



**INDEPENDENT EDUCATION UNION
OF AUSTRALIA**

**RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION PAPER
A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR STANDARDS FOR
TEACHING**

MARCH, 2003

Response to the Consultation Paper – A National Framework for Standards For Teaching

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU) is the federally registered union which represents teachers and support staff in non-government education institutions including early childhood centres, schools and post secondary training institutions, across all the states and territories of Australia. The union currently has a membership of approximately 52,200.
- 1.2 The IEU has always taken an active role in the various debates and government funded projects and forums concerned with issues of teacher professionalism, standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Recently, the union has been engaged in further work on these issues through a number of initiatives, including work advanced by the MCEETYA Taskforce on Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership, the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education, the establishment in most jurisdictions, of Institutes/Colleges of Teaching and the Commonwealth sponsored work coordinated by the Australian College of Educators on teacher quality, professionalism and standards.
- 1.3 Attached to this submission are formal resolutions and policy statements on standards that have been endorsed by the IEU (Attachment 1). These statements inform this submission and should be understood as representing part of the IEU's response to the consultation paper.
- 1.4 The IEU has given in principle endorsement to the document "*A National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism: A Working Document*" developed by the National Reference Group brokered by the Australian College of Educators. (The IEU was a member of the Reference Group). This document also informs the IEU response to the consultation paper and is attached. (Attachment 2)
- 1.5 The Union welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to this MCEETYA consultation process. It is important that an inclusive process of national consultation has been implemented. The paper, "A National Framework for Standards for Teaching" has been the subject of consultation and discussion with the IEU Federal Executive and the IEU Education Committee. However, it is important to note that the timing of the MCEETYA process has prevented the Union from consulting more broadly with the membership or even publishing the consultation paper and the issues within it.

The Consultation Questions

It needs to be noted at the outset that the consultation paper shifts between a document seeking views on the design and structure of a national framework for standards for teaching and one which is seeking advice about the content of the actual standards. This submission makes limited comment on those questions requiring views on the content of the actual standards.

- 2.0 **What underlying principles and values might form the basis of a national framework and, by extension, standards of professional practice for teachers?**

- 2.1 The IEU supports in principle, the development of a Framework for Professional Standards as proposed by the MCEETYA consultation paper. The Union believes that a standards framework should include an explicit introductory values/ethical statement.

A key principle strongly supported by the IEU's is that **strong industrial structures and processes support good professional practice**. Teacher quality and effective teaching practice and the standards derived from it are influenced by context and setting including such elements as the available resources; relevant, ongoing and quality professional development; collaborative workplace structures which provide teachers with the time and space to talk with each other about their students and their work; proper induction and mentoring processes; effective leadership; and a supportive workplace culture.

- 2.2 In various submissions to Government Inquiries and forums, the IEU has argued the need for policy which takes account of the interconnectivity of issues such as: the salary paid and employment of teachers; the status of the profession; teacher recruitment and retention; the speed and process of policy change and implementation; the poor morale and sense of malaise within the profession; the loss of resources to education; and issues related to the need for there to be a better understanding of the complex nature of the work of teachers.
- 2.3 Furthermore, the Union has also urged that greater effort be given to **promoting teaching as a public service of great value and to the need for strong moral support from the community** particularly in the face of ill-informed and indiscriminate attacks on the teaching profession from various quarters. Teaching is the kind of job which people do primarily for the reward of knowing they are doing what their society holds to be worthwhile and in the public interest.
- 2.4 In light of these fundamental values and principles and to support the profession and in particular, our members, the Union developed *A Charter For Teachers – a statement of the shared values and principles* that teachers hold about their profession and the nature of their work. (Attachment 3) The IEU refers the Taskforce to this values statement as one which has been strongly endorsed by our members and which is relevant to the substance of this consultation paper.
- 2.5 The various dimensions of the framework need to relate to teachers' practice, **acknowledging the essential complexity and holistic nature of teaching and of their work, and to valuing teacher professional judgment and reflective practice**. They should also provide the basis for professional dialogue about the nature of teacher's work.
- 2.6 The application of a framework of **standards must take account of context** – location, size and type of school or class, level of schooling, nature of the students and linguistic, cultural and socio-economic factors impact on teaching and learning.
- 2.7 The development of a standards framework should proceed from the **principle that a key purpose is to support improvements to the quality of teaching and hence improved student learning**.

- 2.8 The principles of **professional collegiality and teacher development** should underpin the development and application of a standards framework.
- 2.9 The language and orientation of a standards framework should encourage teachers to be part of the process of **making teaching explicit, sharing practices and to enhancing their range of teaching strategies**.
- 2.10 The Union questions the worth of statements – which in themselves reflect a values position – such as the one located in the introduction:

“In fact the research suggests that teacher quality has a greater role in explaining student achievement than many of the factors associated with either the teaching environment such as classroom resources, curriculum guidelines and assessment practices or the broader environment such as school culture and organisation.

