

Chapter 11

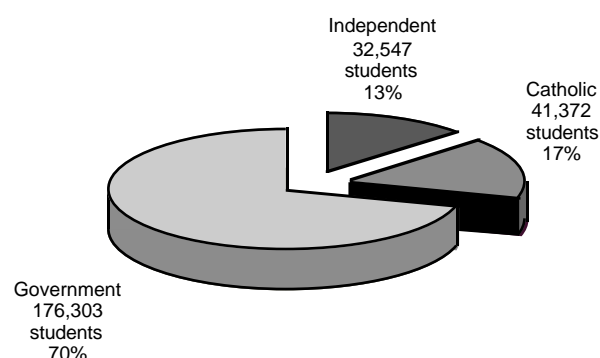
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The valued tradition of cooperation and collaboration between the three schooling sectors continues to enhance schooling for all students in South Australia.

Education at primary and secondary levels is available at government, Catholic and independent schools.

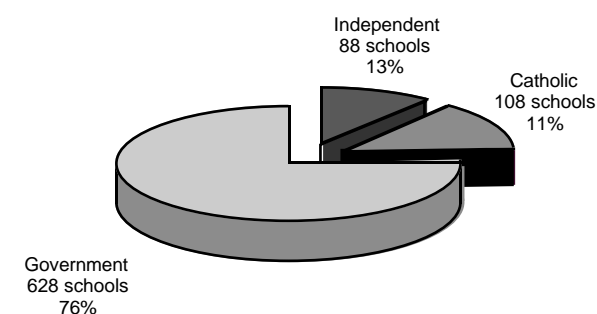
Enrolment at school is compulsory for children aged 6–15 years.

Figure 11.1 Students in South Australian schools, 1999



Source: South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment

Figure 11.2 Schools in South Australia, 1999



Source: South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment

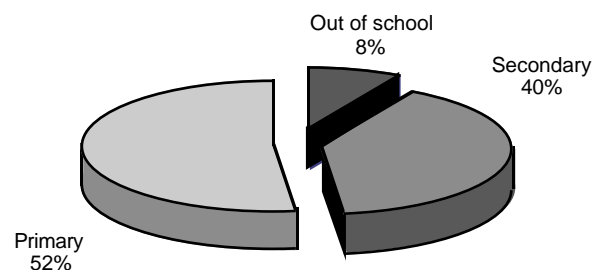
Structure and context of schooling

Government sector

The South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment (DETE) provides services to more than a quarter of a million children and students. The department's mission is to provide high-quality learning, teaching, care, employment and youth services within an integrated, responsive and supportive learning organisation which strives for the continuous improvement in service and performance.

The department works to a rolling three-year strategic plan, the second iteration of which was published in July, 1999. The strategic plan reflects the broader government directions for the State outlined in the document *Directions for South Australia* and in turn informs the strategic planning of its schools, TAFE institutes and other services.

Figure 11.3 Expenditure by State government on government schools, 1998–99



Source: South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment

Catholic sector

The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) sets the direction and policy development for Catholic schools in South Australia. It has responsibility for the 108 Catholic schools in South Australia: 93 in the Archdiocese of Adelaide and 15 in the Diocese of Port Pirie. There are 76 primary schools, 13 secondary schools and 19 schools with a combined primary–secondary enrolment. The majority of Catholic schools in South Australia are governed by the relevant diocese, while a number are governed through a congregational order. Policy implementation, management and administration are coordinated by the Catholic Education Offices of South Australia, which are situated in Adelaide and Port Pirie.

Catholic schools aim to provide a faith-filled environment that supports parents as the primary educators of young people. Catholic schools provide educational programs that educate young people in all dimensions of life and assist in the whole development of each individual student, nurturing their individual gifts and talents.

