

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association of South Australia



Policies

Updated October 2024



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SA ICPA POLICY STATEMENTS

BOARDING, HOSTELS AND SECOND HOME POLICY

To ensure geographically isolated children have access to boarding facilities, provided for students who must live away from home, or the provision of a second home to be set up for access to appropriate primary and/or secondary education.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

SA ICPA seeks the extension and improvement of communication systems and infrastructure to all rural and remote areas to effect improved access to education, health and welfare facilities.

DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY

To ensure the delivery of an integrated service offering programmes, facilities and support services to rural and remote students studying via Distance Education at home or in rural and remote schools, centred on interaction between teachers, students and home supervisors, as well as amongst students themselves.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION POLICY

To ensure that appropriate Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs and support services are available for all children in rural and remote areas.

RURAL SCHOOLS POLICY

To ensure that students enrolled in face-to-face schools in rural and remote areas are offered a balanced educational programme which satisfactorily caters for all facets of their growth and development.

SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY

ICPA seeks travel access to appropriate educational facilities for rural and remote students, with the provision of appropriate public and government funded transport services, and adequate travel allowances to access these services.

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY

To seek adequate funding, facilities and the availability of support to improve the educational requirements of students with specific learning needs who reside in rural and remote areas.



TERTIARY EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS POLICY

To ensure that students from rural and remote areas have access to post-secondary educational opportunities, which will enable them to pursue a career path of their choice.

It is recommended that all individual Policies be read in conjunction with other individual Portfolio Policies and ICPA Australia policy documents.



BOARDING, HOSTELS AND SECOND HOME

POLICY:

To ensure geographically isolated children have access to boarding facilities, provided for students who must live away from home, or the provision of a second home to be set up for access to appropriate primary and/or secondary education.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To ensure that boarding facilities are equitable with national standards, and that they provide all basic physical requirements as well as suitable supervision and pastoral care without economic barriers to entry.
2. That financial hardship is not a barrier to secondary education for geographically isolated children.
3. That where possible, preference be given to rural and remote students when boarding places are being allocated.
4. That courses in general guidance and pastoral care be available for staff in all boarding facilities.
5. Pastoral care for children be a high priority in all boarding facilities.
6. Provision is made in boarding facilities for children with disabilities.
7. That boarding schools offer scholarships and bursaries for rural and remote students, recognising their unique primary schooling.
8. Resources are available for families to make informed and considered choices regarding boarding schools for their children.
9. That all boarding schools liaise and co-ordinate their term dates and exeat weekends.



ALLOWANCES

1. That SA ICPA support ICPA Australia in their lobby for federal allowances
2. That the SA State Education Allowance be reviewed annually and increased in line with CPI.
3. That there be a living away from home allowance to provide access to face-to-face education where the local school can only offer years 11 and 12 by Distance Education.
4. That where it can be demonstrated that the local school cannot meet the needs of a child, then that child be eligible for financial assistance and/or inclusion in the Distance Education system.
5. That SA ICPA state council work with Australian Boarding Schools Association to advocate for a designated ICPA bursary at all boarding schools within SA (M14,2024)
6. That SA ICPA state council work with Australian Boarding Schools Association to ensure access and availability of boarding for Year 7 students who are geographically isolated.

ADMINISTRATION

1. That there be reciprocity of state allowances for children attending schools across state borders.
2. That the Commonwealth departments recognise and accept the South Australian Department for Education's support of children wishing to bypass.



COMMUNICATIONS

POLICY:

SA ICPA seeks the extension and improvement of communication systems and infrastructure to all rural and remote areas to effect improved access to education, health and welfare facilities.

OBJECTIVES:

1. That all Australians have equal access to high quality communications, at equal cost regardless of geographic location, to ensure availability of all present and future enhanced services.
2. That residents in remote areas have a mail service at least once a week for regular delivery, at a cost that does not discriminate against rural and remote students.
3. That the communications networks used by schools of distance education be the most efficient available using state of the art technology: this technology must include clear voice communication.
4. That rural and remote Australia continues to be included in any Universal Service Plan.
5. That there be a standard telephone connection fee for all Australians irrespective of whether the service is being provided by landline, radio concentrator or via satellite.
6. That there be adequate funding of ABC Radio and Television to maintain and produce regional and educational programmes for children in years R-12.
7. That there be adequate technical staff to install and maintain communication equipment in rural and remote areas.
8. Residents in rural and remote Australia have access to at least one free-to-air commercial television channel.
9. Mobile phone service coverage be increased throughout rural and remote Australia, including the provision of satellite small cell networks at properties that have no mobile service
10. Students have a dependable, affordable voice service for education.