The policy implication from this research is that improved student learning outcomes are very dependent upon teacher quality”

Such statements are unhelpful and will evoke a cynical response from the profession. It suggests that the real audience for the document is the Commonwealth and State/Territory Departments of Treasury. It suggests that fewer resources would be needed for education if the problem of teacher quality was addressed – if we can just get some standards defined, there will be improved student learning outcomes. Of course, teacher quality is critical; however, none of these elements on their own, including the defining of teaching standards, is the panacea for improved student learning outcomes. Asserting that “defining teacher knowledge, understanding, skills, principles, knowledge and values is regarded as the best way to ensure that students are receiving a quality education” – a statement attributed to Boston, 1999 – defies the complexity of the teaching and learning process and reduces it to a linear one.

- 2.11 The IEU supports the development of a national framework approach for standards on the basis that it
- i. allows inclusion of the substantive work that has already taken place in the various jurisdictions.
 - ii. allows account to be taken of standards on associated elements that affect the quality of teaching and learning such as standards for initial teacher education, educational leadership, and induction and mentoring.
 - iii. provides greater capacity for flexibility and responsiveness to the diverse contexts and environments in which students and teachers work.
 - iv. facilitates a responsive approach to the evolving nature of professional knowledge and practice.
 - v. provides a commonality of language and structure to describe the standards and their levels in relation to the work of teachers.
 - vi. can also accommodate and inform existing and future research and program work in a range of industrial and professional contexts on issues of teacher professionalism, quality and standards. This includes for example:

- Outcomes from EBA negotiations between the industrial parties on issues such as advanced teacher classifications, the principles underpinning teacher induction, teachers’ professional development, and approaches to teacher review and assessment.
- Work undertaken by the Australian Science Teachers Association, the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Australian English Teachers and the Literacy Teachers' Association in relation to advanced teaching standards in their respective subject areas.
- The work in the various States/Territories as set out in Appendix 1 of the consultation paper “Quality Assurance Systems in the States and Territories.
- The National Competency Framework for Beginning Teachers (1996) – developed by the Australian Teaching Council.
- Recommendations from previous Commonwealth funded work such as “National Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education” and the outcomes from current work of the Commonwealth project “A Review of Teaching and Teacher Education”.
- The values and principles underpinning the “National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism: A Working Document”, developed by the National Reference Group coordinated by the Australian College of Educators. The Executive of the IEU has given in principle endorsement to this Statement.
- Current and future work undertaken by the Teacher Institutes/College/Boards of Teacher Registration in relation to standards

vii It is also consistent with, and reflects, the organisation and structures of education policy and delivery in Australia. For example, some degree of national consistency in relation to curriculum development, student assessment and reporting, benchmarking and arrangements for matters such as child protection are achieved through such a national framework approach. Similarly, in the absence of a national body for the teaching profession, some level of national consistency around teacher qualifications is achieved through framework legislation for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

3. What purposes might a national framework for the teaching profession serve for:

- (a) teachers and the teaching profession**
- (b) principals and educational leaders**
- (c) students and parents**
- (d) schools and school systems**
- (e) Australian education generally**

3.1 See 2.11 above. Further purposes of a national framework include:

- Providing an organising structure for the essential elements or dimensions of teaching; facilitating the shape of current and future work undertaken on standards and may facilitate thinking on the development, recognition and articulation of standards for other roles such as mentors and for related occupations such as school support staff, Aboriginal Education Workers etc;

- Establishing the points at which national consistency of standards across various levels (beginning/advanced) operate for the purposes of mutual recognition between jurisdictions
- Providing the organizing reference for mutual recognition arrangements for the portability of standards across jurisdictions
- *The National Statement* (Attachment 2) sets out purposes of the standards themselves as:
 - improving the effectiveness of professional development, by clarifying the areas in which the profession expects its members to improve with experience and establishing a standards-guided system for continuing professional learning across the profession
 - providing a basis for improving career path opportunities and pay systems for classroom teachers who attain those standards
 - providing, thereby, stronger incentives for all teachers to engage in long term professional development focused on student learning and guided by challenging profession-defined teaching standards
 - strengthening the contribution the profession makes to leadership in teaching, accountability and quality assurance.
 - Teacher education and continuous professional learning
 - Reflecting on and assessing professional teaching practice
 - Recognition and certification of teachers who attain standards for highly accomplished professional practice.

4. The Consultation Paper presents two ways in which to think about the architecture for a national framework for standards; these are examples only to broach the issues of how to present key elements of a teacher’s work and how to represent their professional growth.

(a) What is an appropriate structure for a national framework?