Independent sector

In 1999, there were 88 independent schools serving 32,547 students. The independent sector is characterised by diversity in terms of the range of schools (primary, secondary, R–12) within the sector, and the diverse group of students whose educational needs are met by these schools. School groups included within the sector are:

- the Anglican Schools Commission of SA
- the Lutheran Schools Association
- Christian community schools
- parent-controlled Christian schools
- unaligned Christian schools
- a Jewish school
- an Islamic school
- a Greek Orthodox school
- Uniting Church schools
- Montessori schools
- non-denominational schools.

The diversity of schools reflected in the above groups of schools is also demonstrated in socioeconomic terms. In 1999, of the 32,547 students enrolled, 6,670 were on School Card; 1,276 were Indigenous or from a language background other than English; 1,596 were in the special needs category; and 3,562 received fee remissions.

Australian Bureau Statistics data from the 1996 census indicates that 2,648 students (11.2 per cent of enrolments) who attended independent (non-Catholic) schools in South Australia were from families that had an annual income of \$20,800 or less; 2,248 families (9.5 per cent of enrolments) earned \$78,000–\$103,999. In respect of Commonwealth funding categories 70 per cent of member schools are in Commonwealth funding categories 9–12, 12.5 per cent are in categories 4–8 and 17.5 per cent are in categories 1–3.

Independence, diversity and choice are important characteristics of the independent sector. The wide range of schools within the independent sector provide and increase the choice and diversity to parents in selecting an educational setting that best suits the needs of their child.

Priority objectives

Government sector

The priority objectives for the department in 1999 were:

1 Education, training and lifelong learning for all South Australians

- Improve the flexibility of pathways to enable students to obtain educational and training qualifications.
- Provide seamless pathways from one level of learning to another.

2 Local management

- Implement the Partnerships 21 local management scheme (particularly for schools) with greater parent, community and industry involvement and increased devolution of responsibilities from State office to schools, institutes and services.

3 Learning in the early years

- Develop programs that support both a child's disposition to learn, and parent involvement in their child's development and learning.

4 Broad and balanced high-quality education and training

- Redevelop the curriculum standards framework from the early years through to the pathways described in the Australian Qualifications Framework.
- Develop the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework to trial and implement in 2000.

- Implement the Vocational Education and Training in Schools Strategy 1999–2000.

5 Focus on country services

- Improve the delivery of children's services, education and training in country areas so that children and students have increased access to quality services.

6 Flexibility of delivery/provision

- Review and develop legislation to enable flexibility in service provision.
- Improve the department's productivity through local management and streamlining services and functions.

7 Targeted employment, youth and training programs

- Plan workforce training and employment programs for targeted industry sectors.

8 Strategically sited and integrated schooling, training and care services

- Improve planning between and within organisations and institutions in order to support flexible pathways between education, training and lifelong learning.

9 Development of a high-performance organisation

- Develop measures of effectiveness and efficiency and benchmarking procedures to monitor and improve education and training and identify areas for improvement.
- Implement effective policies and practices that support the development of a skilled and competent workforce responsive to client needs.

10 Increased business and community confidence in education and training

- Undertake a comprehensive public campaign to demonstrate the fundamental value of high-quality schooling and training in building a prosperous and sustainable society.

Catholic sector

Major goals of the SACCS in 1999 were:

- finalising the implementation of the findings of the Review of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools
- implementing new guidelines for the assessment of school planning applications

- implementing the recommendations of the Review of Funding of Schools, which was completed in 1998
- continuing to monitor population movement and the need for new schools and existing school development
- continuing dialogue about preferred models of schooling in the 21st century through the Models of Schooling working party
- identifying strategies for system reporting of learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy and in other areas of the curriculum
- continuing the development of DUX software for school administration and finance purposes
- continuing to develop initiatives in developing Catholic Studies courses and postgraduate opportunities from undergraduate degree to doctoral level in order to support staff and leaders in Catholic schools.

