

CHAPTER III

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF STATE SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE QUEENSLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 1976

A Brief History of State School Education in Queensland¹

(a) Primary Education

The first primary school in Queensland was opened in 1826 under the administration of the Anglican Church. The Church accepted the responsibility to educate the children of the early colony and to do this established a parochial school.

In 1860 a Board of Education was established by the New Queensland legislature. The main purpose of this board was to supervise the few existing National Schools. Under the direction of the Board the number of these schools rose, and in 1862 the Normal School, in Brisbane, was opened. An important function of this school was as a pupil teacher training centre. Schools were also divided into two groups, the National, or vested schools, directly under the control of the Board; and the non-vested schools or independent schools. Both types, however, came under the super-

vision of the Board with regard to curricula and finance. A third type of school, Provisional, was established in 1869. These schools could be established with as few as twelve pupils if the local community could provide a school building and teacher accommodation. In the following year school fees were abolished in National Schools.

A growing spirit to encourage the growth of education in Queensland, coinciding with increasing levels of prosperity, set the background to the Education Act of 1875. This Act provided for compulsory, free and secular education and established a Department of Public Instruction to administer the Act.

The Department took a number of steps to bring education to isolated children, e.g. the Itinerant Teacher Scheme (1901-1932) and the Primary Correspondence School (1922). In 1911 travelling medical and dental teams were also started. As a climax to primary education the Scholarship Examination was conducted, from which successful candidates were selected to receive financial assistance to complete their secondary education.

This examination began to lose its credibility

in the late 1950's, as more and more students went on to secondary education. Consequently it was abolished in 1963, thereby giving greater independence to primary schools in curricula, administration, and use of resources. Standardized texts have subsequently been replaced by expanded library facilities, through a system of government grants.

(b) Secondary Education

Queensland's first secondary school was Ipswich Grammar School opened in 1863, following the enactment of the Grammar Schools Act in 1860. Secondary education closely followed the traditional English model in these schools, but catered for a minority of students. Mass secondary education did not come until the latter half of the twentieth century.

In 1912 state secondary schools were established in places where the attendance was likely to be 25 or more pupils, except where grammar schools had already been established. During the 1930's intermediate schools were started which were designed to cater for all pupils aged twelve years who wished to complete a further two years of education.

The rapid growth in primary enrolments, com-

bined with the increases in population resulting from the higher birth rates and immigration policies of the post World War II period indicated that there was a need for a large scale building programme for secondary schools. In 1964 a programme was introduced designed to offer secondary education to all students. As a result, such/^{education}was no longer selective, the aim being to provide a sound general education with the emphasis on personal development.

Queensland Secondary education in the 1970's has been dominated by the proposals of the Radford Report.² The Radford Committee recommended that external examinations be replaced by a system of internal school assessment, so that by 1973 no Queensland students in schools had to sit for public examinations.

(c) Special Education

During the nineteenth century the education of children with special needs was virtually ignored. The first such group of children to receive special attention were the blind, closely followed by the deaf. By 1897 deaf and blind children were educated separately but housed together. The Department of Public Instruc-

tion assumed full responsibility for the education of these children.

In 1923, District Inspector Bevington was instrumental in establishing the Opportunity Schools. However, it was not until 1949, when the Research and Guidance Branch was established, that more effective supervision and control over admissions to such schools became possible. The senior officer of this branch, W. Wood, played a major part in the reform of special education in Queensland. In 1952, with the help of an English psychologist, he prepared a report for the reorganization of education for the intellectually handicapped. As a result of this report opportunity schools, rather than classes attached to existing schools, were favoured. Special education gained greater attention after the Special Education Services unit was created in 1958. Mr. Wood was appointed the first Director of this unit.

Today the emphasis on special education is on integrating the children into the normal school situation. In 1969 teacher education colleges began to provide courses in special education.

(d) Pre-School Education

This has only become of major concern to the State Education Department in recent years. Private organizations have largely controlled pre-school education, e.g. the Creche and Kindergarten Association formed in 1911. It was not until 1972 that the Queensland Government announced that it would provide free, non-compulsory pre-school facilities for children between the ages of four and five years. The first centres were opened in 1973 and by the end of 1976 it is hoped to have 500 centres. In 1974 the first children were enrolled in the Pre-School Correspondence Program.

Legislation Relevant to Community Involvement in
Queensland State Schools

From its inception, Queensland education has made provision for the involvement of community groups in the operation and organization of state schools.

