

Appendix 4A

Proposals to Transfer the Education Function, or Part Thereof, from the States and Territories to the Commonwealth

Appendix 4A has three sections. The first briefly examines calls for national approaches to education in Australia, with an emphasis on proposals to transfer all or part of the education function from State and Territory governments to the Commonwealth government. The second summarises several qualitative estimates of the benefits possible through national approaches to education. The third then presents a compilation of recent media reports, in Table 4A-1, describing calls for national approaches to education and various qualitative and quantitative claims and estimates of the financial and overall benefits of such national schemes, some of which have already been described in Chapter 4.

Proposals for National Approaches to Education

There have been numerous calls, though rarely formally proposed and fully developed, for a single national education system in Australia operated by the Commonwealth government, for reasons including:

- the potential to achieve cost savings and financial benefits generally if Australia's current nine Commonwealth, State and Territory education bureaucracies and regulatory frameworks are rationalised into a single national system, hence allowing more financial and human resources to be provided more directly for the benefit of students, schools and other education providers (including universities);
- the perceived benefits of common, consistent, transparent, understandable, accountable, and fully comparable educational standards throughout Australia;
- the need to reduce levels of inconvenience and confusion for school children and their families when moving from one State or Territory to another – a problem often raised by Defence Force families and other families who move across State and Territory borders;
- greater equity across State and Territory borders; and
- more efficient private sector markets for schools, text books, other educational resources, and education generally, if State and Territory borders become irrelevant.

The Australian Labor Party's third Federal Conference, in 1902, considered a proposal to establish the Commonwealth control of education as an ALP objective, but this proposal was

defeated (Crisp 1978: 232). As noted earlier, however, in 1915 the ALP adopted the objective of complete unification, hence implying the objective of a national education system under Commonwealth control.

In very recent years (between 2002 and early 2006), Dr Brendan Nelson and others in the Federal government, Labor frontbencher Lindsay Tanner, some State and Territory leaders, and several other prominent stakeholders, have argued strongly in favour of a more national approach to education in Australia, and, in some cases, a formal Commonwealth takeover of all or part of the education function. Table 4A-1 below displays a selection of 57 recent media reports (from 2002 to 2006) on such proposals for national approaches to education in Australia, nearly all of which are based on one or more of the reasons listed above. Some of these proposals call for a formal constitutional transfer of the education function in full from the States and Territories to the Commonwealth. Several proposals call for the Commonwealth to assume responsibility for just part of the education function – universities or TAFE colleges, for example. Other proposals seek national approaches, but without any formal constitutional amendment and transfer of power.

As Federal Education Minister between late 2001 and early 2006, Dr Brendan Nelson frequently announced his intentions to transfer all State and Territory university functions to the Commonwealth and to introduce uniform school starting ages, nationally consistent student reports, a national school curriculum, and a national Year 12 certificate to be known as the Australian Certificate of Education (Hutchinson and Colman 2003: 13; Angus et al. 2004; Maiden 2004: 1; 2005: 7; Craven 2005: 15; DEST 2005a; 2005b; Masters 2005: 11; Nelson 2005: 2, 12; Norrie 2005: 1; Roberts 2005: 16; Solomon 2005: 32). The Federal Government's plan to establish "24 Australian Technical Colleges for years 11 and 12 students" (DEST 2005b: 1; see also numerous reports especially from 2004 onwards in Table 4A-1 below and Table 4D-1 in Appendix 4D, including Davies et al. 2004: 27; Mellish et al. 2004: 1; Steketee 2004: 27; Craven 2005: 15; Maiden and Shanahan 2005: 1; Solomon 2005: 32) is another already confirmed national approach to education.

In 2002, Lindsay Tanner (as reported by Gordon 2002: 10) proposed that "the states cede control of vocational training to the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth cede effective control of primary and secondary education to the states", in order to "enable each level of government to take full responsibility for a discrete stage of education and training and reduce duplication and overlap".

In June 2005, as New South Wales Liberal party leader, John Brogden (2005: 19) claimed that "the historical hangover of states legislating for universities is a lingering demonstration of failed federalism given the commonwealth funds universities and controls policy", and hence concluded that there was "clearly a case for federal control" of universities.

Qualitative Estimates of the Financial Benefits of National Approaches to Education

It is often claimed that a national approach to education could significantly overcome the costly and wasteful duplication which some believe is present in Australia's current systems of education. The word "duplication" appears 14 times, and "duplicate" once as well, for example, among the 57 media reports shown in Table 4A-1 below, and according to Figgis (2005: 1):

If an investigative journalist (or a politician) wanted to find a striking example of an apparent wasteful duplication of effort in Australia having eight separate States/Territories, they would need look no further than to the cascade of formal and resource-intensive reviews of senior secondary schooling and its certification over the last decade. Almost every jurisdiction has undertaken one, some lasting years and most at considerable expense.