Independent sector

In 1999, the priority objectives of schooling in the independent sector schools were shaped by the specific educational, cultural and/or religious environment of each school and were in response to relevant State and national educational initiatives. Therefore, specific objectives varied from school to school but generally independent schools continued to be committed to developing and implementing policies and practices that focused on quality in teaching and learning in order to ensure that the needs of all students were met.

During 1999, staff from independent schools participated in activities and workshops to prepare them to meet the sector's obligations under the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan. Many schools within the sector focused on increasing student access to vocational education and training (VET). A significant objective for all independent schools in 1999 related to increasing their awareness and understanding of their responsibilities for students with disabilities. There was also an expanded program to improve the retention rate of Indigenous students through a wide range of support programs to students, staff and their parents.

Significant developments

Government sector

During 1999, the South Australian Premier launched Partnerships 21, the government's strategy for local

governance and management in education, care and training.

The strategy was based on the recommendations of the 1998 ministerial inquiry chaired by Professor Ian Cox, which investigated whether schools, if given greater flexibility in the use of the resources available to them, could manage their affairs more effectively for the benefit of students. The Cox Inquiry involved over 5,500 principals, teachers, union representatives, members of school councils and preschool management committees and other stakeholders in a widely consultative and participatory process. Its findings led to the development of the Partnerships 21 model.

Schools and preschools that opted to enter into Partnerships 21 have:

- an enrolment-based global budget for the 2000 school year with indicative budgets for a further two years
- an increased ability to make decisions locally on educational matters, within a clear curriculum standards framework, including the flexibility to offer specialised subjects tailored to the needs of their students
- increased authority to manage and use available funds to meet local needs, including minor capital works and equipment purchases
- greater flexibility in the deployment of staff. There is more choice, improved selection procedures, more flexibility in tenure of appointments, more opportunities for leadership and better contractual arrangements within the prevailing industrial, legal and policy environment.

All school and preschools in Partnerships 21 are subject to the new department-wide Quality Improvement and Accountability Framework to ensure that standards remain high and continue to improve. They will also report rigorously and consistently to their local communities and to the department.

Participation in Partnerships 21 is voluntary. School and preschools will be given the opportunity to take up Partnerships 21 every six months, supported by appropriate training and development.

By early December 1999, 368 service agreements and partnership plans had been submitted to the Partnerships 21 Taskforce office: 40 per cent of all sites have opted into round 1 of TAKE UP for the start of the year 2000.

As part of the Partnerships 21 initiative, work commenced on the development of a new index of socioeconomic

disadvantage for the allocation of State and Commonwealth funds within DETE. Previously, allocative methods were based, at least in part, on School Card (an indicator of low family income). The new index, to be completed in 2000, will incorporate additional components related to socioeconomic educational disadvantage.

Standards and accountability

Development began on the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework that will encompass curriculum provision for all learners from birth to year 12 for the first time in SA.

Development of the new framework is informed by the National Goals for Schooling in Australia and is based on a refinement of curriculum frameworks currently in use in South Australian schools and centres.

The framework has three major components.

- 1 Curriculum Scope, which will describe the values, dispositions, knowledge, skills and understandings to be taught through the Essential Learnings and the Learning Areas.
- 2 Curriculum Standards, which will describe, in a developmental sequence, learning outcomes against which learners' progress will be tracked. They will refer to what learners know, understand and can do and will therefore be written as 'performance standards'.
- 3 Curriculum Accountability, which will describe the system's assessment and reporting policy and requirements for the collection and use of learner achievement data (for the government sector only—non-government sectors will develop their own accountability components for the framework).

The SACSA Framework introduces the Essential Learnings as fundamental determinants of the curriculum. The Essential Learnings will interact with the Learning Areas in the structure and detail of both the Curriculum Scope and the Curriculum Standards components of the framework.

Catholic Education SA and the Independent Schools Board of SA are working in partnership with the department on the development of the Framework.

A preliminary draft of the new framework was subject to targeted consultation late in 1999, and a further draft was scheduled for statewide trialling early in 2000. The completed framework will be implemented by all government schools and children's services in 2001.