(a) School Boards

The Education Act of 1875³ proposed guidelines for the formation and the role of school boards in Queensland state schools. Section 24 of that Act stated:-

The Governor in Council may constitute and define School Districts containing one or more primary schools and may appoint in each district a school board which shall consist of not less than five nor more than seven persons one of whom shall be the correspondent and the members of every such board shall hold office for a period of three years but any member may at any time be removed by the Governor in Council.⁴

The powers and composition of the boards, as constituted by this Act, provided the opportunity for the community to become actively involved in the management of primary schools during these early years. The duties of the boards were listed in sub-sections 1 to 5 of Section 24⁵:-

1. To control the use of school buildings in and out of school hours.
2. Report on and recommend on the needs of school facilities.
3. Report on enrolments, general conditions and management of schools.
4. Report on attendance.
5. Report on the need for new schools.

Such duties necessarily involved the co-operation between the teacher(s) and the board but also gave the board powers in the administration and the management of schools. If these powers were exercised fully it placed the staff in the position of being directly responsible to the board, as well as the Department of Public Instruction, for the operation of the schools. The boards were thus given executive

powers.

This Act also referred to the method of formation of school boards. Section 25 stated:-

The Governor in Council may order that the school board for any district shall instead of being nominated as hereinafter provided be elected by such persons and in such manner as shall be provided by the Regulations.⁶

(b) School Committees

In the Regulations of the Education Act 1934, Department of Public Instruction in Queensland⁷, School Committees, a new form of community involvement, were introduced. These committees were also given some executive powers, but were largely envisaged as advisory bodies. Staff were no longer directly responsible to the community group but were expected to work in close association with them. Although very few of these groups actually exercised their full powers they were given the right to have a say in the following areas⁸:-

Section 33. Duties of Committee:

- (a) control of the use of school buildings.
- (b) report on the maintenance of buildings and supervise improvements.
- (c) ...
- (d) influence parents to send their children to school.
- (e) report on misconduct of staff and protect staff from frivolous and vexatious complaints.
- (f) make suggestions on relevant subjects to be taught at school. The Minister reserved the

right for controlling the professional management of schools. The Committees were not to interfere with the professional work of teachers who were responsible to the Minister only.

These regulations also covered such areas as the eligibility for election to Committees (Section 24); the composition of the Committee (Section 25); the procedure for initial meetings (Section 26); vacancies, retirements and appointments (Sections 27 and 28); the officers (Section 29); action to be taken in the event of failure to attend meetings (Section 30); and the raising and spending of funds (Section 32).

The relationship of the head teacher with the Committee was also set out, in Sections 34 and 64. Section 34 stated that the head teacher would facilitate the work of the Committees and submit the school register and records of attendance when requested. Section 64 stated that the head teacher was not to be paid his full salary on leaving the service unless a certificate was signed by two members of the Committee, or if no Committee, two parents, to the effect that the school and grounds had been left tidy.

The Regulations applying to the composition and functions of School Committees remained in force until 1964.

(c) Parents and Citizens Associations

In 1964 the Education Acts of 1875 and 1957 were fully repealed and were replaced by the State Education Act of 1964⁹. With regard to community involvement, School Committees were replaced by the Parents and Citizens Associations (Section 10) with very much reduced powers in the management and operation of schools. These associations were established largely as fund raising bodies specifically excluded from interfering in the control or management of schools. Section 13 of this Act states:-

Association not to exercise authority over teachers. An association shall not exercise any authority over the teaching staff, or interfere in any way with the control or management of any school.¹⁰

The main objective of the association is to "promote the interests of the State school by promoting co-operation between school and community."¹¹

Amendments¹² to this Act are included in the Education Act 1964-70, e.g. amendment 12 which gave the associations power to provide amenities or improvements, following approval by the Minister. Funds raised for these purposes are to be used as directed by the Minister, or failing direction, as the association deems fit.

The Education Regulations of 1971 provided further amendments¹³ which allowed Parents and Citizens Associations to organize and conduct fund raising activities, approved by the Director-General, for the purpose of providing improvements, additions of fixtures, and furniture, with the approval of the Works and Housing Department.

Community participation in Queensland State schools has therefore been eroded from the original executive body (School Boards) to an advisory body (School Committees), and then to a support organization largely concerned with raising funds (Parents and Citizens Association). To reintroduce school boards today, with executive and/or advisory functions, would therefore, require an act of parliament in order to define the composition and functions of such organizations. It would also appear at first glance to "turn back" the clock and reintroduce, in part, administrative structures long since discarded.

The Present Administrative Structure of the Queensland Department of Education

The control of education is vested in the State government, exercising control through a cabinet

minister and the Department of Education. Departmental organization is typically an hierarchic bureaucracy, headed by the Director-General, an experienced educator. There are divisions and sub-divisions, and officials who are ranged hierarchically from directors of various departments, to inspectors, principals, deputy principals and teachers. There are specialist service branches providing support to the educative process in the form of new knowledge equipment and services. This structure is presented in detail in Figure 1¹⁴. In Figure 2¹⁵ the relationships between some areas of school education are shown.