4.1 There are various models of standards frameworks already in existence which could inform the structure of a national framework. The section in the *National Statement* (Attachment 2) “Principles for Guiding Standards” is an important guide. In considering the model for the structure, the following elements can also be considered:

- As outlined above, the Framework will have a number of uses and purposes, including as a teacher education resource, a resource for reflection and review of practice, a resource for registration issues, a salaries application resource. It should include a general introductory statement of context and intent which defines the document as an exemplary statement for such purposes.
- The format and language for the presentation of standards should be descriptive and narrative rather than in column format to ensure that the richness of teachers’ work is captured rather than it being reduced to a checklist approach
- To ensure the standards reflect the integrated and dynamic nature of teachers’ work, they should be expressed in terms of:
 - a. overarching Dimensions which are broad statements of the key elements of teachers’ work – this may be defined generically or be subject specific.

- b. These statements attract a number of sub-statements or Elements, which give more definition to the Dimension and are underpinned by exemplars.
- c. Exemplars or case studies provide context, present a problem and suggested pedagogical approach. They establish a richness and difference of practice to solving pedagogical problems and ethical problems in various contexts.
- d. The framework will also include a set of statements about reflection and assessment and making judgments about teachers' work.
- e. Performance indicators should be defined as pointers to assist in identifying whether the desired/planned outcome is being achieved and should be globally expressed rather than task specific. The language should be empowering for teachers to choose how they give evidence of/demonstrate achievement of student learning.
(For example, see the Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy In Australia <http://www.stella.org.au/>)

(b) What might be the key characteristics of a quality teacher? (NB. This question goes beyond conceptualizing the form and purposes of a national framework. It comes within the domain of developing the standards)

4.2 There has been considerable research on the key characteristics of a quality teacher, what constitutes quality teaching and what has the greatest impact on improving student learning. This work should inform the developmental process of the standards. The IEU's *Charter For Teachers* (Attachment 3) is a statement which articulates the shared values and principles that teachers hold about their profession and the nature of their work and is also a descriptor of a quality teacher. The *National Statement* referred to at Attachment 2, contains a similar testament to the individual and collective responsibility which teachers commit to in the section "*Standards in the Context of Quality and Professionalism*"

(c) How can a teacher's growing expertise best be described? (NB As above. This is not relevant to structural question of a framework of standards)

4.3 A teacher's growing professional expertise is not a linear process but is complex, multi-layered and influenced by a multitude of factors - personal, professional and industrial. It is important to note again that the union is strongly of the view that issues of teacher quality, teacher satisfaction and morale are related to industrial concerns such as the levels of salary and conditions, stability, mobility, professional status and recognition, career development, promotional prospects and other work conditions.

Teaching and learning is not just an intellectual exercise. It happens in a complex social context and both students and teachers have their 'growing expertise' (ie their knowledge, attitudes, values and experience) influenced by their experiences at the school (and of course in other contexts and social milieu) and by the qualities of the school as a social institution.

In the same way that students can 'forge ahead' or not, because of particular factors at a given time, so too is this the case for the 'growing expertise' of teachers. The Union

believes that the following are significant factors which will impact upon a teacher's growing expertise and will also affect student learning outcomes.

- Critical factors in their beginning years of teaching such as their initial teacher education experience and its congruence with their experience as employed teachers as well as quality induction, mentoring and ongoing opportunities for collaborative work with colleagues.
- Opportunities for ongoing relevant and personally directed employer funded professional learning
- The school learning climate including clarity of expectations and standards, active supportive leadership, collaborative decision-making, curricular and work organization, the monitoring of student progress, the reward structure, connections with the parents, and the provision of opportunities to learn;
- Recognition and value given to teacher professional judgment on strategies to enhance student educational outcomes. Growing expertise is strongly linked to the experience of knowing what works and what doesn't with individual students and groups of students in different contexts and settings and the time and opportunity to talk with colleagues about this.

5. Should a national framework be able to encompass generic standards, specialist standards (for example, in literacy teaching), subject specific standards or all three?

5.1 The IEU supports a national framework having the capacity to inform and encompass the development of generic, specialist and subject specific standards, consistent with the position in the *National Statement* (Attachment 3):

“Standards contain both generic and specific elements. Generic standards identify broad capabilities and teacher attributes that apply across a range of subject areas. Specific standards identify the knowledge, skills and values required to teach in particular curriculum areas, levels of schooling and/or other areas of specialisation.”

6. How might a national standards framework assist in informing:

(a) **Course development for pre-service trainers (NB As above. This is not relevant to structural question of a framework of standards)**

6.1 In previous submissions to Inquiries related to initial teacher education, the IEU has argued that the development of nationally consistent and agreed standards and guidelines for initial (and ongoing) teacher education programs is fundamental to achieving a highly skilled, broadly experienced, adaptable and responsible teaching profession which has the support and confidence of the whole community. The union believes that the development and implementation of such standards and guidelines should be undertaken by the profession itself.

6.2 Consistent with this position, the IEU supports the development of standards for the teaching profession which will inform teacher education institutions on course development and the outcomes required from courses.

