

Information Sheet No.30

The School Board

Each government school in the ACT is governed by a board comprising parents, teachers and, in secondary school, students. This group has responsibility for policy making, planning and budgeting in the school - allowing maximum decision-making at the local level.

The **School Board Operation Manual 2007** sets out the information and processes relevant to the operation of school boards. It is an important resource for school board members. It is available on the Department of Education and Training website at www.decs.act.gov.au.

Membership of a school board includes the principal, three parents, two teachers, two students in high schools and colleges and a Department of Education nominee. All members except the principal are usually elected for two year terms and may be re-elected. One of the parent representative is usually selected as board chairperson while the principal is the board's executive officer.

School boards have operated in the ACT since the ACT education system became independent of New South Wales in 1974. The Education Act 2004 defines the main functions of the board as:

- establishing the strategic direction and priorities of the school;
- monitoring and review of school performance and reporting on school performance to chief executive, parents and staff;
- developing, maintaining and reviewing the curriculum;
- developing and reviewing educational policies at the school;
- establishing budgetary policies and approving budgets;
- establishing policies for the efficient and effective use of school assets and management of financial risk;
- developing relations with the community; and
- making recommendations to the chief executive on issues affecting the school.

The board determines broad curriculum policy and has an important role in setting direction of the school. It approves new programs and courses, keeps in touch with community expectations and system guidelines and ensures a regular review of curriculum.

The board approves the budget and reviews its progress through monthly financial statements.

The board is accountable to the department and to the school community through a report prepared at the end of each school year. This annual report should be widely available and discussed in community forums such as the P&C association.

In the ACT members of the community have a legislative right to be fully involved in making the educational decisions which affect them and their children. It is important to be aware of this and to protect this right. ★