

Diocesan Policy on Education

(A report from the Standing Committee)

Background

1. At its meetings in March, April and May 2003, the Standing Committee engaged in a number of policy discussions on education. These discussions culminated in May 2003 with the Standing Committee requesting that a draft diocesan policy statement on education be prepared for its consideration at a subsequent meeting.

2. A draft policy statement has now been prepared and considered by the Standing Committee. The draft statement is set out in Attachment 1.

3. The draft statement includes in paragraphs 3.23 and 3.24 policies previously agreed by the Standing Committee concerning the governance of diocesan schools. For the purposes of paragraph 3.24, a copy of the statement of faith approved by the Standing Committee for signing by lay persons elected to the councils of diocesan schools is set out in Attachment 2.

Draft policy statement

4. The draft policy statement is intended to form the basis of a broad framework within which to address the full range of educational activities within the Diocese. In particular it is considered that the development of a broad based diocesan education policy will –

- Generate confidence and clarity about the nature of and commitment to education that is Christian within the Diocese.
- Provide a stimulus for those involved in educational activities within the Diocese.
- Provide a basis for assessing educational activities undertaken within the Diocese.
- Provide a platform from which to speak to the media on issues relevant to education.
- Position the Diocese to take advantage of a number of emerging opportunities, for example the teacher education program.

5. The draft policy statement has been prepared with a view to replacing a diocesan education policy put in place in 1984. Historically, the 1984 policy was drawn up to deal with a number of specific educational issues confronting the Diocese at the time, particularly Government funding of education. However the 1984 policy does not deal with a number of other broader issues concerning education and is generally in need of updating.

6. A copy of the 1984 Policy is set out in Attachment 3.

Action taken by the Standing Committee

7. The Standing Committee has requested that –

- (a) the following motion be moved at the forthcoming session of the Synod “by request of the Standing Committee” –

“Synod –

- (a) supports the continued development of a broad based diocesan policy on education, and
- (b) requests that the Standing Committee bring to the 2007 session of Synod for its consideration a revised policy statement taking into account any written comments and suggestions made by Synod members, and
- (c) requests that Synod members provide any comments to the Diocesan Secretary by 31 March 2007.”, and

- (b) the Diocesan Secretary move the following procedural motion at the forthcoming session of the Synod –

“Synod agrees to the following arrangements for considering the draft policy statement on education –

- (a) the motion at item X on today’s Business Paper will be taken to have been moved and seconded, and

- (b) the mover may speak up to 20 minutes and the seconder may speak up to 10 minutes, and
 - (c) the Synod will then proceed to debate the motion, and
 - (d) at an appropriate time during the debate, the President may request that Synod members discuss the draft policy statement in groups and provide written comments and suggestions about the draft policy statement, and
 - (e) after the debate has ended the mover has a right to reply,
- and suspends so many of the business rules as would prevent these arrangements.”

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

ROBERT WICKS

Diocesan Secretary

19 September 2006

Draft Diocesan Policy Statement on Education

1. Statement of commitment

The Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney (the Diocese) as part of its mission[†] is committed to encouraging lifelong learning for all its members. It is therefore supportive of education that is Christian within families, parishes, in educational institutions and in informal situations that cater for the spiritual, intellectual, social, moral, aesthetic and physical development of people through pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary and adult learning.

[†] **The Diocesan mission** is To glorify God by proclaiming our saviour the Lord Jesus Christ in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, so that everyone will hear his call to repent, trust and serve Christ in love, and be established in the fellowship of his disciples while they await his return.

(See www.sydneyan Anglicans.net/mission/what_is_the_mission/)

2. Education that is Christian

Education that is Christian is any activity which is informed by *a biblical theology and worldview*[#], and which promotes teaching and learning that -

- glorifies God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- affirms the intrinsic worth of all humans who are made in the image of God;
- recognises that God is the source of all knowledge and purpose;
- encourages the study of all disciplines in an atmosphere of enquiry;
- recognises that all learning has moral and social dimensions;
- respects individual differences and diverse ways of learning;
- is committed to providing for those with special needs;
- is designed to explain and apply the gospel message that Jesus, through his incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, is both Lord and Christ and invites a personal response of faith;
- promotes the study of the Bible;
- develops and equips people to live by faith in Jesus Christ;
- encourages people to serve one another in love, both in Christian community and in the wider world;
- applies biblical teaching to contemporary issues;
- encourages an understanding of God's work through the history and present life of the Christian church; and
- provides freedom for the uncommitted to explore the relevance of the Christian faith and other belief systems for themselves.