The Regional Directorates, as indicated in Figure 1, are an attempt to decentralize the administration of education in Queensland. Some of the functions associated with staffing, finance and buildings have been delegated to Regional Directors. It was in one such Region, the Darling Downs, that the survey to determine opinions on school boards was conducted.

Fig. 1.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF STATE EDUCATION, QUEENSLAND 1975

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

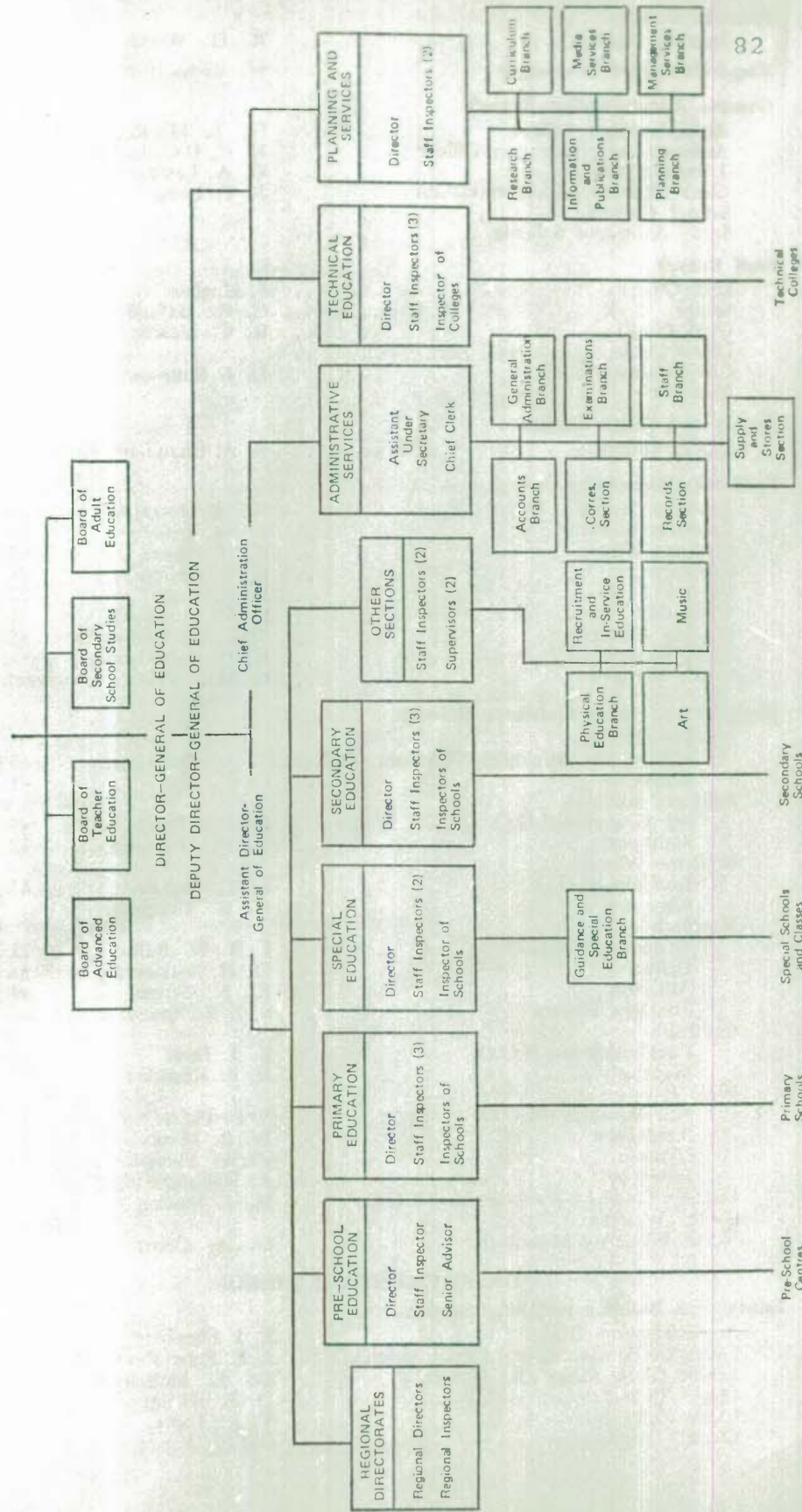
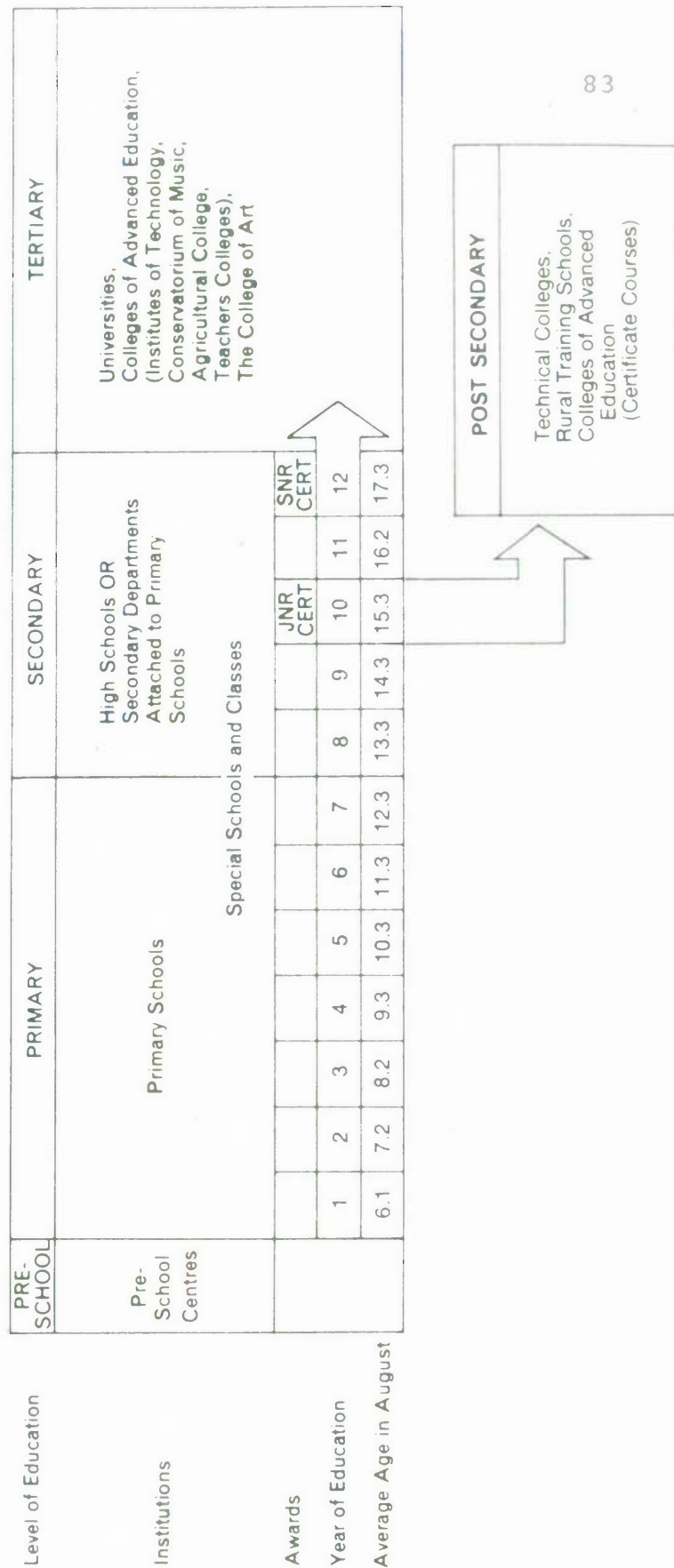