DISTANCE EDUCATION

POLICY:

To ensure the delivery of an integrated service offering programmes, facilities and support services to rural and remote students studying via Distance Education at home or in rural and remote schools, centred on interaction between teachers, students and home supervisors, as well as amongst students themselves.

OBJECTIVES

1. The Department for Education understand the unique circumstances of Geographically Isolated students compared to those undertaking distance education by choice.
2. Ensure the provision of adequate resource materials and modern communications equipment and technology.
3. Ensure sufficient time, training and funding allocated for:
 - a. lessons via Distance Education,
 - b. discussion and advice between teachers, home supervisors and parents.
4. Ensure Distance Education schools are adequately resourced with qualified teachers, teacher aids and counsellors and have access to disability support to assist students requiring additional learning support.
5. Ensure adequate resources and funding is provided with the in-take of mid-year Reception students.
6. Provision of visits to families by suitably qualified personnel for interaction with students and home supervisors occur on a regular basis.
7. The Department for Education maintain the Itinerant Teacher service, providing adequate annual operating budgets, and ensure that:
 - 7.1. Distance Education families are consulted about any proposed changes to the Itinerant Teacher roles or and/or funding.
 - 7.2. Itinerant Teachers will continue to be based in Port Augusta and not be relocated to the Marden campus.
8. Provide resources and funds for a student's teacher to make a home visit if families' request.



9. Suitable and appropriate mobile diagnostic and Special Education units, working in conjunction with the student's school of Distance Education and teacher, be available to visit and test rural and remote students as necessary.
10. Provision of access to sufficient Allied Health services to support Geographically Isolated Distance Education students and Home Tutors.
11. Ensure adequate, safe and modern facilities for on campus curriculum activities are available for geographically isolated students when attending their school.
12. Regular camps, mini-schools and other face to face opportunities are conducted by appropriate personnel for the social, mental, emotional, academic and cultural interaction of rural and remote students.
13. A suitable qualified technical support staff be available at each Distance Education campus to assist families.
14. Distance Education materials be delivered to families in a timely manner, prior to the commencement of schooling.
15. Ensure that where a family uses a school bus alternative operating on non-all-weather roads, those families have the right to enrol at a school of Distance Education to ensure continuity of education.
16. That there be reciprocal arrangements between states and territories which would allow students in border areas to enrol at their most appropriate school of distance education, irrespective of their place of residence.
17. That every South Australian government school be regarded as a Host School and support students of Distance Education.
18. The Department for Education continue to provide funding to schools of Distance Education, on an annual basis and at least equal to the current Geographic and Remote Isolated Technology (GRIT) grant for the provision of modern technology to Distance Education students.
19. That equity programme funding should be weighed more heavily for small rural and remote school communities, and schools of distance education, or where normal services are unavailable, to reflect the geographic isolation of their students.



20. Department for Education fund the Retired Educator Volunteers for Isolated Students Education (REVISE) scheme on an annual, recurrent basis, so that REVISE's administrative, operating, training and development costs can be adequately catered for.
21. Ensure the provision of an internet and hardware subsidy for Distance Education students which reflects the current cost of connectivity.
22. Ensure adequate assistance is provided to Distance Education families to assist with travel to attend face-to-face events.

STAFFING

1. Suitable and relevant training and development be available to all teachers and Student Support Officers (SSOs) of Distance Education.
2. In the appointment of staff, consideration be given to the unique features and duties characteristic of Distance Education.
3. Teachers appointed to Distance Education positions be given specific induction courses, web- conferencing licences, staff development programs and adequate professional development and followup in-service courses.
4. Department for Education provide a non-teaching curriculum student support officer (SSO) position in Schools of Distance Education.

HOME TUTORS / SUPERVISORS

1. A realistic subsidy be payable to rural and remote families in recognition of the vital role played by the home tutor.
2. Promote the role the Home Supervisor plays in Education.
3. That regular training and development sessions for home supervisors, by both face to face and distance methods, be provided, for instruction, discussion and exchange of ideas and information.
4. Home supervisors are offered the opportunity by School of the Air to complete a Certificate III in Education Support, relevant to their work in the home classroom.



CURRICULUM

1. Curriculum implementation considers the unique needs and circumstances of rural and remote children.
2. Consideration for the time commitment required by distance education tutors for course implementation.
3. That the attainment of basic literacy, numeracy and computer literacy be regarded as essential to all students, on the completion of primary school, regardless of location.
4. That special purpose funding be made available to aid in the expansion of programmes to give greater social and cultural opportunities for rural and remote students.
5. Timely testing timeframes for national testing programs assisting with accessing support and appropriate learning support for rural and remote students.

