

DISTANCE EDUCATION

April 2003
Amended 2008

POLICY: ICPA seeks an integrated service offering a complete network of programmes, facilities and support services to rural and remote students studying at home or in rural and remote schools, centred on interaction between teachers, students and home supervisors, as well as among students themselves.

OBJECTIVES:

1. That a realistic allowance be payable to rural and remote families in recognition of the vital role played by home supervisors, as well as adequate support services, for children studying at home via Distance Education.
2. That there is provision of adequate resource material and modern communications equipment, and technology of high quality and quantity at each Distance Education campus, with sufficient time and funding allocated for:
 - a. lessons via Distance Education,
 - b. discussion and advice between teachers, home supervisors and parents,
 - c. the children to interact with each other.
3. That visits to families by suitably qualified personnel for interaction with students and home supervisors occur on a regular basis.
4. That there be provision of facilities and funds for a student's teacher to make a home visit at least annually.
5. That suitable training and development be available to all teachers of Distance Education.
6. That 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.
7. 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.
8. That 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.
9. That adequate funds be available for suitable communications equipment, (with installations checked by qualified technicians), for any rural and remote family wishing to participate in lessons via Distance Education, and that suitable qualified support staff be available at each Distance Education campus to assist families.
10. That there be provision of at least a once a week mail service throughout Australia to expedite the turnaround of Distance Education material, and that where necessary there be:
 - a. the continued existence or improvement of existing mail services, including subsidised travel costs to collect mail in the absence of a regular mail service,
 - b. subsidies on delivery and landing fees where Distance Education material must be transported by air at a surcharge above normal postal rates.
11. That new and developing technologies are incorporated into the delivery of educational programmes, services and materials by schools of Distance Education, with no detriment to those students whose only option is Distance Education.
12. 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 in order to ensure continuity of education.
13. 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.
14. That every South Australian government school be regarded as a Host School and support students of Distance Education.

15. That the South Australian Education Department adequately maintain the Itinerant Teacher service, providing adequate annual operating budgets, and ensure that:
 - a. Itinerant Teacher contracts begin and end with the school year.
 - b. Selection panels for Itinerant Teachers include a parent representative, who is currently a recipient of the Itinerant Teacher service.
 - c. Local Management Groups from all Distance Education campuses be consulted about the Itinerant Teacher job specifications.
 - d. Distance Education families are consulted about proposed changes to footprint areas.
 - e. Itinerant Teachers will continue to be based in local footprint Host Schools and not at a campus of the Open Access College.
16. That the Open Access College introduce a continuous enrolment form.
17. That the South Australian Education Department fund the REVISE scheme on an annual, recurrent basis, so that REVISE's administrative, operating, training and development costs can be adequately catered for. Additionally, that the proceeds of any nationwide appeal that results in funds for a single state or territory REVISE/VISE group be shared equitably between all the state and territory REVISE/VISE groups.
18. That the South Australian Education Department continue to provide funding to schools of Distance Education, on an annual basis and at least equal to the current GRIT grant, for the provision of modern technology to Distance Education students.
19. That the South Australian Education Department ensure that schools of Distance Education have adequate funding to ensure that Distance Education course materials can be systematically redeveloped as well as ensuring the ongoing development of new courses, so that currency of Distance Education materials and methodologies are maintained. Additional funding should be provided to ensure that:
 - a. courses can be properly trialled and developed with input from independent sources as well as home supervisors, students, parents and Distance Education teachers,
 - b. regular reviews of the course writing unit are conducted by independent sources and that such reviews consult fully with home supervisors, students, parents and teachers of Distance Education.