In October 2005, Professor Geoff Masters (2005: 11), head of the Australian Council of Educational Research, makes the following observations and claims, based on his examination of the Australian Certificate of Education (ACE) as proposed by Dr Nelson as above:

Nine senior certificates are awarded by state and territory authorities (Victoria has two), meaning that students' experiences can be very different from one state to another. There is a bewildering variety of subjects across the country. Sometimes, the subject names (for example specialist maths, maths A, extension maths) used in different states obscure what is common. More often, the use of the same name (such as English) obscures what is different. Added to this are differences in terminology (for example, courses, subjects, studies); in minimum requirements for the certificate; in assessment procedures (for example, examinations, or school-based assessment only); and in the ways student results are reported (for example, a mark out of 50 or out of 100; how the level of achievement is recorded).

Nobody we have spoken with believes these differences reflect, or are a response to, different student needs in different states. Instead, they reflect different histories and philosophical positions, and the influence of individuals and committees. It is far from the case that these interstate differences are in the best interests of students. And employers tell us that they find the differences confusing. One consequence is that it is not possible to compare subject results across state borders. ... No doubt, for users of senior certificates, this limits the usefulness of subject results. Another consequence is the considerable duplication of effort. Australia develops seven physics syllabuses, and their associated examinations and assessments, for essentially the same group of tertiary-bound students. If several systems were to work on a shared physics syllabus, might that free up resources - perhaps to develop other science courses for students who will not go on to tertiary education?

Masters (2005: 11) concludes that "it seems clear that there would be advantages to students, families and employers, and to Australia's position in the international education marketplace, in greater national consistency in senior secondary school arrangements."

Wilson (2004: 16), like Masters and others, respects historical influences but believes that national approaches to the education function are now needed to address national, local and global challenges:

Our arrangements for the management and delivery of schooling in Australia look like what they are: an accommodation which met the political needs of the federation process at the end of the 19th century, and which was appropriate to a large continent with poor communication systems. It is difficult to imagine that this will provide a credible response to the challenges of globalisation. ... Where speed of delivery, flexibility and responsiveness to local needs are criteria, services should be close to their users. But in the big emblematic areas – curriculum, assessment and certification – it is difficult to find any argument for multiple separate parallel institutional frameworks.

Wilson (2004: 16) argues that there are "two great contributions we could make to improving the transparency and coherence of Australian school education, and its attractiveness internationally":

The first is a single common Australian curriculum. The second is a national system of assessment and certification for Year 12, so every successful student would receive an Australian Certificate of Education. The simplest argument for these changes is that there is a significant potential financial saving. More substantially, an Australian curriculum will improve the nation's competitiveness in the market for international students and curriculum goods and services. A single curriculum framework is likely to make education more accessible and transparent. In particular, it will make a serious difference to children who change education systems, and their families, who find the complexities of differences incomprehensible and infuriating.

In an address to the 2004 conference of the Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA), on 29 September 2004 in Darwin, ASPA President Ted Brierley (2004; see also Tomazin 2004: 4) made the following claims and recommendations:

- The question needs to be asked again: Are departments of education a part of the problem, or a part of the solution? Let me remind you that of the top 15 stressors experienced by school leaders, 10 are under the control of the departments.
- Another question that needs answering is why we need 8 departments of education, each vying with each other for the 'dead hand of bureaucracy award of the year'. Such an approach is inefficient, ineffective and does damage to the national interest. ...
- Our current structure was set up over 100 years ago when travel was by horse and the telephone was an infant. Communication and data systems have progressed beyond their years since then, yet we still suffer from the 'rail gauge' mentality. Is there benefit from scrapping the states' and territories' ministries and departments of education and handing all responsibility to Canberra, run through, say 50 regions or districts around the country? I think it is high time that the less than sparkling performance of our current structures were put under closer scrutiny, and action taken. I am not convinced that Australian students are being well served by our current federal structure.

Tomazin (2004: 4) reported further on the ASPA conference as above:

School principals have called for state governments to be cut out of education, claiming state bureaucracies are hindering schools and soaking up money intended for classroom programs and capital works. The Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA) yesterday suggested a national framework in which education funding and policy is administered federally, and run through about 50 regional divisions.

ASPA president Ted Brierley said principals were "fed up" having to deal with complex state education departments, which made it harder for many schools to improve their services and facilities. He said a national framework could reduce back-logs in areas such as capital works, allow greater consistency in the way school programs are delivered, and prevent "buck-passing" between governments. ...

... Mr Brierley said that, in the past, part of the federal funding given to Victoria to improve teaching quality had been "soaked up" by the bureaucracy and used on consultancies, project officers or other administrative costs.

... Andrew Blair, president of the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, backed a new approach. "It would be simpler and cleaner if there was one funding source and it came directly to schools. For a population of 20 million, we are clearly over-governed," he said.