Early Years

The Early Years Strategy is one of SA government's highest educational priorities. The strategy includes among its aims 'improved literacy and numeracy skills for children under the age of eight years'.

Within the Early Years Strategy the following programs were developed:

- ECLIPSE (Early Childhood Literacy includes Parents, Staff and Education) training
- a curriculum framework for 0–3-year-olds
- parenting forums on child development (Growing and Learning in the Family)
- preschool research into educational outcomes
- School Entry Assessment, commencing in 2000, to assess students' literacy and numeracy in their first term at school.

Local early intervention based on the Basic Skills Tests results, Reading Recovery, professional development for teachers and para-professionals, research and the production of materials continued to support students' literacy and numeracy learning in their first years in school.

Legislative review

The legislative review of the Education Act, the Children's Services Act and the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Act resulted in the participation of over 2,150 people in statewide forums and 2000 written submissions.

Student achievement

South Australia, with 8 per cent of the national population within its government schooling sector, outperformed all other States with 11.3 per cent of the international student market.

Research on the Third International Maths and Science Study indicated that South Australian students were among the highest achievers in the world in mathematics and science.

Coincidentally, 1999 Term 3 enrolments for full-fee paying international students are up 43 per cent on 1998.

Internet strategy

The DETE contract with Telstra to provide Internet access and services for all government schools was announced by the Premier in September 1999. Known as 'sa.edu', this schools' service is part of the government's initiative,

PathwaySA. All schools will be connected to sa.edu by the end of Term 1, 2000.

This contract provides SA government schools with the highest speed Internet access of any State in Australia. Costs and Internet access service levels will be identical for all schools throughout the State, irrespective of geographic location. Under sa.edu the cost to schools of accessing the Internet has been dramatically reduced.

Email addresses are available for all staff and students. Access decisions are made at the local school level.

Microsoft agreement

Thousands of students and teachers are set to benefit following an agreement reached late in 1999 with Microsoft to provide the latest computer software in schools and preschools. Under the \$6 million agreement, SA's 1,100 State preschools and schools will be able to immediately and continually upgrade software to allow students access to the latest technologies.

Local area networks for schools – cable grants

Cabling grants of \$5.5 million were distributed to schools in June 1999 for the purchase and installation of non-active components of a local area network. Another \$5.5 million will be sent to schools in August 2000.

Catholic sector

The SACCS, which was reconstituted under new statutes following a review of its work and statutes during 1997–98, established a new committee structure which commenced on 1 July 1999. The new structure ensures that key partners in Catholic education are represented on committees of the Commission. The committees will provide the Commission with policy and advice to enable it to make decisions which have been fully and openly explored and deliberated in a collaborative environment.

The SACCS participated in the review of the Children's Services Act and the Education Act. Members of the Commission and of Catholic Education SA were members of the review panels, contributed to discussion papers and formulated responses to the discussion papers.

Catholic Education SA was a significant partner and participant in the development of the SACSA Framework. Members of Catholic Education SA contributed as members of the coordinating committee and on reference groups, experts groups and working parties.

Independent sector

Consistent with the diversity of schools and school groups within the sector, independent schools undertook a range of initiatives in 1999.

Many independent schools and their associated school authorities contributed to a number of major educational reviews and enquiries carried out at the state and national level in 1999. These reviews included the review of the South Australian Education Act and the Children's Services Act, a review of the State government planning policy for non-government schools, reviews of State and Commonwealth funding arrangements for non-government schools, the Commonwealth's taxation reform agenda and the Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education and the Senate Inquiry into VET in Schools.

A number of independent schools increased the delivery of civics and citizenship education in their schools through trialling Discovering Democracy units of work, reviewing their curriculum offerings and becoming involved in the Civics and Citizenship Education Program.

Many schools in the sector explored middle schooling practices and structures in 1999. A significant number of independent schools established middle schools, while others reviewed their structures and practices with the view to establishing a middle school in order to better meet the needs of their student cohort.