ALLOWANCES

7. That SA ICPA support ICPA Australia in their lobby for a federal allowance of a non-means tested distance education supervisor allowance for students who do not have reasonable daily access to a government school and are studying primary or secondary education by distance ~~educat~~
8. That Distance Education tutors are paid a government allowance in recognition of the essential work they perform.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

POLICY:

To ensure that appropriate Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programs and support services are available for all children in rural and remote areas.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Where children do not have reasonable daily access to ECEC, appropriate programs are provided to meet their needs.
2. That ECEC be available for at least one year prior to the commencement of primary school, with enrolment being optional.
3. To support the inclusion of parent education as an integral part of ECEC programs for rural and remote children, so that parents are aware of;
 - 3.1. The importance of ECEC for children's intellectual development, pre-reading and pre-writing skills, social development and fine and gross motor skills.
 - 3.2. The critical role of early detection and intervention in addressing learning disabilities.
4. That appropriate technology is available for accessing ECEC lessons.
5. To promote the provision of maximum opportunities for social interaction for all children involved in ECEC in rural and remote area.
6. That suitable learning resources are made available to support all children in rural and remote areas engaged in ECEC.
7. That regular opportunities be available through workshops and playgroups, allowing parents to engage with ECEC professionals.
8. That routine screenings be carried out on all rural and remote preschool children, ensuring parents have easy access to information on accessing skilled professional support when necessary.
9. That regular opportunity and funding be available for rural and remote mobile children's services to attend appropriate training and professional development.
10. That there be consultation with communities involved prior to any changes in existing ECEC services, and that such services be maintained at their current level for the full calendar year.



11. That existing facilities in rural and remote areas be used to establish Family Day Care or Rural Care.
12. That rural and remote families have access to childcare services for children up to the age of 12 years, regardless of their location.
13. That the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) allowance be available for all pre-compulsory school students enrolled in a recognised early childhood distance education program.



RURAL SCHOOLS

POLICY:

To ensure that students enrolled in face-to-face schools in rural and remote areas are offered a balanced educational programme which satisfactorily caters for all facets of their growth and development.

OBJECTIVES:

Staffing

1. That staffing policies consider the special needs of small rural schools.
2. That every effort is made to ensure that a teacher is suited professionally and socially to a specific appointment, with consideration being given to a favourable aptitude that understands and appreciates the social and environmental factors of living in rural and remote communities.
3. That teachers and all auxiliary staff, including School Services Officers, be given tangible incentives for seeking out placements at schools in rural and remote areas.
4. That permanent and contract positions in rural schools be filled as quickly as possible.
5. That teacher placements be for a minimum of one semester.
6. That a sliding scale staffing formula be applied to schools with enrolments of less than 24 students.
7. That rural and remote schools endeavour to seek out and employ School Services Officers who have the appropriate training and skills to support students in a rural and remote setting.

Training and development

1. That teachers be trained in the special skills needed to teach in small rural schools.
2. That rural and remote teaching practice be experienced as an essential part of teacher training.
3. That multiyear level methodology and experience be incorporated into teacher training.
4. That teachers are made aware of the positive aspects of rural and remote living.
5. That all teachers and School Support Officers, working in rural and remote areas have access to regular training and development activities.



6. That teachers are assured access to departmental personnel who are appointed to counsel rural teachers experiencing adjustment or professional difficulties.

Curriculum

1. That the attainment of basic oracy, literacy, numeracy and computer skills be regarded as essential to all students regardless of location.
2. That children at all levels of schooling suffer no difficulties or disadvantages in transferring between curricula or teaching methodology available in small rural schools and that which is offered in urban education, such as the middle school concept.
3. That the curricula available be such that rural and remote students can be absorbed into trade, employment and tertiary education on an equal footing with that of their non-isolated counterparts.
4. That multiyear level courses be developed for small rural schools.
5. That Preschool/Primary/Secondary transitional educational programmes be facilitated.
6. That Commonwealth funding continue to aid in the expansion and initiation of programmes to give greater social and cultural opportunities.

Resources

1. That teachers and School Support Officers in small rural schools have readily available access to training and development in all areas of:
 - 1.1. curricula
 - 1.2. school development
 - 1.3. administration
2. That specialist services be available to small rural schools in the following areas:
 - 2.1. special education
 - 2.2. guidance officers
 - 2.3. speech pathologists
 - 2.4. medical and dental
3. That equity programme funding should be weighed more heavily for small rural and remote school communities, and schools of distance education, or where normal services are unavailable, to reflect the geographic isolation of their students.