NSW Parents and Citizens' Council president Sharryn Brownlee, in February 2005, "said she would welcome other states embracing one, simplified system" (Maiden 2005: 7):

"We're great supporters of national consistency and a national curriculum because when you're talking about a country of 20 million, why do we duplicate in eight different institutions?" [Sharryn Brownlee] said. "Even in the defence force alone, 80,000 children move schools and states every year. It's very confusing because there's no consistency for starting ages either."

Several studies have focused on the adverse impact of inconsistent education systems on school children and their families following movements across State and Territory borders. Eccles et al. (2002: 1), in a survey of "school-aged children of families with high levels of mobility across all States and Territories, including the school-aged children of Australian Defence Organisation personnel", jointly sponsored by the DEST and the Department of Defence, observed as follows (Eccles et al. 2002: 42):

Throughout the consultation stage of the project and again through comments derived from the project survey, the mismatch between year levels evident in the Australian States and Territories is an issue that consistently raises a passionate response.

"It's a throw back from our colonial past. We couldn't get it right with railway gauges and we can't get it right with education."

"Of our 3 elder children ... all have had to undergo tutoring following interstate moves because of differences in the State education systems. All 3 suffered a change of year levels (up or down) when moved from State to State. Australia is a mobile society, particularly within defence. It is essential that the States get together and develop one consistent schooling system."

The Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee (Senate FADTRC), in its October 2001 report on 'Recruitment and Retention of ADF Personnel', similarly notes as follows (Senate FADTRC 2001: 65-66):

Many previous reports on the provision of support to ADF families have highlighted the difficulties created by the absence of a national education standard. ... The Committee heard evidence that Defence families moving on posting encountered difficulties with school entry ages, grading systems and handwriting standards.

...

However, these measures avoid the strategic problem of a national education system, which must be addressed by Federal, State and Territory Governments. This is an issue that has been on the national education agenda for a long time. It covers mainly starting ages, handwriting styles and curricula. Differences among the States and Territories cause immense difficulty and frustration for Defence personnel and all other people who move from State to State with their employment or for other reasons. It is time that Commonwealth and State and Territory Education Ministers get national consensus for at least starting ages and handwriting styles.

Significantly, several of Dr Nelson's initiatives, as described earlier, appear to have followed Recommendation 29 from this Senate FADTRC (2001: 67) report, as follows:

The Committee urges Commonwealth, State and Territory Education Ministers to reach consensus on the introduction of national standard school starting ages, standard grades and standard handwriting requirements.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI 2005c: 1) claims, generally, that Australia's current education arrangements are hindered by "parochial rivalry" and duplication, and that a nationally consistent approach can offer mutual benefits to both public and private sectors (ACCI 2005c: 2):

National consistency has long been an imperative underpinning many policy positions expressed by employers. The plain fact is that national consistency reduces the amount of red tape, overlap and duplication and costs of doing business in a highly competitive domestic and global environment. It also enables clients to have a clearer view on agreed outcomes across and within governments.

The most recent drive for national consistency from the Australian Government has come in the form of a proposed Australian Certificate of Education which puts the clients of education (i.e. students, parents and employers) before providers and individual governments.

Selected Recent (2002 to 2006) Media Reports Calling for National Approaches to Education

Table 4A-1 below contains extracts from 57 recent media reports, from 2002 through to 2006, which describe support for national approaches to the education function, or part thereof.