Schools within the independent sector expressed much interest in the UNESCO report *Learning: The Treasure Within* and undertook activities within their schools to ensure that their curriculum and practices continue to meet the needs of student in the 21st Century.

In 1999, the independent sector participated in and contributed to the new curriculum development, the SACSA Framework, initiated by the government sector in SA. Twenty-three staff from the independent sector were invited to participate in and contribute to the working groups providing advice on the development of the framework. The Independent Schools Board has facilitated a range of information sessions related to the SACSA Framework to stimulate discussion about curriculum change and renewal. Such sessions have been used by schools to confirm or challenge their curriculum approach, and/or to initiate review of their curriculum.

In 1999, the South Australian Independent Schools Board Targeted Programs supported developments in schools

related to literacy and numeracy, languages, special learning needs and school to work.

The South Australian Literacy Program supported teacher professional development programs and research to assist school-based planning, and provided school-based funding targeted at educationally disadvantaged students in terms of their literacy and numeracy development.

The School to Work and VET in Schools programs funded VET developments, including New Apprenticeships, in schools, in particular the development and delivery of programs that contribute to the expansion of vocational education in schools, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and programs that promote effective pathways from schooling to work.

Within the Languages Program independent schools were assisted to enhance and expand the Asian languages through the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) program, and with developments related to the Commonwealth's ten priority languages.

The Special Learning Needs programs supported initiatives and developments in independent schools related to improving the educational participation and outcomes of young people with disabilities.

Developments in schools that improved the educational opportunities and participation of geographically isolated students were supported through the Country Areas Program.

During 1999, a number of schools in the independent sector identified the need to examine different operating models, with particular reference to the relationship between the governing body and the principal. Interest has been expressed in the development of more relevant and meaningful financial reporting.

Professional development and teacher education

Government sector

Training and professional development is provided to DETE personnel and others through a range of groups and units. The Training and Development Unit provides strategic planning and policy advice, together with administrative support, coordination and management of some programs.

An assessment of expenditure on training and professional development across the department was conducted in April 1999, and identified the following expenditure over the previous six months.

	<i>Units and other departmental providers</i>	<i>Districts</i>	<i>Total</i>
Salaries	\$4,170,447	\$38,874	\$4,209,321
Expenditure	\$4,262,725	\$16,787	\$4,279,512
Revenue	\$392,087		\$ 392,087
Balance			\$8,096,746

The figures were based on information collected from providers and districts, and highlighted the need for consistent, strategic collection of data.

The Training and Development Unit maintains a database of courses and registrants administered through the Unit, for example Partnerships 21 training, Mandatory Notification, Basic Casualty Care, THRASS (Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills), First Steps, ESL and the Early Learner. The unit also records occupational health and safety training through a partnership with the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare team.

Significant other providers of training and professional development within the department include the SA Centre for Leaders, the Technology School of the Future, Employee Services, the Equal Employment Opportunity team, the Languages and Multiculturalism team, the Aboriginal Education Unit and Support Services. Providers within the department who do not access the Training and Development Unit database provide their own reports on request.

Training that previously was delivered by curriculum officers has been largely outsourced. A training and professional development strategy is planned for the implementation of the new SACSA Framework.

In order to coordinate information, including the *Directory of Training and Professional Development*, the Training and Development Unit developed a comprehensive resource folder, which it distributed to all education and children's services sites.

The Training and Development Unit, the SA Centre for Leaders and the Technology School of the Future will relocate to the Education Development Centre, Hindmarsh in early 2000.

During 1999, a total of 14,365 registrants completed 600 classes administered through the Training and Development

Unit. Thirty-two per cent of the classes were run in country areas. All sites within education and children's services receive a share of the annual grant totalling \$1,090,000 for training and professional development.

A Register of Providers, which includes over 100 private providers, was developed during 1999 and posted on the Web, for use by sites wishing to negotiate their own professional development options.

