

Government Schools Education Council

Annual Report 2009-10

The Government Schools Education Council (the Council) is established in accordance with section 54 of the *Education Act 2004* (the Act).

The Council's functions are to advise the Minister on any aspect of the ACT public school system; and when asked by the Minister, to inquire into and give advice to the Minister on any aspect of the ACT public school system. Under section 66 (1) of the Act the Minister must present a copy of the advice to the Legislative Assembly.

The Council also meets with the Non-government Schools Education Council to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Achievements in 2009-10

The Council provided ongoing advice on the impact of the Australian Curriculum; National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the *My School* website on ACT public education. This was achieved through:

- meetings of the Council Chair with the Minister and Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Training, particularly around the time of the launch of the *My School* website
- Council members participating in consultations about the Australian Curriculum held by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- Council members monitoring the achievement of ACT public schools as presented on the *My School* website and discussing the data with Jayne Johnston, Executive Director School Improvement who attends Council meetings as the representative of the Chief Executive of the Department of Education and Training
- the Chair participating in the ACT's Curriculum Renewal Taskforce.

The Council maintained a strong interest in special education throughout 2009-10. This was reflected in Council making input to and monitoring the outcomes of the Review of Special Education and by seeking to ensure that the ACT makes a strong contribution to inclusion of special needs in the Australian Curriculum.

The Council provided government with a view concerning the level of investment in public education that needed to be made in the 2010-11 year so that public education regains its position as the schooling system of choice for the great majority of ACT families. Council's advice also focused on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the recommendations of the Review of Special Education.

The Council demonstrated its commitment to early childhood schools by carrying out an inspection of Narrabundah Early Childhood School and holding its meeting of 4 August 2009 on the premises. This meeting was attended by the Minister and the Chief Executive.

Every opportunity was taken by the Council to identify, celebrate and share in the achievements of public education in the ACT. As well as sending numerous letters of congratulation throughout the year, the Chair attended the Public Education Awards ceremony held on 28 May 2010.

2010-11 goals

- to monitor and provide advice to the Minister on the activities of ACARA and the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) as they relate to public education, especially in regard to teacher professional standards and the development of the senior secondary curriculum in Phase 1 and the K-12 curriculum in Phases 2 and 3 of the Australian Curriculum
- to provide ongoing advice on the recommendations of the Review of Special Education and monitor their implementation
- continue to monitor the achievements of students in Government education in NAPLAN
- to monitor and provide advice on the strategies to enhance the achievements of Indigenous Australian students and staff in ACT public education
- to monitor the range of data generated by public education as part of the revised national reporting process for 2010
- to provide advice to the Minister and Chief Executive on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in ACT public schools
- to maintain a close interest in the progress of early childhood schools
- to continue to seek input from Council membership constituencies concerning all matters pertaining to public schooling
- to continue to meet with the Non-government Schools Education Council.

Council composition

The Council consists of the Chair, Chief Executive of the ACT Department of Education and Training, six community and 10 education members appointed by the Minister.

Criteria for membership

Sections 56 and 57 of the Act state that the Council must consist of the Chief Executive and the Minister must appoint the following members of the Council:

- a chairperson

- six people who, in the Minister’s opinion, have experience in one or more of the areas of business and commerce, public policy, early childhood care, education, the special needs of young people and teacher education (the community members)
- 10 people who, in the Minister’s opinion, represent the views of public school education (the education members), including:
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the peak organisation representing principals
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the government teacher union
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the peak organisation representing parent associations of government schools
 - two education members chosen from nominations of the peak organisation representing students
 - one education member chosen from nominations of organisations representing school boards
 - one education member chosen from nominations of organisations representing preschool parents.

Council members

Ms Di Kerr

Ms Kerr is the Chairperson of the Council, with 20 years teaching experience in ACT public schools, and 12 years at senior management level in the ACT and Western Australian Departments of Education. She also has extensive experience in curriculum development at the national, state and school level. Ms Kerr holds a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education, and is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators and the ACT representative on the Board of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

Ms Jill Burgess

Ms Burgess is a community member on the Council and a lecturer at the Australian Catholic University (Canberra Campus). Ms Burgess is a committee member of the ACT Chapter and a National Councillor of the Australian Association of Special Education Inc. and a committee member on the Coalition of ACT Education Associations. She has extensive experience in a variety of educational settings from early childhood to tertiary level, including teaching, consulting, researching and lecturing in special needs education. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Diploma of Education, Graduate Diploma in Reading and Language Education and a Master of Education (special needs education).

Ms Wendy Cave

Ms Cave is currently the acting principal at Macquarie Primary School and is an education member on the Council representing the Australian Education Union.

She has worked in the ACT Department of Education and Training for 21 years as a teacher and in executive positions. Ms Cave holds a Bachelor of Education.