SCHOOL TRAVEL

POLICY:

ICPA seeks travel access to appropriate educational facilities for rural and remote students, with the provision of appropriate public and government funded transport services, and adequate travel allowances to access these services.

OBJECTIVES:

1. That the assessment of conveyance allowances for students being transported privately at regular intervals be based on annual kilometres travelled and payment be made on a per family basis.
2. That the conveyance allowance be indexed annually to reflect vehicle and fuel costs in rural areas and rural road conditions.
3. That student travel allowances be reciprocal between states where appropriate.
4. That there be adequate funding from the appropriate authorities for the repair, upgrading and maintenance of roads used for educational access by rural and remote children.
5. That there be provision of uniform safety standards, equipment and suitably available and appropriately trained coach/bus drivers for all buses used for the transport of school children.
6. That South Australian Department for Education school bus policies are regularly upgraded to suit modern day needs.
7. That all new school buses be fitted with air conditioning and seatbelts.
8. That the South Australian Department for Education consider preschool students when determining bus routes, bus sizes and available seats.
9. That bus routes that give rural and remote children access to school be retained and, when they are changed, that the parents are given all relevant information and documentation.
10. That Area Schools have the right to retain at least one departmental bus.
11. That a conveyance allowance be paid for pre-school students living more than 5km from a pre-school facility or a school bus route serving a pre-school facility.
12. That airlines provide a student fare



SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS

POLICY:

To seek adequate funding, facilities and the availability of support to improve the educational requirements of students with specific learning needs who reside in rural and remote areas.

OBJECTIVES:

1. That there be provision of mobile units and itinerant specialists to consult in rural and remote areas on a regular basis, to identify and assist children with specific learning needs, and to provide support for their families.
2. That pre-service teacher training includes courses on recognition of children with learning difficulties or specific abilities, and the methods of assisting with such children.
3. To ensure all rural and remote students have access to early assessment and intervention of learning difficulties as a high priority.
4. That all rural and remote schools have access to teachers that have knowledge of the identification process and that assistance is available for children with specific learning needs.
5. That students with specific learning needs, studying by distance education or in rural and remote schools, have regular access to specific learning needs teachers and therapists.
6. That specific learning centres be established to cater for children with learning difficulties, learning disabilities or those who are gifted and talented.
7. That suitable travel and accommodation assistance be available for those rural and remote families accessing specific learning needs centres and face to face specialist services for students with specific learning needs.
8. That regular workshops and seminars be held throughout South Australia for parents of rural and remote children with specific needs.
9. That adequate Commonwealth funds be allocated to the South Australian Department for Education each year to be used specifically to assist with the provision of specialist services, for both school and home-based education and therapy programs.
10. That there be provision of adequate financial assistance to enable rural and remote families to gain access to special education and other support services without undue hardship.



11. That there be coordination of all relevant agencies: government, private and voluntary, to better service the requirements of rural and remote children with specific learning needs.
12. That specialised programmes be introduced into a greater number of secondary schools, thus enabling more students with special needs to receive their education through normal streams.
13. That appropriate classes and accommodation be provided in boarding schools for children with specific needs.
14. That the South Australian Department for Education include severe learning disabilities as a recognised disability in their “Students with Disabilities” Policy.
15. That the education of rural and remote students with specific learning needs be a vital consideration in curriculum delivery.



TERTIARY EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS

POLICY:

To ensure that students from rural and remote areas have access to post-secondary educational opportunities, which will enable them to pursue a career path of their choice.

OBJECTIVES:

1. That government provide financial assistance so that rural and remote students can access post-secondary education.
2. That post-secondary institutions are informed of the communication problems that can occur in rural and remote areas, so that distance can be considered, especially with regard to enrolment, interview or any other attendance in person.
3. That there be adequate places in post-secondary institutions to provide for all qualified applicants.
4. That education authorities are aware of the need for accommodation for rural and remote students accessing post-secondary education.
5. That assessment for post-secondary placements be broadened to include aptitude as well as academic score.
6. That post-secondary institutions be encouraged to include in their Bachelor of Education courses, a compulsory unit covering all aspects of rural, remote and distance teaching.
7. That government departments be encouraged to promote and advertise the availability of allowances for students accessing post-secondary educational options, such as the living away from home allowance paid to apprentices in their first three years of training and the travel and accommodation allowance.
8. To investigate the feasibility of the provision of an Agricultural Program/College in South Australia that provides vocational learning opportunities in the pastoral industry for high school students.