

Curriculum Developments on Nauru Developing a School Charter

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Early in 1995, it was decided to formulate a three-year plan for Nauru Primary School. The ever-increasing school population, coupled with tighter economic conditions, required improved planning and management strategies in order to supply a focus and a clearly-defined path for education on Nauru in the future years.

It was decided that developing a School Charter would be the most effective way of setting up a three-year plan. A School Charter is a document which proposes a set of intentions to be achieved in a sequential manner, guiding the future directions of the educational institution for which it is developed.

There are eight key areas around which a School Charter is organised:

School Profile	Code of Practice
School Goals	Student Code of Conduct
School Priorities	School Accountability
Curriculum Profile	Budget Summary

The writing of a School Charter is a daunting task to the uninitiated but under the direction and leadership of Mr Eston Thoma, the then Principal of Nauru Primary School, the process became manageable.

The first step in the development of the School Charter was the formation of a committee of interested and experienced members. Emphasis was placed on the inclusion of community/parent members in order to more fully involve them in the education system. Also on the committee were school leaders, teachers and central office staff. By developing the Charter in a consultative manner, it was hoped to give all members ownership, both of the document, its aims and objectives, and the schools it would cover.

Thus the Charter Development Committee was established. Tasks were delegated to working groups depending on an individual's interest and expertise. Regular meetings were held by the working groups, during

which time their section plan was developed. This involved the setting out of priorities, specifying outcomes and developing a timeline of strategies in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Full committee meetings were held every two weeks when working groups presented their papers so that their recommendations could be shared and discussed.

The most difficult part of the process was confining the priorities to six areas as it was felt this was a realistic number of goals to try and achieve in a three-year period. The priorities included physical resources and curriculum areas in need of development

The priorities set by the school charter for the years 1996 - 1998 were:

1. Buildings and Resources
2. English as a Second Language
3. Literacy in Nauruan
4. Science
5. Children's Health and Community Awareness
6. Catering for children with special needs.

In all, it was a most worthwhile process, clarifying issues of importance, prioritising needs and realistically attempting to set goals which, given appropriate funding, could be achieved in the time span of the Charter.

The Charter has been submitted to the Minister of Education for his consideration and will hopefully be adopted by the government.

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