- (b) **Teacher’s self reflection**
- (c) **Professional learning**

6.3 The IEU supports the statements on the use of standards by teachers as a tool to inform their professional development and to reflect on the effectiveness of their practice with colleagues as articulated in the *National Statement* at attachment 2. The IEU believes that the majority of teachers want their practice to be seen as rigorous, fair and transparent and that what they do now reflects high standards of effective practice.

(d) **Establishing registration standards**

6.4 See 6.1 and 6.2 above for the interrelationship of teaching standards with initial teacher education. Initial teacher registration in jurisdictions where it exists relies on the appropriate teacher education tertiary qualification.

(e) **Performance Assessment**

6.5 The Union points to the position set out in the *National Statement* (Attachment 2) in the paragraph on Assessment and Certification which is generally supported, although we have sought the strengthening of this section to make clear that it only applies to the assessment and certification of advanced standards. In relation to this latter issue, such assessment and certification must be voluntary and not come under the mantle of performance management.

Refer to (d) and (e) of 4 (a) for comment on assessment and performance indicators.

7. How might a national framework be linked with teachers’ professional development

7.1 We reiterate the view that strong industrial structures and processes support good professional practice. Standards are influenced by context and setting including such elements as the available resources, relevant, ongoing and quality professional development, workplace structures, proper induction and mentoring processes, effective leadership, and a supportive workplace culture.

7.2 A national framework could inform a teachers’ career-long education and development. It could also inform the shape and focus of teachers’ professional learning on a nationally consistent basis by HEI’s, employing authorities and other organizations involved in the development and provision of teachers’ professional development. The IEU supports the position in the *National Statement* at Attachment 2 regarding the relationship between national standards and teachers’ professional development including the following:

“Many envisage teaching standards being used as a framework for continuous professional learning and development which is teacher-directed and controlled..... Building on this concept, many also see standards being used to support the development of career pathways, with teachers using standards as a means of determining their current position on a learning continuum and charting their own course for higher-order learning and professional recognition”.

and

“.... professional teaching standards provide an important strategy for:

- *improving the effectiveness of professional development, by clarifying the areas in which the profession expects its members to improve with experience and establishing a standards-guided system for continuing professional learning across the profession*
- *providing a basis for improving career path opportunities and pay systems for classroom teachers who attain those standards*
- *providing, thereby, stronger incentives for all teachers to engage in long term professional development focused on student learning and guided by challenging profession-defined teaching standards”*

8. How might professional development and tertiary courses be recognized?

8.1 The IEU policy “Meeting Teachers’ Professional Development Needs” includes the following:

- *Employers must ensure as far as possible that professional development activities provided carry credit for university courses. Such credit transfer arrangements help to ensure the quality of provision and facilitate ongoing participation in further training by teaching staff.*
- *Universities must become more flexible in recognizing all forms of teachers’ professional learning including professional reading, participation in mentoring programs, conference presentations etc.*

9. Can a national framework represent the role of the principal and others in school leadership positions and if so how?

9.1 As indicated above, the framework can provide an organising structure for standards, including standards developed for those holding positions of education leadership such as school principal. The issues set out in 4(a) above would be relevant for such standards.

10. Should and if so how can teacher quality be described by reference to the learning outcomes of students? (NB As above. This is not relevant to structural question of a framework of standards)

10.1 While acknowledging the critical significance of teacher quality to student learning, the IEU does not support the notion implied in this question that teacher quality be judged against the learning outcomes of students.

The *National Statement* at Attachment 2 makes clear that the standards are derived from good practice and make explicit what the profession believes teachers should know, do and value and are the tool for reflecting on and assessing professional teaching practice. Peer and self-assessment through reflective practice and professional learning communities is in keeping with ownership by the profession.

11. Which elements of the consultation paper present issues for your organization and how might these be resolved?

11.1 The IEU asserts again the interrelationship of professional and industrial issues when debating the form, content and uses of standards and rejects the argument that the issue of standards belongs within the purview of the “professional” only. The fact that standards have been and continue to be the subject of negotiation between the industrial parties in a range of contexts, including enterprise bargaining agreements, makes this clear.

The coy approach taken by various parties in how to deal with the unions around this debate is therefore politically naïve. Given that the education unions between them, represent over 210,000 members of the profession, there is a clear legitimacy and authority which we bring to the debate on behalf of the profession. A very clear statement of intent from all the discussion papers written to date is that it is important that the profession is involved, consulted, supports and has ownership of this agenda. A confident and inclusive approach on the part of governments and other stakeholders to involving the unions and to naming them as such is required.

12. What is the best way to achieve collaboration in the design and content of a national standards framework?

12.1 As indicated in the consultation paper, there is now very substantial work already completed, with more currently being undertaken by various parties (for example by the Victorian Institute of Teachers).

