

Diocesan Policy Statement 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 was prepared and considered by the Standing Committee and then referred to the Synod in 2006.
3. By resolution 30/06 Synod –
 - (a) supported the continued development of a broad based diocesan policy on education, and
 - (b) requested 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) requested that Synod members provide any comments to the Diocesan Secretary by 31 March 2007.

Development of a revised policy statement

Comments from Synod members

4. At its meeting on 13 November 2006 Standing Committee resolved to constitute a committee comprising Dr Bryan Cowling (chair), Dr Grant Maple, the Rev Andrew Katay and the Rev Dr Mark Thompson, with power to co-opt, to review comments provided by Synod members about the draft diocesan policy on education and to prepare for Standing Committee's consideration at its meeting in July 2007 a revised policy statement taking into account these comments.
5. The committee met on 19 January and then 16 and 23 April 2007 and reviewed each of the questions and comments raised by Synod members during the debate on 18 October 2006, plus those recorded on comment sheets during Synod and the written comments forwarded to the Diocesan Secretary prior to 31 March 2007.
6. Some comments recommended editorial or other minor changes that were quite straightforward, simple to incorporate and seemed to improve the document. Some suggested a change in substance or a major realignment of the policy statement. A few were either opposed, contradictory or irrelevant to the policy and to implement some particular comments would negate others. The overwhelming majority of comments, however, were supportive and encouraging of the general thrust of the policy statement.

7. The main considerations that guided the committee in drafting the revised policy statement were –

- (a) To include four paragraphs of *Introduction* before the *Statement of commitment* to set the broader context.
- (b) To incorporate into the renamed and expanded section *A Christian approach to education* the former footnote explaining the *biblical theology and worldview*, as well as something about learning situations, the components of education, the link between education and God's revelation and the list of teaching and learning outcomes.
- (c) To create a new section for *Education in a democratic society* which addresses the roles and responsibilities in relation to education of the individual, the family, the Church, public and private educational institutions and the State.
- (d) To bring together under the heading *General principles regarding the provision of education* a summary of the key principles that apply to all Diocesan activities and organisations.
- (e) To introduce a new section for the *Application to specific educational activities*, simplify the numbering structure and make the language of all the principles consistent. Within this section create new *sub-sections for early childhood education, public education, other schools and public agencies, tertiary education (rather than just university residential colleges)*, and an expanded section for *educational leadership, professional development, advocacy and research*.
- (f) To change the previous requirement (*old paragraph 3.24*) for each lay person elected or appointed as a member of an Anglican school council to sign a statement of faith. In the revised policy document (*new paragraphs 2.6.2. and 2.6.3.*) the Statement of personal faith and support for the Christian ethos and charter of the organisation becomes optional for members not elected or appointed by Synod, although all members are still required to sign a Statement of support for the Christian ethos and charter of the organisation, and the application of these requirements has been broadened to include clergy and pre-schools and university colleges.

8. The committee recognised that there is much more that could be said, particularly about the philosophy of Christian education and the reasoning for each of the policy statements applicable to specific educational activities. In the view of the committee, however, the policy

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statement itself is not the right place for such material. The Anglican Education Commission has been asked to develop suitable resources and other material to assist the Diocese in the implementation of the policy.

Circulation for further comment

9. The committee presented a revised draft policy statement to Standing Committee on 30 April 2007 and the Standing Committee agreed that this document should be circulated to some 46 schools and other interested organisations and all Standing Committee members, inviting their written comments by 30 June.

10. The committee noted that the Diocesan policy statement on education is intended to form the basis of a broad framework within which to address the full range of educational activities within the Diocese. If the policy statement is adopted by Synod it will have implications for almost every educational activity undertaken in the Diocese. Indeed, as the statement of commitment itself affirms –

“[The Diocese] is eager to support Christian education within families, parishes, educational institutions and informal situations that cater for the spiritual, intellectual, social, moral, aesthetic and physical development of people through pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary education and adult learning in its various forms.”

11. A total of 13 (of the 46 organisations contacted) responded with comments. In addition, one other organisation and three Standing Committee members submitted detailed comments.

Final revisions

12. After considering these further responses the committee made a number of revisions to the statement to refine the wording and improve the flow of the document and clarify the link to and actual text of the Statements required from members of the governing councils of preschools, schools and university colleges.

13. The aspects of the policy that drew the most comment from schools concerned the sections dealing with the application of the principles to Anglican schools and the governance of Anglican organisations.

Policy statement

14. The policy statement on education is attached. It is intended that the statement will –

- (a) generate confidence and clarity about the nature of and commitment to a Christian approach to education within the Diocese,
- (b) provide a stimulus for those involved in educational activities within the Diocese,

- (c) provide a basis for assessing educational activities undertaken within the Diocese,
- (d) provide a platform from which to speak to the media on issues relevant to education, and
- (e) position the Diocese to take advantage of a number of emerging opportunities; for example, the teacher education program.

15. As foreshadowed at Synod last year, the policy statement has been prepared with a view to it 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.

Response of the Standing Committee

16. At its meeting in July 2007, the Standing Committee approved the printing of this report and the attached Diocesan Policy Statement on Education as its response to resolution 30/06.

17. Standing Committee requested the following motion be moved at the forthcoming session of the Synod “by request of the Standing Committee” –

“That the Diocesan Policy Statement on Education be approved in principle.”

18. Standing Committee also requested the following procedural motion be moved at the forthcoming session of the Synod “by request of the Standing Committee” –

“Synod agrees, for the purposes of considering the motion appearing at item X (the ‘In Principle Motion’), to the following arrangements –

- (a) the In Principle Motion will be taken to have been moved and seconded, and
- (b) the mover may speak up to 20 minutes about the In Principle Motion, and
- (c) the seconder may speak up to 10 minutes about the In Principle Motion, and
- (d) the procedures for the making of ordinances under Part 5 of the business rules (from and including rule 5.5(2) but excluding rules 5.7(3)(b), 5.9 and 5.10) are to apply as if the Diocesan Policy Statement on Education was an ordinance, and
- (e) if a motion that the Diocesan Policy Statement on Education pass as a policy of the Synod is

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carried under business rule 5.7(1), the mover of the motion may forthwith move the following –

‘Synod –

- (a) requests that a copy of the Diocesan Policy Statement on Education, or the relevant part or parts thereof, be circulated to all parishes and Diocesan organisations, and
- (b) requests that each parish and Diocesan organisation review its own policies where necessary to ensure they are consistent with the Diocesan Policy.’,

and suspends so many of the business rules which would prevent these arrangements.”

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

ROBERT WICKS
Diocesan Secretary

26 July 2007