview/welcome.htm

I return to my initial point. AAPAE and member schools have not been part of this review process and as a result we are faced with even more pressure to accept the inevitability of testing as a way of school life. Part of the problem is that we have not yet built up a public profile and this is an example of the need to give more time and attention to this aspect of the association. Kinma and Currumbena are working together to develop strategies and a plan of action and they would like support from other schools and individuals and the association.

Plan of Action

Keep a watching brief on reviews and legislation in all states

write to Warren Grimshaw directly and request opportunity to put our case

NSW Education Minister and Shadow Minister, introducing AAPAE and presenting a case for input re testing

Federal Minister for Education and Shadow Minister introducing AAPAE

State Ministers

AIS (Associations of Independent Schools)

NCISA (Nat Council of Independent Schools Associations)

Please note for your diaries.....

**3rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION for PROGRESSIVE &
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
is being held at
PINE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
in BRISBANE
from 2nd-4th OCTOBER 2003.**

Please see accompanying flyer for more details.
Hope to see many of you there and participating in this event

2003 AGM for AAPAE
will be held as part of the conference.

INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

HUMAN RIGHTS in EDUCATION

Is being held in
ALBANY, NEW YORK
From 16th-24th JULY, 2003.

For more details see the website

www.idec2003.com

for those who do not have access to the web contact

DANA BENNIS
162 WOLF HILL RD
MELVILLE NY

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USA

There is also youth committee for those students who want to be involved in the organization and
planning of the conference

Contact Isaac Graves

youthcommittee@idec2003.com

The dates for this conference clash with the AAPAE conference but I thought it may be of interest to many in our group as well so worth letting you know about it.

Byron Bay Region, NSW Australia 27 September-4 October, 2003

Australia will host the third international Soul in Education conference with the theme Celebrating Spirit of Learning

Who is it for?

The conference is for both the local and global community. It is open to educators and students from all domains, committed 'life-long learners' and interested representatives from indigenous and multicultural communities, parents and youth.

An experiential week-long international gathering
for innovative thinkers, practitioners
and all those committed to fostering
soul in education, human potential and learning for life

The conference will be hosted by Spirit of Learning Inc, a non-profit, non-sectarian association established in Sydney in 1995. Affiliations and partnerships are provided by a range of Australian educational institutions including The School of Social Ecology and Life-Long Learning, University of Western Sydney, Southern Cross University, Adult Community Education (Northern Rivers, NSW), La Trobe University (Melbourne), Byron Bay Community Primary School and the Holistic Education Network (Tasmania).

Acknowledgment of collaboration and assistance from the business community and educational organisations will be communicated through all our publications and on our website www.spiritoflearning.com/conference/

A PLEA!

**Please spread the word, especially to the kids about AAPAE,
JOIN AAPAE and participate in our network.**

**Attend the 2003 conference where we can continue the
development of the association and our valuable connections with
each other.**

Send articles, photographs etc for this newsletter

**Send a blank email to
ausschools@yahoogroups.com**

Website: <http://bastion.marbury.sa.edu.au/aapae>