This issue has been given considerable authority by virtue of its carriage under the auspices of the MCEETYA process and this process remains incomplete with further work to be done. The Union supports this being coordinated through MCEETYA provided there remains a strong commitment to ensuring that the key stakeholders which represent the professional and industrial rights and interests of teachers and the collective profession are consulted fully and in a timely way.

A key issue is how a number of these matters are going to be dealt with in a consistent and coordinated way by the existing and emerging Teacher Institutes/registration authorities at state and territory level. The IEU has written to these authorities outlining these concerns and this correspondence is attached (Attachment 4)

Attachment 1: Resolutions

November 2002

The IEU reaffirms its view that the current standards agenda for the teaching profession is a valid and important one as confirmed in the IEU policy statement endorsed at the July 2001 Executive meeting (attached). The IEU believes that the majority of teachers want their practice to be seen as rigorous, fair and transparent and that what they do now reflects high standards of effective practice. Fundamental to this agenda is the involvement and engagement of the teaching profession in the work on standards.

- The IEU notes the report on the work to date on the draft National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism: A Working Document” developed by the ACE- coordinated National Reference Group and the range of dissenting comments on this draft Statement from participants - in particular those statements which seek to distance the role of the Unions and to diminish the industrial aspects of the professional standards agenda and those which argue that there is little research evidence to support claims that the diversity of context and conditions in which teachers work affect the quality of teaching and learning.
- It is the IEU's view that strong industrial structures and processes support good professional practice and this is also the view of the majority of the teaching profession. Standards are influenced by context and setting including such elements as the available resources, relevant, ongoing and quality professional development, workplace structures, proper induction and mentoring processes, effective leadership, and a supportive workplace culture.
- For the IEU to support the proposed Statement from the National Reference Group on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism, it must be consistent with the IEU policy on Standards For the Teaching Profession.
- It remains the strong view of the IEU that the articulation of standards, together with the range of other roles and functions articulated over the last decade, should properly sit within the mandate of an appropriately teacher controlled body or bodies so that the agreed standards best serve the entire profession.
- While the IEU has strongly argued over the past decade for the establishment of a national professional body for teachers to undertake work relevant to the professional interests of teachers, the incremental establishment of Teacher Institutes (howsoever called) in most States and Territories now provides the locus for this work. It will be important for there to be a national consultative process developed which provides for national consistency and recognition of standards across the jurisdictions.

IEU STATEMENT ON STANDARDS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION (July 2001.)

1. Executive notes the substantial national debate currently occurring in a number of national and state forums around the issue of professional standards for teachers and proposals for the establishment in a number of States, of regulatory bodies such as Teaching Institutes/College of Teaching. In particular, Executive notes the funded work being undertaken by the Australian

Science Teachers Association, the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Australian English Teachers and the Literacy Teachers' Association in relation to advanced teaching standards in their respective subject areas.

2. Consistent with policy positions it has taken in the past as outlined below, Executive supports in principle, the Working Document from the National Professional Summit on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism. In particular, the IEU supports the three key areas identified for action – *Professional Teaching Standards; Engaging the Profession; and National Commitment and Support*.

Further, the IEU is particularly concerned that there is an appropriate level of resourcing from governments at Commonwealth, State and Territory levels to underpin the work needed to address the challenges as outlined in the document.

The IEU supports the proposal for a national campaign to identify and celebrate aspects of quality teaching.

3. The IEU has been active in contributing to this debate over the past decade and in the context of the current debates, reiterates the following principles and policy statements in relation to the issue of teacher professional standards:

- The IEU is on the public record as strongly supporting and advocating the need for the explicit articulation of standards for the teaching profession – that is, what teachers should know and be able to do at the various stages of their career.
- Professional standards are a matter of pride for the profession and form quality benchmarks for employers, registration authorities, teacher education institutions and the broader community. Of equal importance is the issue of a public guarantee whereby parents and the community know that their children are in the care of teachers who have been licensed to teach.
- As a complement to this, the Union has strongly argued over the past decade for the establishment of a national professional body for teachers to undertake work relevant to the professional interests of teachers. It remains the strong view of the IEU that standards should properly sit within the mandate of an appropriately teacher controlled body or bodies so that the agreed standards best serve the entire profession.
- The IEU supports initiatives, the intent and outcomes of which will enhance the status of the teaching profession; provide opportunities for professional recognition; deliver improved career structures; support teacher renewal underpinned with nationally agreed professional development standards; support beginning teachers through developed and agreed standards for induction processes and ensure increased public support.
- The IEU rejects the view put forward by some in the current debate that teaching is a standards free endeavour where teacher accountability requirements exist at a minimum. The IEU believes that standards apply to teaching in the various national Curriculum Statements and Profiles, Boards of Studies syllabuses, tertiary teacher education departments, particular school and system authority policy requirements, teacher registration, re registration and accreditation requirements at State and Territory levels, and

in various industrial instruments which include appraisal procedures etc. Teachers are accountable to students and parents, colleagues including principals, and employing authorities.