The Shortened School Year initiative was implemented successfully, with all teachers undertaking 37.5 hours (or the pro rata equivalent) of training and professional development during the year. Over 95 per cent completed those hours during their own time, which enabled them to take the last week of Term 4 as additional leave, while the remainder undertook a range of programs promoted through the Training and Development Unit, including over 30 self-paced flexible options, during the last week.

The Pathways framework for the accreditation of professional development linking with university qualifications was developed in 1999, through a partnership between DETE, the universities in SA and other significant stakeholders (for example the Teachers Registration Board, Catholic Education Office and Independent Schools Board).

Professional Development Pathways

The Professional Development Pathways Framework has been developed to assist education professionals to engage in quality professional development that links with university study through accreditation and add to their professional qualifications.

The framework enables consortia to come together with a university partner to offer modules accredited to Masters level. This initiative is intended to provide professional development that is clearly relevant to educational practice in order to improve professional knowledge and to provide insights leading to change and improvement.

Independent sector

A range of professional development programs and teacher education programs operated in the independent sector in 1999, related to the priorities and developments within the sector and individual schools in the sector.

The SA Independent Schools Targeted Program Authority planned and delivered approximately 120 professional development programs in 1999. Areas of particular focus for 1999 included Early Years Literacy; School Entry Assessment; First Steps; an intensive (11-day) course for

teaching mathematics and numeracy; transition from school to work for students with disabilities; ESL in the Mainstream; and Indigenous literacy.

In addition, schools participated in a series of seminars sponsored by the Independent Schools Board in the following areas:

- The Delors Report –seminars that provided an overview of the UNESCO report and its implications for schooling in the 21st Century and also focused attention upon the relationship between the ‘Learning to do pillar’ described in the report and national developments in vocational education.
- Middle Schooling – this seminar reflected the considerable interest in the concept of middle schooling, middle schooling practices and structures. Sixty participants heard about the range of structures and practices in place in schools to enhance educational outcomes for adolescent students.
- Tax Reform –seminars aimed at assisting schools to prepare for the implementation of the GST and other tax reform initiatives.
- Commonwealth funding arrangements –seminars to inform schools about the recent funding model proposed to be introduced by the Commonwealth in 2001.
- The Disabilities Discrimination Act – advice and workshops for member schools.
- Commonwealth Funding Model – briefing sessions outlining the proposed model for the allocation of Commonwealth funds commencing in 2001.

Commonwealth-funded capital projects

Government sector

In 1999, the Commonwealth provided \$17.405 million towards capital projects for government schools in South Australia.

Of the ten capital projects funded by the Commonwealth and completed both physically and financially during 1999, the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were construction and establishment of middle schools at secondary schools, completion and provision of technical work areas and science laboratories at secondary and area schools and upgrading of classroom accommodation in both primary and secondary schools to meet occupational health, safety and welfare requirements.

Catholic sector

In 1999, the Commonwealth provided \$3,926,696 towards capital projects in South Australia to SACCS (Building Grants Authority). This amount included \$81,443 supplementation payment. These funds were used for General Element projects for capital development of new and existing places.

Of the 11 projects funded by the Commonwealth and completed both physically and financially during 1999 the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were:

- construction of: senior student centre, library resource, administration and staff facilities and amenities, general learning areas, student amenities, canteen, multipurpose learning area, various stores
- conversion to provide: home economics facilities, canteen, general learning areas, administration and staff facilities and amenities
- refurbishment of: Administration and staff facilities and amenities, general learning areas.

Independent sector

In 1999, the Commonwealth provided \$2.43 million towards capital projects in the South Australian independent school sector.

The five capital projects funded by the Commonwealth and completed both physically and financially in 1999, involved the construction of general purpose learning areas and specialist facilities for science, art and industrial arts, the refurbishment of library facilities and purchase of furniture and equipment in primary and secondary schools.