[#] *A biblical theology and worldview* is built on an appreciation of –

- the sovereignty of God and the goodness of his purposes in creation and redemption;
- the unique place of Jesus Christ as the Son who reveals the Father and who alone restores us to relationship with him;
- the value of all men and women as those created in the image of God;
- the reality of universal human sin and its consequences in guilt, corruption, an enslavement to rebellion, and death with judgement;
- the centrality of the cross of Christ in God's plan to redeem men and women from sin and all its consequences;
- the importance of the resurrection as the affirmation of God's purposes and the proclamation of Jesus' future role as judge;
- the gift of the Spirit to unite us to Christ, awakening faith and bringing new life;
- the certainty of Jesus' return to bring God's good purposes to their completion; and

- the authority of Scripture as the word of God written, understood on its own terms, to direct our response to God's mercy at every level.

3. General Principles

In a democratic society we recognise and affirm the respective roles and responsibilities of the individual, the family, the church, public and private educational institutions, and the state.

The Diocese is committed to the following general principles. The principles in 3.1 to 3.8 apply to all Diocesan activities and organisations. The remaining principles are grouped according to their applicability to particular types of activities and organisations.

- 3.1 The recognition of **the importance of quality education** in enabling people to reach their full God-given potential;
- 3.2 The biblical principle of the **primacy of parental responsibility** for the education of their children;
- 3.3 The importance of **choice and accessibility of educational opportunities best suited to the learning needs of the individual**, whether in a public or non-government educational institutions;
- 3.4 The social as well as individual benefits accruing from **alternative forms of education** to cater for human diversity;
- 3.5 The **encouragement of professional development of staff in all diocesan organisations**;
- 3.6 The requirement that **appropriate child protection practices and occupational health and safety standards** be observed in all educational activities sponsored by the Diocese;
- 3.7 The receipt of **government funding** for the provision of educational services **not precluding the delivery of faith-based educational programs** appropriate for the stage of development of the recipients;
- 3.8 The **maintenance of exemptions under Commonwealth and state anti-discrimination legislation** to enable Anglican educational institutions to select suitable employees, to enrol students in a way that is consistent with their enrolment policies, and to deliver faith-based educational services;

[in relation to schools and pre-schools]

- 3.9 The **importance of public education** for the development of civil democratic society in Australia;
- 3.10 The importance of **education in the primary faith of the family by maintaining Special Religious Education** in NSW primary and secondary schools to support Anglican and other parents who have chosen the public system to meet the needs of their children;
- 3.11 The **support of parental choice by the provision of exemplary care and nurture of the whole child, explicit biblical instruction and examples of faithful moral living** in affordable, high quality Anglican schooling;
- 3.12 The importance of Anglican schools **fostering links between school students and their families and local churches** and the avoidance of any activities that will compete with such links;
- 3.13 The **importance of voluntary Christian groups** in government and non-government schools in nurturing the faith of students and providing a supportive Christian forum for the exploration of issues that concern students;
- 3.14 The need for an independent body, such as the NSW Board of Studies, **setting curriculum** that meets the needs of schools from all sectors, **conducting public examinations** for awards, and **registering non-government schools**;
- 3.15 The need for an independent body, such as the NSW Institute of Teachers, **registering teachers and setting standards** for their professional development and access to leadership responsibilities;

- 3.16 The **support of local initiatives that provide Christian long day care and pre-school programs;**
- 3.17 The importance of **recruiting and training Christian people** who are committed to quality teaching and learning and education that is Christian to serve in public and non-government schools and pre-schools;
- 3.18 The importance of **Christian teachers who are committed to quality teaching and learning and education that is Christian, serving in public and non-government schools and pre-schools;**
- 3.19 The encouragement of Christian teachers to undertake professional development, further studies and work experience that will equip them to **exercise Christian leadership in schools;**
- 3.20 The **support and encouragement of Anglican schools** throughout the Province of New South Wales;
- 3.21 The **alignment of the culture and environment of Anglican schools**, especially in relation to the use of wealth and the allocation of resources for the good of others, with the teaching of Biblical principles;

[in relationship to Anglican residential colleges sponsored by the Diocese]

- 3.22 The **importance of university residential colleges** that support students in their learning and academic research, and that facilitate gospel proclamation and model Christian living in community;

[in relation to governance of Anglican educational institutions]

- 3.23 The **overriding aim of each Anglican school and university college** being to educate people in ways consistent with the teaching of the Bible and gospel of Jesus Christ, and to maintain and uphold the Christian faith in teaching and practice;
- 3.24 The importance of each **lay person elected or appointed as a member of an Anglican school or university college council**, prior to taking up office, being required to sign a statement of faith and support of the council's overriding aim in a form determined from time to time by the Synod of the Diocese or its Standing Committee;
- 3.25 The provision of **induction and training for council members of Anglican educational institutions** in their responsibilities as council members;