- Professional standards, both entry level and advanced, should be the result of a collaborative exercise but in the main should be defined, developed and owned by practicing teachers.
- The IEU is on the public record as arguing that there are a number of elements which are the foundation for a confident, publicly supported, skilled and qualified profession, namely
 - The quality of teacher education
 - Appropriate qualifications
 - Suitability to teach
 - Agreed standards in practice
 - Respect for standards of ethical behaviour
- The IEU's Charter For Teachers is a statement intended to reflect the primacy of these elements and the complexity and importance of the work of the teaching profession.
- Fundamental to the development of professional standards for the teaching profession is the purpose and use of such standards. The IEU is strongly opposed to the use of standards primarily as a performance management strategy by employing authorities.
- The IEU believes that accreditation as an accomplished teacher should be voluntary and should be rewarded by, for example, professional leave, higher salaries or accelerated progression. However, the IEU believes that the issues of equity and access, the nature of teaching as an essentially collaborative endeavour, quota issues, clarification of criteria and resourcing in general need much more thought and discussion across the profession.
- The IEU believes that the interrelationship between the professional and industrial aspects of a teacher's work is very clear and must be taken account of in relation to the debate around professional standards for teachers. Professional standards intersect with and take account of issues such as experience, skill level, rates of pay, teacher review and career structures. These are issues which are negotiated between the industrial parties and are set in legally enforceable industrial awards and agreements. There are a number of reasons why teachers would participate in a process of accreditation as an accomplished teacher, and amongst those will be access to improved salaries and conditions, as well as necessary protections for their professional autonomy and judgement. It is their expectation that they would be properly negotiated by their union with the relevant employing authority. If this is not part of the process, the standards agenda will not be supported by the profession or the Union.

ATTACHMENT 2

A Charter for Teachers

Preamble

The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) represents teachers in non-government education. The IEUA is committed to ensuring that the essential work of teachers and their unique contribution to the cultural identity of Australia is known, understood and valued by the wider community.

The social, moral and economic wellbeing of the nation depends on the provision of high quality education for all Australians. It is the foundation upon which Australia's democracy is built. It requires continued commitment and appropriate resourcing by all levels of government.

Teachers have a strong sense of the dignity and worth of their work and believe that it is important to share and expand the knowledge of their profession. They believe that as members of the teaching profession, they have an individual and collective responsibility to advocate to the community the value of their work in educating students in the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that our society supports.

Quality education depends on teachers who are highly educated, professionally expert in the classroom and for whom student learning outcomes are a priority. The IEUA **Charter for Teachers** articulates the shared values and principles that teachers hold about their profession and the nature of their work.

Guiding Principles

Teachers accept and respect that the teaching-learning relationship is critical as are teachers' relationships to other adults responsible for the child.

Teachers are accountable for their work and recognise that integral parts of their role are the evaluation of student outcomes and the sharing of information with relevant parties.

Teachers recognise individual differences in students and develop and implement appropriate teaching and learning strategies which respect such differences.

Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the content of what they are teaching and an appreciation that the process and content of learning are interdependent.

Teachers exercise professional autonomous judgements every day within a complex and multi-faceted work context.

Teachers work with each other in a culture of trust, shared decision making and open communication.

Teachers assist and support their colleagues and share their knowledge, expertise and experience to enhance their work and that of their colleagues.

Teachers believe that the teaching and learning environment must be safe, caring and free of harassment for all staff and students.

ATTACHMENT 3

National Statement from the Teaching Profession on Teacher Standards, Quality and Professionalism A Working Document

11 December 2002

INTRODUCTION

Why should teachers embrace professional standards? What purposes are they designed to serve? Who will benefit most from their introduction? Such questions are often in the minds of practising teachers, given that over time they have witnessed a plethora of initiatives designed to improve the quality of teaching, with many of these emphasizing the importance of professional standards.

What teachers know, do and value has a significant influence on the nature, extent and rate of student learning. The powerful phrase – ‘teachers make the difference’ – captures the key role that professional educators play in shaping the lives and futures of their students. Recognition of the critical relationship between teacher and learner highlights the need to better define, communicate and build on what constitutes good teaching.

Professional teaching standards provide a powerful mechanism for achieving these objectives. While teaching is not a standards-free endeavour and most teachers have always understood the essential elements of high quality professional practice, much of this knowledge has remained at an intuitive level. Standards do help to make the knowledge and capabilities *explicit* – not only to professional colleagues, but also to students, parents and the wider community. They also provide a means through which good teaching can be identified, celebrated and rewarded. Provided the profession can maintain its role as the driver of the standards agenda, then there is considerable potential for these measures of teaching quality to be used in ways that will support teachers individually and collectively.