Table 4A-1: Recent Media Reports Calling for National Approaches to Education

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<i>The Age</i> 17 Oct 2002 p. 10	'Tanner calls for radical school reform', by Michael Gordon	Mr Tanner has advocated sweeping reforms, including a rationalisation of federal and state responsibilities for education and training and a bigger role for the private sector. ... Among his proposals are that: The states cede control of vocational training to the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth cede effective control of primary and secondary education to the states. ... Mr Tanner, whose Melbourne electorate includes the University of Melbourne and the RMIT, argued that the changes would enable each level of government to take full responsibility for a discrete stage of education and training and reduce duplication and overlap.
<i>The Australian</i> 3 Feb 2003	'Preschool trial brings state into line'	QUEENSLAND moved into line with the rest of Australia last week when more than 800 preschoolers began their school life. Premier Peter Beattie said the youngsters were part of the state Government's Preparing for Schools trial. He said in the past Queensland was the only state in Australia not to offer a full-time year of education before Year 1.
<i>The Australian</i> 26 Jun 2003	'Nelson plan to reform schools', by Dennis Shanahan	EDUCATION Minister Brendan Nelson will launch a quest for national uniformity in school curriculums, starting ages, student reports and reading, writing and teaching standards. Dr Nelson has declared he is prepared to use the federal Government's annual \$6.9 billion in state education funding as leverage to get national standards in "Australia's national interest". "We have eight different educational jurisdictions, eight different commencement ages, eight different curricula," Dr Nelson told <i>The Australian</i> . "We would not be giving service to young Australians if we just accept that we are eight jurisdictions," he said. "I see it as our responsibility to prepare the next generation to be well equipped as global citizens, to be proud and well-developed Australians as much as they are New South Welshmen or Queenslanders or West Australians," he said. Already embroiled in an attempt to reform higher education, Dr Nelson has set a target of uniform national school standards within five or six years. ... Dr Nelson said the federal Government gave \$6.9 billion in financial assistance to schools and believed the commonwealth had a "responsibility to use the leverage" of that funding to head towards national consistency. ... Australian Secondary Principals Association chief Ted Brierley last night agreed there was a need for consistency. "We believe there should be a common starting age around the nation, and a common curriculum, but not a common syllabus," Mr Brierley said. "We need to have national outcomes and national courses, but give some flexibility on syllabus." [Dr Nelson] said there were 80,000 students moving between states each year, but some senior business people would not shift interstate because of concerns about school differences. Dr Nelson also said the major issue facing Australian schools was the professionalism of teachers and the need for "nationally consistent, nationally recognised and accredited professional development programs for the teaching professional and quality assurance". He said there should be teacher-training initiatives that "are owned by the profession and facilitated by the federal and state governments so that a teacher teaching mathematics in Bunbury is involved and meeting the same sort of standards in Hobart or Darwin".
<i>Canberra Times</i> 27 Jun 2003	'Nelson accused of plagiarism' by Stacey Lucas	Education Minister Brendan Nelson has been accused of plagiarising his plans to unify Australia's eight education systems. State and territory ministers say a special task force has already spent the past 12 months working towards a national curriculum.
<i>Border Mail</i> 27 Jun 2003	Editorial: 'Level playing field better'	THE Federal Government is to be applauded for its proposal to implement a standard school curriculum across Australia. Such a system of education is common sense and one that must surely better equip young Australians to pursue their life goals. It is incongruous that each year some 80,000 children move around Australia and therefore have to contend with different systems and levels of education. Or to put it another way, eight different education systems exist in this country. Education, more than anything else, should be seamless. The challenge for federal Education Minister Dr Brendan Nelson and his State counterparts will be to ensure that there is no diminution of education standards. Indeed the goal must be one of continual improvement to ensure the children and adults of tomorrow have the best education possible to best equip them to compete and survive in an increasingly competitive world. Standardisation of education, including a consistent tertiary entrance exam, is essential and must transcend politics. Of course Dr Nelsons plan for a standardised education system begs the question why start and stop with education?