[in relation to churches]

- 3.26 The **provision of church-based educational programs for people of all ages, by catering for their preferred learning styles**, in order to increase their understanding of the Scriptures, to deepen their personal devotion to Christ as Lord and Saviour, and to increase their capacity to live faithful and fulfilling Christian lives;
- 3.27 The importance of the **recruitment, selection and training of godly people for the leadership** of congregations and parishes;
- 3.28 The **provision of high quality reformed Evangelical theological education** as a preparation for Christian ministry and service;
- 3.29 The value and necessity of **ongoing professional development of clergy and lay workers** who serve local churches and in special chaplaincy positions;
- 3.30 The **clear presentation of the gospel through the preaching and teaching ministries** of its churches;
- 3.31 The **encouragement of all Christian people to identify, develop and use their spiritual gifts** in the service of Christ and others;
- 3.32 The **fostering of a balance between work, family and church** that has in view God's intentions for each for holistic living for people at all stages of development;

[in relation to community support services and special chaplaincies]

- 3.33 The benefits of **strengthening communities through the provision of family educational and training programs** that are based on enhancing and supporting relationship growth and development;
- 3.34 The **importance of providing professional and theological training for staff** who are delivering or supporting services to the community;
- 3.35 The encouragement of community harmony through the **provision of culturally sensitive and appropriate education and training programs**;
- 3.36 The **spiritual, moral, emotional and social benefits from having trained chaplains** for schools, TAFE colleges, universities, hospitals, correctional services, Defence Forces and the police and emergency services;

[in relation to camping, conferencing and outdoor education]

- 3.37 The importance of **learning experiences that can be gained through camping, conferencing and outdoor education programs**;

[in relation to educational leadership, advocacy and research]

- 3.38 The importance of providing **educational leadership** for the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools, Provincial Commission on Christian Education and Inter-faith Religious Education Dialogue;
- 3.39 The **benefits of consultancy and advocacy services** through the Anglican Education Commission;
- 3.40 The importance of **encouraging leaders** of Anglican educational institutions **to play an active role in shaping and implementing public policy**;
- 3.41 The **encouragement of research** in educational matters affecting the educational activities of the Diocese;

4. Specific activities (principles and applications):

It is expected that Anglican organisations and programs will take the relevant General Principles, as set out in section 3 above, into account when framing their employment, staff professional development and other education policies. These organisations and programs include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Pre-schools
- ❖ Schools
- ❖ University colleges
- ❖ Theological and training colleges
- ❖ Churches
- ❖ Camping programs
- ❖ Diocesan organisations: Diocesan offices and the Secretariat; Anglican Retirement Villages; Anglicare; Anglican Media; Anglican Youthworks; Evangelism Ministries; Ministry Training and Development; Professional Standards Unit; Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation

Statement of Faith of School Council Members

1. I believe and hold to the truth of the Christian faith as set forth in the Apostles' Creed.

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.*

2. In particular I believe -
 - (a) there is only one way to God which is through his Son, Jesus Christ, who died for us the death that everyone deserves; and
 - (b) that God's word, the Bible, is the one final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
3. I acknowledge that the School to whose Council I am elected or appointed aims to educate young people in ways consistent with the teaching of the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to this end I support the Council's commitment to maintain and uphold the Christian faith in teaching and practice.
4. I shall endeavour to fulfil my duties as a member of the School Council to which I am elected or appointed in accordance with this declaration and the ordinance by which the Council is constituted.
5. I agree that my continuance as a Council member is dependent upon my continuing agreement with this declaration and I undertake to resign if this ceases to be the case.

Policy On Education

DIOCESAN EDUCATION COMMISSION
BOARD OF EDUCATION, DIOCESE OF SYDNEY

SUMMARY STATEMENT ON THE
DIOCESE OF SYDNEY'S POLICY ON EDUCATION
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION OF
GOVERNMENT AID TO SCHOOLS

Submitted to the Synod of October, 1984
for Adoption as Diocesan Policy

This statement of the Diocese of Sydney's current Policy on Government Aid is based on documentation covering the past 25 years, consisting of motions passed, reports adopted and documents and statements received and/or endorsed by the Diocesan Synod, as well as of documents issued by the Board of Education and more recently specifically by the Diocesan Education Commission.

I. Basic Principles

The Diocese of Sydney:

1. Accepts the primacy of parental responsibility in education. Therefore in its educational policy, it is committed to reflect the viewpoint of Anglican parents and to uphold their rights in educational matters, in terms of Biblical principles.
2. Supports the principle of parental right of choice in education and believes that it should apply not only as between government and non-government schools but also, to the fullest practicable extent, within the public education system.
3. Supports the principle of independence in education, in the sense of ensuring freedom for the existence of alternative forms of schooling to the public education system. Such independent schools serve as a means of providing for the practical expression of parental right of choice and as a democratic safeguard against a State monopoly in education.
4. Encourages parental participation in education and therefore supports the continuation and extension of the right of parents to play an active role in educational decision-making at all levels and especially in the education of their children at the local level.