Ms Laura Darcy

Ms Darcy is a student representative on the Council. During her time at college Ms Darcy was a member of the Student Representative Council. Ms Darcy has participated in parliamentary debates and the Australian National University college science program. Ms Darcy completed year 12 in 2009 at the Canberra College.

Ms Karen Dial

Ms Dial is an experienced board member with stints at Bonython Primary School which included three years as Board Chair. Ms Dial is an education member on the Council representing school boards. She is the Director of a childcare centre and also the operator of a small business. Ms Dial holds an Associate Diploma of Education (Child Care).

Ms Jo Dixon

Ms Dixon is a senior teacher in the Learning and Innovation Support Team in the Faculty of Business and Information Technology at the Canberra Institute of Technology. Ms Dixon represents the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens (P&C) Association as an education member on the Council. She is the President of P&C Council and a member of several of the Council's subcommittees. Ms Dixon has represented the P&C Council on the Assessment and Certification Committee of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies, the Curriculum Renewal Consultative Committee, the Australian School-based Apprenticeships working group and the Teacher Registration working group. Ms Dixon holds a Bachelor of Arts in Computing Studies, Post Graduate Diploma in Information Science and is currently studying towards a Master of Education (Honours).

Ms Carolyn Harkness

Ms Harkness is a life member and councillor of the Canberra Preschool Society. She represents preschools as an education member on the Council.

Ms Harkness is currently lecturing in early childhood education and is the early childhood course coordinator at the Australian Catholic University in Canberra.

Ms Jayne Johnston

Ms Johnston commenced with the Department of Education and Training in April 2009. She is the Executive Director, School Improvement Division.

Ms Johnston represents the Chief Executive on the Council. Ms Johnston was previously the Director, Professional Learning Institute, West Australian Department of Education and Training, and has previously held positions as Director of Schools and District Director within this state. Ms Johnston holds a Bachelor of Science, Masters of Education and a Diploma in Education.

Ms Christine Kallir Preece

Ms Kallir Preece is an education member representing the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens. Ms Kallir Preece has many years of community volunteering experience including terms with Kaleen School Board, Macquarie Primary School Board, ACT Council of P&C and Early Childhood Intervention Australia. Ms Kallir Preece holds a Bachelor of Science and a Graduate Certificate in Management.

Ms Clare Kim

Ms Kim is a student representative on the Council. During her time at college Ms Kim was a member of the Student Representative Council as well as a member of the ACT College Representative Council. Ms Kim is an active member of the community helping organise fundraising for charities and has participated in many forums to encourage youth leadership. Ms Kim completed year 12 in 2009 at the Melba Copland Secondary School.

Ms Christine Pilgrim

Ms Pilgrim is the Principal of North Ainslie Primary School and is an education member representing principals on the Council. She has extensive teaching and executive experience in the ACT and Indonesia. Ms Pilgrim holds a Bachelor of Education.

Dr Kaye Price

Dr Price is a community member who has been involved with public education over many years. She has extensive experience in the area of Indigenous education in Australia and has worked as a primary teacher and in curriculum development. Dr Price holds a Bachelor of Education, Masters of Education and a Doctorate of Philosophy. She currently works with ACARA.

Mr Phil Rasmus

Mr Rasmus is an education member of the Council representing the Australian Education Union. Mr Rasmus has over 30 years experience as a teacher and school leader. He is a member of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the ACT Executive Teachers Association. Mr Rasmus is the current president of the Australian Education Union, ACT Branch. He holds a Bachelor of Science (Hons) and a Graduate Diploma in Education. In May 2010, Mr Rasmus resigned from his position on the Government Schools Education Council.

Mr Bob Ross

Mr Ross is the Manager, Leadership Strategy in the Learning and Teaching Branch of the Department and is an education member on the Council representing principals. Prior to this he was principal of the Melba Copland Secondary School. He has over 26 years teaching experience in New South Wales and the ACT and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Diploma of Education.

Ms Meegan Stuart

Ms Stuart is a community member on the Council and is an Educational Consultant. Ms Stuart has worked in education in the ACT, Western Australia and South Australia and has a Bachelor of Education (Junior Primary/Primary).

Ms Gillian Styles

Ms Styles has over 30 years experience in a range of preschool services in Tasmania and the ACT and is a community member on the Council. Her experience includes teaching, administration, policy and curriculum development, staffing and professional learning. Ms Styles is an executive member of World Organisation for Early Childhood Education, Australia and holds a Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Teaching.

Ms Paula Thompson

Ms Thompson has over 40 years education experience having taught across a range of settings from early childhood to university, both in Australia and overseas. Ms Thompson is a community member on the Council. Ms Thompson has a Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education, majoring in literary studies and a Masters in general education.

