

1984 – Evolution, not Revolution

President – Nancye Harris; **Secretary** – Barry O’Donnell; **Research Officer** – Colin Cooksey.

Major Papers/Reports

- 1984 Annual Conference (‘Beyond 1984’) –
 - The President referred to Director-General of Education (DG) Doug Swan’s comment that change will not be revolutionary but ‘evolutionary’ and she cited these earlier reports:
 - The 1978 Royal Commission on Human Relationships’ recommendation that “the government require the DoE to make a major effort to change the policies of all concerned with education to ensure the fullest possible development of the whole person, physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially by carrying out reforms to respond to the community’s desire for better and different education.”
 - The 1983 ‘Future Directions’ Report: “Our proposals are designed to achieve better schools and higher standards in those schools, giving value and purpose for all students, developing them to the maximum extent. The community has a right and obligation to be involved in deciding what is to be taught in schools and what is important for all students to know.”
 - The 1983 Commonwealth Schools Commission’s ‘Participation and Equity in Australian Schools - the Goal of Full time Secondary Education’: “Funds will be made available to stimulate changes in secondary education, to cater for the needs of a full range of students and to improve the relationships between schools and the community and community attitudes to education.”
 - Professor Bob Golding, Pro Vice Chancellor UNSW and a member of the Board of Senior School Studies (BSSS) reported that significant senior school increases in retention rates have led to changes in curriculum patterns adopted by schools.
 - The BSSS had introduced a new curriculum in 1975 based on ‘Unit’ structures with some courses leading to tertiary studies and others not.
 - Other Approved Studies (OAS) were introduced to offer a wider range of educational experiences (in 1983 over 1700 OAS were approved).
 - The BSSS had introduced some very different syllabuses, e.g. Society and Culture, and within Industrial Technology there were a wide range of study areas.
 - The broadening of courses was creating difficulties in schools, particularly those with small Year 11-12 cohorts.
 - Greater attention must be paid to assessments as part of the HSC award.
 - Dr Ralph Rawlinson, Chair of the NSW Education Commission, spoke on post compulsory education, exploring options for closer collaboration with other institutions (particularly TAFE) and for less formal approaches to education.
- Two new papers were being developed by DoE:
 - ‘The Role and Responsibilities of the Centre, Region and School’
 - ‘The Role of the Principal’.

Major Impacts on DoE, Schools and Principals

- Rodney Cavalier, Minister for Education (and a proud product of Public Schools) said to principals:
 - “I expect you will have high expectations of me as Minister, equally I have similar expectations of you as leaders of the community in your own schools, as you have the opportunity to make a marked impact on Public Secondary Education.”
 - “I have become aware of the challenges you face as principals – the demands of community participation, the pressures of interest groups, industrial issues (including casual relief), the changing and increasingly varied curriculum and the complexity of school organisation. I expect Regional Directors and Inspectors should back your judgement on key issues.”

- “While you need to understand that the Government’s priorities are Aboriginal Education, Multicultural Education and the Education of Students with Disabilities, there will be financial constraints that impact on changes we can make. We spend \$80m on relief over 80 categories of leave and the provision of casual relief for first day absences resulting in unsupervised classes are not a priority. Similarly, there is no money for executive restructuring. Any changes would have to be cost neutral.”
- Council was advised that legislation was expected to be passed creating School Councils, initially in three schools per Region at the discretion of the Regional Director.

Council Matters

- Council reported on the difficulties experienced by principals, as many DoE managers had no school experience and didn’t understand how schools function. Their decisions at Regional or State level (e.g. in monitoring, staffing, ancillary staff duties and inservice for principals) reflected this.
- The Hunter Regional Director (Alan Beard) advised that inspectors would be more involved in school organisation and in providing support for principals.
- Senior Officers of DoE again led workshops at Annual Conference (held at Hawkesbury Agricultural College) on industrial relations, superannuation, monitoring and accountability, dealing with the media, the principal and the law, school councils, the Participation and Equity Scheme, computers in administration and drug abuse.