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>The Australian</i> 27 Jun 2003 p. 13</p>	<p>'Beyond the state line', by Sascha Hutchinson and Elizabeth Colman</p>	<p>The federal Government wants uniformity among state education systems. But can it be done? ... As well as being a parent, Geoff Masters is also the chief executive officer of the Australian Council for Educational Research.</p> <p>... On Wednesday, federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson told The Australian he would be pushing ahead to reform the Australian school landscape by introducing national uniformity across school curriculums. He would also be arguing for uniform school starting ages, student reports and national standards in reading, writing and teaching.</p> <p>... "There's just so much duplication. That mathematics is somehow different in Western Australia than South Australia seems crazy," says Masters. "You can't actually say in this country how a person in NSW who has taken [Year 12] chemistry has performed in relation to a student in South Australia."</p> <p>... On Wednesday, Nelson said he had a "responsibility to use the leverage" of federal funding to drive the push towards national consistency.</p> <p>... The states reacted angrily to the prospect of a threat over funding but most agreed in principle with the idea of a more uniform national approach, as long as other states adopted their system.</p> <p>The idea of a national standard curriculum was raised this time last year by Queensland Education Minister Anna Bligh at a meeting of state ministers. Bligh yesterday said she "welcomed [Nelson's] decision to follow the lead of state ministers". Bligh says she is concerned about the effect on parents of moving their children interstate to a new school curriculum and sought to identify common ground among the states and territories in curriculum, where they differed and how to achieve consistent results. Her concerns were referred to a national taskforce, then to the Curriculum Corporation, which is forming recommendations.</p> <p>... But the Australian Education Union is not so sure of the benefits to students in standardising school curriculum. Federal president Pat Byrne says although greater uniformity makes sense, the degree to which it is embraced has to be questioned.</p> <p>... Geoff Noblett, author of a report last year that studied the effects of moving interstate on schoolchildren -- jointly funded by the Department of Defence and the Commonwealth Department of Education -- says uniformity of school systems is an important issue to many parents. "Uniformity was raised more often by parents than by teachers," he says. "Parents were more prone to highlight the difference in year levels, starting ages and variations in terminology. "I certainly think [mobility] is an issue. In the report we've got a trend line to say family mobility is on the increase in Australia and [we've] become a highly mobile society. For most families it's not an issue, but for the more marginalised families it can be very disruptive."</p> <p>... "Parents are increasingly worried in a mobile world that their children are going to be disadvantaged simply by moving from one part of Australia to the next," Nelson says.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 25 Sep 2003</p>	<p>'Nelson flags single senior certificate', by John Stapleton</p>	<p>FEDERAL Education Minister Brendan Nelson has flagged replacing the eight different Year 12 qualifications with a single certificate, in another move towards nationalising the state-based school system. Dr Nelson told ABC Radio he felt it was time a debate was held to determine the best way to assess Year 12 students for university entry. The different systems in each state meant that students did not have the same opportunity for admission to tertiary education. "It is important that we drive towards a nationally consistent method of assessing the skills and abilities of young people when they leave secondary education," he said.</p>
<p>ABC radio and online 2 Feb 2004</p>	<p>'Labor sets out school funding shake-up'</p>	<p>The Labor Party has outlined a plan to shake up the funding of Australian schools, including rolling together Commonwealth and state monies. Labor leader Mark Latham has outlined a plan to integrate Commonwealth and state government funding so public and private schools can operate under one national framework. ... Mr Latham believes an integrated system would result in greater funding for schools overall, with some money to be redistributed to more needy schools.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 12 Mar 2004 p. 1</p>	<p>'PM orders nationwide school tests', by Samantha Maiden</p>	<p>SCHOOLS will secure a record \$31billion injection of federal funding if they agree to national student testing, to a common age for starting school and to deliver parents "plain language" report cards. Under a new funding model announced by John Howard yesterday, both private and public schools will be forced to provide parents with student results from nationally graded reading, writing, arithmetic and science tests, along with programs to tackle bullying and improve literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>... "It is unacceptable that in only three of eight jurisdictions at the moment do parents actually know how their children are going against the national benchmarks of reading and writing," Education Minister Brendan Nelson said. "We will require all schools in Australia to actually have a national safe schools framework ... so that in every school students not only feel safe and every school not only identifies bullying and other unsafe practices, but is actually involved in preventing it and dealing with it when it occurs. "At the moment we have eight different starting ages across Australia. We've got 80,000 school-aged children who moved interstate last year, but in many cases their parents have told me they felt like they were moving to a different country in an educational sense."</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<i>The Australian</i> 22 Apr 2004	'Student tests too costly and confusing', by Samantha Maiden	Calling for an overhaul of national literacy, numeracy tests and reporting to parents, state governments warned that a genuine national system must be developed so results could be accurately compared. "Parents and the community have a right to know how Australia's schools are progressing but they need to be informed, not confused," Dr Refshauge said. "We need to break the cycle of state versus state and develop a genuine national reporting system.
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 27 May 2004	Editorial: 'The unevenness of learning'	<p>Equality of opportunity underpins Australia's embrace of compulsory universal education. If children are to have the best chances their talents allow, they should have as uniformly good preparation for schooling as the nation can afford.</p> <p>... Australian preschooling is a disjointed clump of systems where access to quality and affordability is more a lottery than a right. An independent study, commissioned by the Australian Education Union, has found preschool education fragmented, of variable quality and access, lacking national vision, commitment and consistency and characterised by different approaches, funding formulas, terminology, child ratios, curriculum, costs and opening hours. The result is that 40,000 children a year are denied fit preparation for the transition to school. The poorest and those living in remote areas are the most likely to miss out.</p> <p>Since the Commonwealth withdrew from preschool block grants 19 years ago, the only national policy - apart from some direct funding for indigenous children - has been to not have one. The luck of the draw is emphasised in NSW where two state government departments run separate systems. The Education Department funds about 80 preschools, with another 20 to come. It charges no fees. The Department of Community Services funds 800 and charges parents an average of \$60 a week. Victoria is the only other state to levy preschool fees. Unsurprisingly, preschool participation in NSW is a meagre 62 per cent compared with Queensland's universal coverage.</p> <p>The Australian Education Union study concludes that the most beneficial systems involve the one government department taking responsibility for preschool, child care and school. This heartens parents, who see the three tiers working together, and gives the single agency control over curriculum continuity.</p> <p>How much more efficient this would be if the Federal Government took the steering role in a national system. The Federal Government already funds long-day child care for infants. It possesses the only structures capable of facilitating and co-ordinating a clean-up of the existing preschool mess.</p>
<i>The Australian</i> 29 Jun 2004 p. 3	'Local Red tape 'costing schools \$2.75bn', by Samantha Maiden	ONE in every four dollars spent on the nation's primary schools never made it to the classroom as a result of state governments' "overly bureaucratic" administration practices, Education Minister Brendan Nelson warned yesterday. Releasing a new report card on the nation's schools, Dr Nelson claimed Labor states were "sucking substantial dollars from the coalface of teaching". ... "In dollar terms, 25 per cent of recurrent expenditure equates to a massive \$2.75 billion in this financial year," Dr Nelson said. "If state governments could reduce their administration costs by even 5 percentage points, this would release more than \$500 million per annum to support Australia's state government primary schools."
ABC radio and online 15 Jul 2004	'Latham talks schools, health with Labor leaders'	Federal Opposition leader Mark Latham has meet with state and territory leaders in Melbourne and says he will reform the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). ... Education Union federal president Pat Byrne says the declaration that public education should be a national priority will hopefully mean an end to buck-passing between the states and Federal Government.
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 15 Jul 2004	'Latham's pact with states to reform health and education', from AAP	Federal Labor Leader Mark Latham and state and territory leaders today signed an agreement to reform health and education services through better commonwealth-state cooperation. ... The communiqué, signed in Melbourne today, includes introducing national standards of funding for schools and common standards for reporting and accountability. ... Mr Latham said the pledge was an "historic opportunity" to end federal-state squabbling over health and education issues. "The Australian people want problem-solving, they want a cooperative federal-state approach that gets on with the real task of doing the things that have a positive impact in their lives. "They don't want blame-shifting and buck-passing. They want problems to be solved for the benefit of their children's education. ... ACTU president Sharan Burrow said Australians wanted action on such key issues, not buck-passing by politicians. "Everyone knows that the federal, state and territory government relationship is long overdue for reform," she said.
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 16 Jul 2004	'United States of Australia: Latham's plan', by Mark Metherell and Linda Doherty	The Opposition Leader, Mark Latham, has pledged to exploit Labor's political dominance across Australia with "a new era of national co-operation" on health, education and federal-state relations. He signed a pact with premiers and territory leaders yesterday to end "the culture of buck-passing, blame-shifting and bureaucratic waste" in the federal system in the event of a Latham victory at the coming federal poll. ... The plan also involves an overhaul of school funding, replacing nine systems. It would also unify the distribution of federal and state money to public and private schools.