Fig. 2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF QUEENSLAND 1974



NOTES

1. Department of Education, Queensland, E.O.G., Vol. 77, No. 1, January, 1975, Supplement pp.1-12.
2. Report of the Committee Appointed to Review the System of Public Examinations for Queensland Secondary School Students and to make Recommendations for the Assessment of Students' Achievements, Brisbane, Department of Education, 1970.
3. The Education Act 1875, Brisbane, Govt. Printer, 1875, Sections 24 and 25.
4. Ibid, Section 24.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid, Section 25.
7. Education Act 1934, Regulations of the Department of Public Instruction in Queensland, Brisbane, Govt. Printer, 1934, Sections 24 to 34 and 64.
8. Ibid, Section 33.
9. The Education Act of 1964, Brisbane, Govt. Printer, 1964, Sections 10 to 13.
10. Ibid, Section 13.
11. Ibid, Section 11.
12. Education Act 1964-1970 with Regulations, Brisbane, Govt. Printer, 1971, Sections 10 to 13.
13. The Education Regulations of 1971, Brisbane, Govt. Printer, 1971, 48.
14. Department of Education, Queensland, E.O.G. Vol. 77, No. 3, March, 1975, Information Statement, p.4.
15. Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, Annual Report, 1974, Brisbane, Govt. Printer, 1974, p.8.