Relationships with the Department

- The DoE’s response to a question from Council on who has legal responsibility for the conduct of a child within a school said: “The Principal cannot require a parent to come to the school to discuss a student’s conduct; schools can implement punishment as the Principal sees fit; parents can only act through the processes the DoE has developed, as the child is responsible for itself.” Staff cannot determine who they will teach.
- While Council agreed that monitoring of schools provided accountability on how allocated resources including staffing were used, it believed that accountability was a total school responsibility and not simply that of the principal. It was concerned that any review of the school curriculum in the monitoring process should not be used as a curriculum control, as that control lay with the Study Boards. With significant regional differences in the monitoring process, Council recommended that principals be involved in the design of both format and process when these were being negotiated with the NSWTF.
- For 1984 schools were given greater flexibility based on the Term 1 Staff Return and the strength of the school’s case for executive appointments. This resulted in 86 additional positions including 12 PE, but 66 reductions elsewhere including nine Language positions.
- The Council prepared a position paper on ‘Executive Restructuring in NSW High Schools’ (*see summary on page 5*).
- In discussing implications of the ‘Future Directions’ Paper, the DG said there was support for the concept of a second Deputy Principal or Dean of Studies and invited Council to contribute to deliberations.
- Various Regions researched particular aspects of school organisation (e.g. student welfare, curriculum) and Bruce Bensley (Hunter Region) put together a paper proposing radical changes linking executive staffing to the number of teachers being supervised.
- Major changes were proposed to school staffing for 1985. Previously the school entitlement was based on student numbers in each year and schools would plan their subject offerings to suit. The new formula was based on the total number of staff in NSW (less up to 100 retained for later flexibility). A series of multipliers were developed for student numbers in each of the bands 7-10, 11 and 12 that in the first year resulted in some schools being better off and no school being reduced by more than one teacher.

- In 7-10 there were four multipliers dependent on the percentage of General Ability students.
- In Years 11-12 staffing was previously calculated to allow all Year 11 classes to proceed to Year 12, but the new formula was calculated separately on student numbers in each year, resulting in difficulty for schools to maintain curriculum continuity when student numbers fluctuated.
- When DoE set up a workshop to design a program for the professional development of principals, only two out of 15 representatives were principals.

The Teachers Federation

- In response to Federation's concerns that principals' councils were functioning in a semi-industrial manner, Director-General Doug Swan stated, "There would be no negotiations on industrial matters with any organisation other than the NSWTF." He said principals' councils were a professional forum but in discussions of educational and administrative issues, industrial and educational issues are often intertwined. Such discussions, which are part of his management responsibilities, will not impinge on the NSWTF's legitimate industrial role or its standing as the negotiating body for public school teachers.
- When the NSWTF said classrooms could not be visited when subject masters/mistresses (head teachers) were being inspected, the response from the DG to the NSWTF and Council was "for assessment, monitoring, accountability or any other reason, inspectors could not be denied entry."

The Study Boards

- The Council expressed concern about the workload if principals were expected to appoint the HSC Presiding Officer and exam supervisors for their school.
- There were new procedures developed for approving OAS and School Based Courses, with the Board planning to place its own staff in each Region to manage the process.
- The universities in Sydney established their Joint Metropolitan Working Party to manage university entrance for 1985. Council supported the use of the best ten units from a common set of subjects but expressed concern at the limit of two units of 2 Unit General Courses and Sydney University's decision to require two units of English in the ten units counted for entry.

Other Matters

- The newly-introduced Commonwealth Government Participation and Equity Program (PEP), with its emphasis on more equitable student outcomes, increased retention rates in government secondary schools, increased participation in post-compulsory education and increased resources for government secondary schools, targeted 120 schools with 160 more teachers plus an additional 100 for Transition Education.
- The Federation of P&C Associations was critical of principals and stated students did not have to pay fees or wear uniforms. This was one example of how many groups had influence on educational policy and practice. Other examples of such influence included:
 - The removal of topics/texts from the English syllabus.
 - A complaint to the Ombudsman by a North Sydney BHS parent, "concerning the alleged enforced wearing of the school uniform". The Ombudsman did not accept this as the DoE policy was well stated and public; there was no evidence the student was forced to wear a uniform; and the action of the Principal did not amount to 'bullying and harassment' in the usual meaning of these terms.
- Concern was expressed that the formula used for school accommodation was out of date and did not account for changes in class sizes, non-traditional curriculum programs and the need for rooms for audio-visual, computing, careers and transition education programs.
- Western Region reported some schools, including Broken Hill/Orange/Bathurst, were still missing staff in Week 9 Term 1 and suggested final year graduates be offered placements. As it was also difficult to fill promotion positions from subject lists (Broken Hill - 9 months for English/History, Brewarrina - 7 years for English/History, Canowindra - 11 months for Social Sciences, Boorowa Central - 7 months for

English/History), it proposed that teachers placed on List 2 Admin or experienced in their subject area be appointed to these positions.