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<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 6 Aug 2004</p>	<p>'Head start central to childhood strategy', by Cosima Marriner</p>	<p>Access to preschool for all children, a common national preschool curriculum and home visits by community nurses to all new parents will be promoted by the Federal Government in an ambitious plan to maximise childhood opportunities.</p> <p>The Government's draft national agenda for early childhood, which has been two years in the making, focuses on the first five years of life to prevent problems later on. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Larry Anthony, presented the draft to his state and territory counterparts at a meeting in Hobart last week. ... "We want to ensure that at Commonwealth level we're working with the states and territories ... so that we're not wasting taxpayers' money and, most importantly, we're getting a more consistent and better outcome for young kids and for parents," Mr Anthony said.</p> <p>... Although the draft centres on ideal broad outcomes, rather than specific programs, the Government has suggested some concrete goals. These include ensuring all children have access to preschool and a common preschool curriculum.</p>
<p><i>The Age</i> 12 Oct 2004 p. 4</p>	<p>'Principals want to expel state system', by Farrah Tomazin</p>	<p>School principals have called for state governments to be cut out of education, claiming state bureaucracies are hindering schools and soaking up money intended for classroom programs and capital works. The Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA) yesterday suggested a national framework in which education funding and policy is administered federally, and run through about 50 regional divisions.</p> <p>ASPA president Ted Brierley said principals were "fed up" having to deal with complex state education departments, which made it harder for many schools to improve their services and facilities. He said a national framework could reduce back-logs in areas such as capital works, allow greater consistency in the way school programs are delivered, and prevent "buck-passing" between governments. "I wouldn't mind at all seeing state governments cut out of education . . . Something has to be done. Schools need much more flexibility in the use of their resources," said Mr Brierley, whose group represents about 2000 secondary principals.</p> <p>The contentious suggestion, which was raised at a recent principals' conference in Darwin, appears to build on the Howard Government's \$1 billion plan to bypass state governments and give infrastructure funding directly to schools through parent and teacher bodies. It also comes after a national survey by ASPA showed that dealing with education departments was one of the major causes of stress for principals around the country. Mr Brierley said that, in the past, part of the federal funding given to Victoria to improve teaching quality had been "soaked up" by the bureaucracy and used on consultancies, project officers or other administrative costs.</p> <p>... Andrew Blair, president of the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, backed a new approach. "It would be simpler and cleaner if there was one funding source and it came directly to schools. For a population of 20 million, we are clearly over-governed," he said.</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>The Australian</i> 18 Oct 2004 p. 16</p>	<p>'Argument for single curriculum framework', by Bruce Wilson (chief executive officer of the Curriculum Corporation)</p>	<p>DOES Australia have a national curriculum? ... In fact the curriculum, along with responsibility for delivery of school education, belongs to state governments. Each state system is self-contained, develops its own curriculum, builds and runs its own schools, employs teachers, decides starting ages, sets standards, monitors and reports student achievement, and certifies student results in Year 12. ... Our arrangements for the management and delivery of schooling in Australia look like what they are: an accommodation which met the political needs of the federation process at the end of the 19th century, and which was appropriate to a large continent with poor communication systems. It is difficult to imagine that this will provide a credible response to the challenges of globalisation.</p> <p>... Where speed of delivery, flexibility and responsiveness to local needs are criteria, services should be close to their users. But in the big emblematic areas – curriculum, assessment and certification – it is difficult to find any argument for multiple separate parallel institutional frameworks. In Australia we now have eight curriculum and assessment systems. Hundreds of people work away at solving the same set of problems. They spend, by some estimates, over \$100 million annually on activity which could be done once rather than eight times. If we were constructing arrangements to develop curriculum in this nation today, would we put this together?</p> <p>In the area of curriculum, the argument for a national approach is rich in possibilities. Other areas also offer opportunities for greater efficiency, customer responsiveness and coherence: commonality in school starting ages; consolidation in equipping schools with information and communication technology, and in providing Australia's teachers with the skills to use them effectively; and a national approach to buildings, resources and procurement. More ambitiously, teacher employment might be managed more efficiently in a single system, and mobility dramatically improved.</p> <p>There are, however, two great contributions we could make to improving the transparency and coherence of Australian school education, and its attractiveness internationally. The first is a single common Australian curriculum. The second is a national system of assessment and certification for Year 12, so every successful student would receive an Australian Certificate of Education. The simplest argument for these changes is that there is a significant potential financial saving. More substantially, an Australian curriculum will improve the nation's competitiveness in the market for international students and curriculum goods and services. A single curriculum framework is likely to make education more accessible and transparent. In particular, it will make a serious difference to children who change education systems, and their families, who find the complexities of differences incomprehensible and infuriating.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 20 Oct 2004</p>	<p>'Do it again': Letter by Stuart G. Partis of Kingston Park, SA</p>	<p>BRUCE Wilson (Schools, 18/10) is merely stating the obvious about the school system when he writes: "Hundreds of people work away at solving the same problems... they spend over \$100 million annually on activity which could be done once rather than eight times." Why single out education? Thanks to our state/federal systems the same applies to just about every aspect of life in Australia.</p>
<p>ABC radio and online 20 Oct 2004</p>	<p>'Carr floats move to trade powers'</p>	<p>New South Wales Premier Bob Carr is offering to hand control of the state's hospital system to the Federal Government in exchange for state control of schools and TAFE colleges. Mr Carr says a wholesale trade of the responsibilities is unlikely but the two levels of government need to hold a conference to discuss the issue. "The overlap in responsibilities, the endless buck-passing and blame-shifting between Commonwealth and state governments should end," he said. "The Prime Minister is in a position where he could enter negotiations with the states from an undisputed position of strength - political strength. "We ought to be able to get this on the agenda as never before."</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

