



POLICY STATEMENT: Educational Accountability

Independent schools in Western Australia are accountable.

They are accountable to:

- their students for the provision of quality teaching and a safe school environment;
- the parents of their students for student and school performance;
- the Australian Government and its agencies for the use of public funds;
- the State Government for the use of public funds provided by the State Government;
- school system authorities where schools are members of a system;
- the State Minister for Education, through the Office of Non-Government Education, in meeting school registration requirements; in particular, curriculum, welfare of students, safety, financial viability and governance;

Such a policy could be accompanied by a set of principles that should underpin or be used to evaluate structures put in place by State or Federal Governments.

Principles Underpinning Educational Accountability

A best practice approach to educational accountability should:

- recognise the diversity of purposes of school education;
- recognise the autonomy of independent schools and systems and their diverse accountabilities;
- accommodate the diversity of school communities and of school philosophies;
- encourage diversity in curriculum and educational options for young people.

Best practice processes should:

- provide schools with information or structures to use as tools for self evaluation in order to empower schools to achieve self improvement in the quality of teaching and learning;
- be based on valid measures of educational outcomes that can be understood by students, staff, parents and the wider community;
- measure outcomes for which schools have significant responsibility;
- use measures that are valid indicators of the performance of a school and/or its students and which have been designed specifically to meet accountability requirements.

Best practice will:

- inform stakeholders about the effective use of public funds;
- provide valid data to governments that can be used to evaluate effectiveness;
- provide data for use by individual schools but not for the production of league tables.

Best practice should:

- enhance creativity and innovation;
- improve educational standards but not result in standardization;
- acknowledge the administrative requirement imposed on independent schools and systems by the accountability process;
- be adequately funded by government to meet the administration of the required external assessments.