- Approval was given for the appointment of 70 additional teachers to assist schools not able to access casual relief staff.
- The government approved the appointment of 80 Aboriginal Aides across primary, secondary and central schools and 120 additional ancillary staffing positions mainly in primary schools.
- Council again sought approval for a variation to Day 2 and Day 3 at the start of each new school year, to allow extra staff to be free on Day 2 to settle in Year 7 and organise Year 11 into their courses, with the rest of the school starting on Day 3. This was not granted.
- It was announced that the four term year would be introduced for 1987, maintaining 201/202 teaching days.
- There was an increase in stress-related claims for workers compensation naming the principal as the cause. The Council expressed concern that the DoE was not prepared to provide legal support for principals in such cases, and that there was a lack of clear procedures when action was being taken against principals for financial mismanagement.

Item of Interest

- Proposals for changes to the superannuation scheme for teachers and principals included higher benefits in the first 20 years of service, a final return of 65% of salary after 30 years of service for those aged 60, and reopening of the scheme for those previously granted exemption. This latter group included women who had left the scheme after having children and it was proposed to give them a twelve-month period to re-enter the scheme. Ned Lynch, the SPC Management Committee representative on the review, asked all principals to advise women who no longer had superannuation of this opportunity. (In hindsight it would appear that very few principals did this and Federation also failed to advise their members. This turned out to be a very costly and unfair exercise for women who later retired with minimal super benefits.)

Please see below for the SPC Position Paper: 'Executive Restructuring in NSW High Schools'

Summary of the 1984 Council Position Paper: 'Executive Restructuring in New South Wales High Schools'

After 'Future Directions of Secondary Education in NSW' was released in 1983, Council was invited to submit their proposals for executive restructuring. This paper, based on a survey of NSW principals and prepared by Bruce Bensley, was submitted to the DoE in response.

Council acknowledged that whilst the context of schooling had changed dramatically, the executive structure of high schools had undergone little change since the early 20th Century, and that any proposed restructure must acknowledge:

- a. The increased demands on the Principal and Executive for curriculum, pupil welfare, personnel management and administration.
- b. Inequity in executive supervisory roles due to the disparity in sizes of subject departments in large schools and the lack of supervision of some teachers due to the shift away from traditional teaching areas.
- c. The need for increased career opportunities at the middle management level.

Any changes in executive structuring needed to provide support to allow the Principal to regain their major role as the educational leader in the school; provide sufficient middle management to allow teachers to concentrate on classroom teaching; and provide supervision for teachers working in non-traditional roles in schools.

High School Executive descriptors were proposed for the following positions:

- **Principal** - The educational leader responsible for all aspects of school organisation and its effective implementation.
- **Vice Principal** - To assist the Principal in all duties and responsibilities. VPs to teach a 0.5 load in schools with fewer than 25 teachers and in all other schools be a non-teaching role.
- **Deputy Principal** - Based on school size, up to three DPs to be appointed to share responsibility for curriculum, staff development, pupil welfare and administration. DPs would teach a 0.5 load.
- **Co-ordinators** - Teachers appointed to supervise and organise a faculty, a group of associated studies or a special school program. Co-ordinators to be responsible for a ratio of 1:4 teachers, including all classroom teachers, librarians, school counsellors, careers teacher, E.S.L etc. All co-ordinators would teach a 0.8 load.
- **Year Advisers** - Based on an entitlement of one adviser for each Year group, with schools to organise a program of pupil welfare on a Year basis, a vertical structure or other such structures considered best for the school. YAs teaching load would be reduced by 1 period per 50 pupils to a maximum of 5 periods. Advisers to be selected by the Principal from the assistant teachers on the staff.
- **Welfare Teachers** - In schools with over 35 staff there would be a Co-ordinator of Pupil Welfare to supervise those teachers involved in pupil welfare (Year Advisors, School Counsellors etc).
- **Balance within the Executive** - These principles to ensure women would be represented in the executive structure:
 - DP positions - offered to a woman if both the Principal and Vice Principal were men.
 - Welfare Co-ordinator - must be a woman if no women were in existing senior executive positions.
 - Co-ordinators - offered initially to qualified women whenever the ratio of women on the executive fell below 1:4.
 - Allowances - within a small executive or when qualified women were not found to accept a position, an allowance of 1 period to be given to a female assistant teacher for every 100 girls in the school, with a maximum of 4 periods.
- **Staffing** - Year Advisers and welfare teachers would not be members of the executive.
- **Stability of Executive** - Schools to be required to have held the increase in staff for, say, one year before an increase in executive be established, and similarly for a decrease resulting in loss of an executive position.
- **Central Schools** - The secondary section would be staffed as per all other secondary schools.

The paper Council submitted included a detailed analysis of the four areas of concern – Curriculum, Pupil Welfare, Personnel and Administration – plus diagrams and tables that demonstrated the impact it was believed such changes could have on secondary schools.