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<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 21 Oct 2004</p>	<p>Federal health control just what the doctor ordered', by Mark Metherell, Kelly Burke and Cosima Marriner</p>	<p>The Premier, Bob Carr, has won support from doctors but divided education groups over his proposal to cede state control of health to the Commonwealth in return for the states assuming responsibility for schools. ... his suggestion for a state takeover of schools and TAFE split parent and teacher groups down public-private lines.</p> <p>... Responding to the proposed shift of responsibility for education, the general secretary of the Independent Education Union, Dick Sherman, said only the Commonwealth could bring much-needed consistency across all states.</p> <p>The executive director of the NSW Association of Independent Schools, Terry Chapman, said the education department in NSW was not as supportive of non-government schools as the Federal Government.</p> <p>Duncan McInnes, executive officer of the NSW Parents Council, which represents families of non-government school students, described Mr Carr's idea as "an ALP knee-jerk reaction" which would leave private all non-government schools at the "unpassionate mercy of the states".</p> <p>The executive director of NSW's Catholic Education Commission, Brian Croke, said education needed to be more nationally governed, not less.</p> <p>But the president of the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations, Sharryn Brownlee, said the states carried most of the responsibility for education and training, yet none of the control. "Parents in the wider community are sick of the buck shifting ... and fed up with the misuse of statistics and information."</p> <p>The Teachers Federation president, Maree O'Halloran, said absolute transparency was needed on how schools and TAFE colleges were funded and operated. A single level of sensible government was required to ensure that transparency.</p>
<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 23 Oct 2004</p>	<p>'Very little visible change', by Gerard Noonan</p>	<p>When Bob Carr proposed to give Canberra full control over health to end decades of buck-passing, he added a rider. In exchange, he wanted the states to gain full control over education.</p>
<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 23 Oct 2004</p>	<p>'Carr wants states to quit universities', by Linda Doherty and Matthew Thompson</p>	<p>The State Government wants to offload its role in university management and accountability to the Federal Government in the latest example of the "new federalism" push by the Carr administration.</p> <p>The Minister for Education, Andrew Refshauge, said yesterday that almost all university funding came from the Federal Government and the role of the states was "a relic of the past". Dr Refshauge told a national university governance conference in Sydney that he would seek talks with the federal minister, Brendan Nelson, to transfer "all [NSW] powers relating to universities" to the Federal Government. "The Commonwealth already exercises de facto control of Australian universities through its funding arrangements," he said.</p> <p>But the State Government appoints university boards or councils, universities submit financial reports to the NSW treasurer and the state auditor-general and Ombudsman have a watchdog and auditing responsibility.</p> <p>... The Prime Minister, John Howard, said yesterday that it was an anomaly that the states managed universities but the Federal Government funded them. But Mr Howard said he was not in favour of Mr Carr's call for the states to take over responsibility for all schools and transfer the running of hospitals.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 2 Nov 2004</p>	<p>'Nelson's battlegrounds'</p>	<p>UNIVERSITIES are a hybrid of federalism. On one hand, the commonwealth provides most of their funds and determines their policies. On the other, they are established under state acts, making them legal creations of state parliaments. The only exceptions are the Australian National University and the Australian Maritime College, which come under federal acts.</p> <p>It was not always thus: in the 1970s, the Whitlam government took over the bulk of their funding and policy. But most states still inject significant funds through cash and in-kind support, particularly for research facilities.</p> <p>The states authorise university borrowings, which are guaranteed by state treasuries. They have considerable control over university governance, commercial activities and an institution's capacity to own and dispose of assets. Universities must also comply with state laws on financial accountability and are subject to audits. The dual reporting requirements to commonwealth and state are at times frustrating.</p> <p>Brendan Nelson says that the states impose unnecessary restrictions on commercial activities and tendering and a fully federal system would expedite new areas such as a national credit transfer system.</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