Dr Tiemin Wu

Dr Wu is a community member on the Council and is President of the Federation of Chinese Community of Canberra Inc. Dr Wu is currently working with the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, managing Education Services Overseas Schools compliance issues relating to Australian institutions. Dr Wu represented the then Department of Education, Employment and Training at the national roundtable on school policies in 1995. In 2003-2004, he was in charge of teaching skills assessments under the General Skilled Migration Programme. Dr Wu holds a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Education Studies, Doctorate of Philosophy, and is a Master of Business Administration.

Procedures for appointment of members

The Act outlines the conditions under which the Minister may appoint or terminate the appointment of a Council member. As a statutory appointment the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People is consulted on proposed appointments.

Number of meetings

The Council met seven times between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010.

Members Name	Position/representing	Number of Meetings Eligible to Attend	Number of Meetings Attended
Ms Di Kerr	Chair	7	6
Ms Jill Burgess	Community member	7	6
Ms Wendy Cave	Education member	7	4

Members Name	Position/representing	Number of Meetings Eligible to Attend	Number of Meetings Attended
	Australian Education Union		
Ms Laura Darcy	Education member ACT Public Schools Student Network	7	1
Ms Karen Dial	Education member School Board Chairs Network	7	4
Ms Jo Dixon	Education member ACT Council of P&C Associations	7	5
Ms Carolyn Harkness	Education member Canberra Preschool Society	7	6
Ms Jayne Johnston	Proxy for Chief Executive	7	4
Ms Christine Kallir Preece	Education member ACT Council of P&C Associations	7	5
Ms Clare Kim	Education member ACT Public Schools Student Network	7	3
Dr Kaye Price	Community member	7	3
Ms Christine Pilgrim	Deputy Chair Education member Secondary Principals' Association	7	3
Mr Phil Rasmus	Education member Australian Education Union	7	0
Mr Bob Ross	Education member ACT Primary Principals' Association	7	3
Ms Meegan Stuart	Community member	5	2
Ms Gillian Styles	Community member	7	5
Ms Paula Thompson	Community member	7	6
Dr Tiemin Wu	Community member	7	7

Remuneration arrangements

Remuneration for the chairperson is determined by the ACT Remuneration Tribunal in accordance with the provisions of section 10 (1) of the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1995*. The current determination took effect on 23 December 2009. The chairperson is the only member to receive remuneration.

Financial controls

The Council has no funds for which it is responsible therefore Council does not receive or expend funds.

Internal audit and risk management

Council operations are regarded as low risk and the Chair has put processes in place to monitor identified risks. No risk mitigation activities have been required.

Ethical standards

The *ACT Government Boards and Committees Code of Conduct* outlines the standards of behaviour and ethical conduct expected of all people serving on ACT boards and committees. All members are required to declare (in writing) that they will abide by this code before they are appointed. In addition, at each meeting members are given the opportunity to disclose any conflicts of interest that may arise.

Resources

The Department of Education and Training provides secretariat and advisory assistance to the Council. The Council may call on departmental staff to address Council meetings or meet with members to discuss particular issues or programs relevant to the work of the Council. If required, the Council would have access to legal advice through the ACT Government Solicitor's Office.

Council operations

2010-11 Budget Recommendations

The Council was aware of the financial circumstances in framing the ACT Budget and the ongoing implications of the economic downturn. Council welcomed the Government's expressed intention to honour its election promises, particularly in relation to public schooling. Council expressed its appreciation of the incorporation of many of the Council's past suggestions.

Council advised that it believed there were three main areas where budget commitments needed to be made or sustained, even if these are in the out years.

Education of students with disabilities and special needs

Council believed that a commitment needed to be signalled in the budget that the Government intended to implement the recommendations of the Report on the Review of Special Education, particularly in regard to students with special needs in public education.

Implementation of the Australian curriculum

Council welcomed the Minister's comments that the ACT will be at the forefront in implementation but wished to point out that ACT teachers will need to be supported in two main areas – implementation of the science area in the primary years and implementation of history in both primary and secondary years. Council urged that a particular commitment to professional learning for teachers in these areas through 2011 be included in the budget.

Pastoral care in schools

This has been a valued Government initiative and Council believes that further work needs to be done and budgetary commitments made in relation both student and teacher wellbeing.

Expert Working Group to examine National Professional Standards for Teachers

Two Council members, Ms Jo Dixon and Ms Paula Thompson participated in this working group on 13 May 2010. This cross-sectoral expert working group was formed to examine the Standards in more detail and refine the responses from

the workshops held to provide staff with the opportunity to engage in the consultation process.

For more information:

Contact either the secretariat or the Chairperson for the Government School Education Council (GSEC):

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