Several national professional associations have invested considerable time and resources in establishing a rationale for teaching standards, and in working with classroom practitioners to design and trial various models and approaches. At the state and territory level, statutory bodies for teachers and education systems have been active in advancing this agenda. There has also been recognition of advanced status in a number of industrial agreements (e.g. Level 3 Teachers in Western Australia). Underpinning all of this work is the teacher’s fundamental commitment to the effective learning, care and achievement of his or her students.

Another common theme spanning much of the published work of teacher organisations on standards is the strong connection with professional learning. Many envisage teaching standards being used as a framework for continuous professional learning and development which is teacher-directed and controlled. In other words, the process is done by and with teachers not *to* or *for* them. Building on this concept, many also see standards being used to support the development of career pathways, with teachers using standards as a means of determining their current position on a learning continuum and charting their own course for higher-order learning and professional recognition. Effective professional learning has been referred to by one author as a long-term personal quest to attain high professional standards, as distinct from a series of discrete courses or workshops provided by school authorities, universities, professional associations and other agencies.

STANDARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF QUALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

The profession of teaching incorporates five dimensions or objectives:

- to act as a public advocate for the profession and the social good
- to contribute to the development of the knowledge base of the profession
- to adhere to professional and ethical standards set by and for the profession
- to be competent and knowledgeable about subject matter and pedagogy
- to reflect a strong values orientation across all areas of learning and teaching.

Teachers' professional learning involves both the opportunity to engage with research and knowledge, and the capacity to generate new knowledge and critique the knowledge claimed by others. All forms of professional learning should support teachers in achieving high professional teaching standards. Examples include pre-service training, professional development courses and reading, continuous inquiry embedded in the daily life of a school, learning networks, professional association activities and post-graduate study. These activities also provide teachers with opportunities to strengthen the profession by leading, facilitating and supporting others committed to improving the quality of teaching. Other factors influencing the quality of teaching and learning include high quality supportive leadership in schools and good collegial relations. The quality of teachers' work is also affected by the conditions of student learning.

While professional teaching standards are not the only means of achieving quality and teaching excellence and enhancing the status of teachers and the profession, they do provide an important strategy for:

- “improving the effectiveness of professional development, by clarifying the areas in which the profession expects its members to improve with experience and establishing a standards-guided system for continuing professional learning across the profession
- providing a basis for improving career path opportunities and pay systems for classroom teachers who attain those standards
- providing, thereby, stronger incentives for all teachers to engage in long term professional development focused on student learning and guided by challenging profession-defined teaching standards
- strengthening the contribution the profession makes to leadership in teaching, accountability and quality assurance.”

(Source: National Professional Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers of Science, Australian Science Teachers Association, 2002, p.4)

PRINCIPLES FOR GUIDING STANDARDS

In discussions so far, national teacher organisations and stakeholders have reached consensus on a set of principles to guide the development and application of standards. Professional standards for teaching should:

- be the responsibility of, and be owned by, the teaching profession in collaboration with key stakeholders
- be applied in the interests of learners and the public good
- be firmly grounded in an accurate and comprehensive understanding of teachers' work
- provide a framework for teacher qualifications and registration
- recognise the value of both generic and subject specific standards

- be clear to the profession and the wider community
- enhance the public perception of and regard for teachers and their work
- promote teaching as a desirable career, thus contributing to recruitment
- focus on high-level capabilities and be described in terms of professional knowledge, understanding, skills and values
- promote engagement in professional learning throughout a teacher's career, allowing for different points of entry and re-entry to the profession
- acknowledge that context and resourcing will have an impact on implementation and sustainability
- acknowledge the responsibility of employers to establish conditions conducive to developing and maintaining profession-defined standards.

HOW WILL STANDARDS BE USED?

Standards are derived from good practice and articulate what the profession believes teachers should know, do and value. Teachers have demonstrated that they can develop publicly credible and professionally challenging standards for professional practice. Standards should be used to provide a framework and guide for:

- teacher education and continuous professional learning
- reflecting on and assessing professional teaching practice
- recognition and certification of teachers who attain standards for highly accomplished professional practice.

In other words, standards are tools for action – tools with which the profession can exercise greater responsibility for the quality of learning in schools. Use of standards must be first and foremost about professional learning. Teachers should use them to create and monitor their own professional learning programs, either individually or as members of learning communities.

National collaboration and the involvement of professional organisations are essential to ensure maximum consistency in the use of both beginning and advanced teaching standards in all states and territories.

There should be flexibility in the use and forms of assessment of standards across different fields to recognise the complexity of teachers' work, the range of contexts in which they work and the different ways in which teachers can meet standards.

Standards contain both generic and specific elements. Generic standards identify broad capabilities and teacher attributes that apply across a range of subject areas. Specific standards identify the knowledge, skills and values required to teach in particular curriculum areas, levels of schooling and/or other areas of specialisation.