II. Practical Consequences of Those Principles

A. In Respect of Public Education

The Diocese of Sydney:

5. Acknowledges as consistent with biblical principles, and therefore fully supports, the right of Anglican parents to educate their children in the public school system, while recognising that their reasons for doing so may range from philosophical conviction to geographical or financial necessity.
6. Reaffirms its traditional support for public education, and asserts that its promotion of church schools rests on its support for the principle of independence and is in no way an expression of opposition to public education.
7. Is therefore committed to support parents in ensuring that the public education system in N.S.W. is a suitable vehicle for the education of children of Christian parents. As a corollary of such a commitment, the Diocese encourages the active participation of Christian parents, teachers and administrators in public education.
8. Is further committed to providing Special Religious Education in government primary and secondary schools, in accord with the principles of consultation and co-operation enunciated in the Ministerial Committee's Report on Religion in Education in N.S.W. Government

Schools, 1981. Consequently, the Diocese acknowledges that the training, equipping and encouraging of clergy and lay people in the provision of an effective S.R.E. ministry is a diocesan and parochial priority in terms of finance and manpower.

9. As a result, the Diocese of Sydney supports:
 - i. The retention of the 1880 Public Instruction Act's inclusion of "general religious teaching" in its definition of "secular instruction" (Clause 7) and the continuation of its specific provisions for Special Religious Education (Instruction) (Clause 17).
 - ii. The implementation of General Religious Education as it is defined in the Report on Religion in Education in N.S.W. Government Schools, 1981 and only in terms of the Recommendations of that Report.
 - iii. The continuance of the Departmental policy of employing teachers who, acting in loco parentis, merit the trust of parents and pupils alike, and who are willing to respect, and not to undermine, Christian values.

B. In Respect of Non-Government Schools

The Diocese of Sydney:

10. Specifically endorses the contribution already being made to education by its Diocesan church schools and supports, as need arises, the establishment and maintenance of further Diocesan Schools (and certain other types of independent schools) which have the opportunity and responsibility to make their particular contribution to education in a distinctively Christian context. Such schools should be able to preserve and develop the fullest possible degree of independence in their operation, being subject only to minimal registration requirements and that reasonable level of accountability which the government may set as a reflection of community opinion.
11. Has expressed its support for that form of government aid which is 'aid to parents'. One ground of this support is that parents enrolling their children in the school of their choice should be confident that, if that choice is for a non-government school, they will still receive some financial assistance from the government. Hence a basic per capita grant has been seen as the giving of financial assistance to parents in the exercise of their right of choice.
12. Has supported the view that such 'aid to parents' in the form, for instance, of a basic per capita grant which is realistic and significant, should be applicable in respect of all children, irrespective of the school attended.
13. Therefore, in the present debate the Diocese of Sydney would be generally in favour of the following proposition:

If, in relation to this type of 'aid to parents', any differentiation or extension beyond a basic per capita grant is to operate in respect of any child, it should be relative to recognized parental need and not be based on the fee structure or other resources of the school attended.
14. The Diocese of Sydney also supports indirect government aid to all children through access to specialist Departmental and other government agencies.
15. However, the Synod of the Diocese has never declared its support for the proposition that independent schools, as institutions, should receive grants of direct (i.e. capital) government aid, as of right. Nevertheless some forms of direct aid to independent schools are justified on the basis of need, as with government schools. While criteria for determining such need will be complex, they should include the establishment of new schools to meet a demand arising from the desire of parents to exercise their democratic right of choice in the schooling of their children, and also the essential development of an existing school which gives proof of enjoying the support of its own local and/or religious or ideological community. On the other hand, the Diocese of Sydney does not support a policy of maintaining or establishing schools which, by their very nature, are or will be 'needy', in the sense of being virtually dependent on the receipt of direct (capital) government aid, as well as on generous recurrent aid to parents, for their continued existence and development.
16. The Diocese of Sydney is thus committed to the twin basic principles of self-help in independent education on the one hand, and of the fundamental importance of government

schools in meeting the educational needs of the community as a whole, on the other. However, no government or political party at Federal or State levels should use such a Diocesan policy to discriminate against Anglicans by depriving Anglican parents and Anglican church schools of an equitable share in whatever funding schemes they propose for either recurrent or capital grants to non-government schools.

Rev. Canon A. A. Langdon,
Executive Chairman.