



Legislation Should Provide a Democratic Framework for Schools

P&C Council's submission to the Schools Legislation Review says the new legislation should extend the democratic foundation upon which the ACT schools system was first established.

The submission rejects a return to centralised bureaucratic provision of education. It also rejects the adoption of market-based mechanisms, such as fees and competition between schools, to determine the operating framework of the school system.

The Council says that the new legislation should support the delivery of education as a common good. It should be based on clear democratic goals, principles and processes.

Council Proposals for New Legislation

Improving equity in education

- incorporation of a statement of values, objectives and principles of government schooling including universal access, non-discriminatory provision and free education;
- changing compulsory attendance requirements to the completion of Year 10 rather than to age 15;
- a new non-punitive process for dealing with persistent non-attendance at school;
- funding schools on the basis of needs; and
- assurances about local access to schools and public consultation on the closure or amalgamation of schools.

Participation in decision-making

- a Government Schools Education Board comprised of parents, teachers and government appointees to determine policies and allocate the government schools budget;
- clarification of the respective roles of school boards and principals;
- a role for school boards in the selection and review of senior staff;
- school boards to approve and review curriculum;
- policies and action plans in support of parent partnerships in schooling; and
- requirements for information on policies, curriculum and student progress to be given to parents.

Accountability for quality

- regular curriculum review;
- a Teacher Registration Board to assure the competency of teachers;
- reporting of schooling outcomes; and
- a process for system and school review and improvement.

Non-government school registration, planning and funding

- educational, safety and welfare, financial and planning criteria for registration;
- a Non-Government Schools Registration Board to administer registration and planning;
- impact assessment procedures for new school proposals;
- ACT funding for non-government schools to be limited to schools whose total funding from private and Commonwealth Government sources is less than 85 per cent of the average cost of a government school.