Evidence of ability to meet relevant profession-defined standards should be a requirement for entry to the profession and a basis for advancement within the profession. Peer and community recognition will result from engagement with and achievement of teaching standards.

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

Professional certification is an endorsement by a professional body that a member of that profession has attained a specified level of professional practice. In education, certification might be implemented

across a number of fields of teaching and learning. Given the work of national professional associations, state/territory statutory bodies for teachers and the inclusion in some industrial agreements of advanced status payments, a nationally coordinated and consistent approach to professional certification should be further developed. In the meantime, however, it is important to acknowledge an emerging consensus that the process for the formal assessment of performance for certification should:

- be authentic
- be based on professional teaching standards
- have peer involvement in its development and execution
- reflect the core business of teaching
- be positively oriented (i.e. with a focus on accomplishment rather than deficiencies)
- use a range of methods and evidence
- incorporate appeal processes.

The processes for assessing attainment of standards should be consistent across all fields of teaching and learning and be fair for all applicants. Peer and self-assessment through reflective practice and professional learning communities is in keeping with ownership by the profession.

In the case of advanced standards, participation by teachers in assessment processes should be conducted on a voluntary basis. Where assessor panels are established they should be composed predominantly of practising teachers who are adequately trained in the assessment processes. In these processes it is important that judgements are made against the standards themselves.

RECOGNITION AND REWARD

A nationally coordinated and consistent system should be established to provide recognition to teachers who demonstrate advanced standards. There should be no quota on the number of teachers who are able to receive recognition for certification. Reward is an important part of the recognition process and reflects the desire of the profession and the community to acknowledge high-level accomplishment in tangible ways such as increased remuneration, professional leave or other incentives.

The enterprise bargaining process between employers and unions will be an important mechanism for providing substantive recognition for professional certification. All employing authorities should be encouraged to provide recognition and support for professional certification as the process comes to demonstrate its credibility and its effects on professional learning.

ATTACHMENT 4

Letter to Teacher Registration Boards/Institutes

3 February 2003

Ms Susan Halliday
Chair
The Victorian Institute of Teaching
PO Box 531 Collins Street West
Melbourne Vic 8007

Dear Ms Halliday,

At its last meeting in 2002, the IEU Federal Executive considered the developments taking place under the auspices of Commonwealth and State/Territory policy and projects with regard to standards, teacher quality and professionalism, and issues of teacher supply and demand. Part of our discussions concerned the interrelationship of these agendas with the roles and responsibilities of the already established and the newly emerging statutory Teacher Registration Boards and Teacher Institutes (howsoever called) at State/Territory level.

In most, if not all, jurisdictions, the right to be employed will require all teachers to be registered by the relevant Board/Institute. Further, a number of the authorities have (or will have) responsibility in relation to the accreditation of preservice courses and the development and accreditation of both entry and advanced standards and of provisional registration and re-registration processes. However, in other states there may be no provision for the recognition of advanced standards or re-registration.

The Union believes that it is important that there is national consistency, recognition and portability of teacher qualifications and experience across the jurisdictions and of overseas teachers. These matters intersect with industrial agendas and will be the subject of discussion and negotiation with the education unions. For example, it was noted at our meeting that 3 year trained teachers from another state may not be eligible for registration in Victoria under the requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teachers.

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For its part, the IEU and its branches will coordinate its industrial approach in relation to the next Enterprise Bargaining Agreement round to establish a nationally consistent framework of conditions on issues such as:

- properly resourced induction and mentoring for teachers
- ongoing well-resourced quality professional learning and sharing of good practice
- properly resourced conditions of student learning.

For the Boards to have the confidence of the teaching profession and their Unions, it will be important that they strongly and publicly advocate the need for teachers to have the time to be able to engage with their colleagues about what works and what doesn't in their teaching practice and that teachers are active participants in the development and validation of teaching standards.

The IEU believes it will be essential for there to be discussions with the Boards/Institutes about such matters. Further, the IEU believes that there should be joint meetings of the various Boards/Institutes to address matters such as a national framework for the recognition and portability of qualifications, standards and experience across the jurisdictions in both the government and non government systems and schools.

The Union would appreciate advice from you on these practical issues and any initial discussions already held across the Boards/Institutes and progress made in advancing a consistent approach across the jurisdictions on the range of responsibilities within the mandate of the Boards/Institutes.

The Boards/Institutes will be important bodies. They carry the authority provided by their legislative base and have quite wide-ranging responsibilities. The IEU has a long history of strongly supporting the establishment of such bodies, going back to the seventies, later on in the early nineties and of course, more recently. Of course, such support cannot be taken for granted – in recent months, all IEU branches have received strong criticism from members in relation to some of the policies being proposed by Boards/Institutes and the Union has a very close watching brief, given this member criticism.

The IEU Executive is meeting on 28 February and would appreciate advice from you in relation to the issues outlined above.

Yours sincerely



Lynne Rolley
Federal Secretary