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<p><i>The Australian</i> 2 Nov 2004</p>	<p>'Nelson bid to seize unis from states', by Dorothy Illing</p>	<p>EDUCATION Minister Brendan Nelson will use the Howard Government's new Senate majority to push through sweeping changes to the academic workplace and centralise in Canberra power over universities. ... He told <i>The Australian</i> yesterday he would approach the states to discuss having all legislative acts governing universities -- presently enacted by each state -- transferred to the commonwealth, a move that would finish what former Labor prime minister Gough Whitlam started when the federal government took over university funding and policy in the 1970s.</p> <p>Universities are established under state acts, which gives the states control over their borrowing, their commercial activities, part of their governing councils and financial accountability. ... The Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee yesterday said its members would be concerned about all power resting with one minister. AVCC chief executive John Mullarvey said some states provided university funding and actively supported them in their communities. "If the legislation is moved from the states to the commonwealth there will be less of a need or desire for states to be involved in the activities of the university," he said. "And that would be a concern for vice-chancellors."</p> <p>An angry Queensland Premier Peter Beattie vowed to fight "all the way" any attempt to remove state powers over universities. "We want the best possible education system for Queenslanders and we've invested more than \$2.4billion in research, science and innovation," he said. "Without state government support there would be no regional campuses in places like Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg and Gladstone." In contrast, federal governments had given universities "paltry funding in decades".</p> <p>A spokesman for Victorian Education and Training Minister Lynne Kosky said they were "happy to have the conversation" about shifting power to the commonwealth but it had to be looked at as a total package.</p>
<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 3 Nov 2004</p>	<p>I'm responsible for university takeover, Refshauge says', by Aban Contractor</p>	<p>The NSW Education Minister, Andrew Refshauge, has claimed credit for a controversial move by the Federal Government to take over the state's universities. Dr Refshauge said yesterday he would meet his federal counterpart, Brendan Nelson, as soon as possible to implement the changes.</p> <p>A spokesman for Dr Refshauge said the minister had suggested almost two weeks ago that the state transfer all of its responsibilities for the 11 publicly-funded universities in NSW - including accreditation, appointments to university boards and financial audits - to the Government.</p> <p>Other states were quick to oppose the proposition, with the Queensland Premier, Peter Beattie, saying he would fight any move by the Federal Government to take control of the state's universities. The move was also opposed by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee - which represents the nation's 38 public universities - the National Tertiary Education Union, Labor, the Australian Democrats and students.</p> <p>The proposals had been blocked by the Senate but will now be pushed through when the Government takes control of the upper house in July.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 20 Dec 2004</p>	<p>'Nelson wants uni sector control', by Samantha Maiden</p>	<p>Outlining his plan to seize control of universities from the states, Education Minister Brendan Nelson yesterday warned reform of commonwealth-state relations remained the key to ensuring higher education providers could compete on the world stage.</p> <p>Despite the commonwealth providing about 98 per cent of funding to the nation's 39 publicly funded higher education providers, Dr Nelson said the current regime ensured the states controlled university legislation. He said the system was also riddled with duplication and red tape.</p> <p>A Department of Education, Science and Training paper to be released today, <i>Rationalising Responsibility for Higher Education in Australia</i>, considers the pros and cons of commonwealth-state reforms.</p> <p>Dr Nelson said there was a growing need for a national system in response to the rapid globalisation of higher education. "There are complexities in the current shared arrangements, a lack of consistency and limitations and constraints that result from having nine jurisdictions involved," he said. "The only benchmarks that will count increasingly are international ones and now is the time to consider the case for change."</p> <p>Universities are currently established under state acts, ensuring the states control accreditation, borrowing, commercial activities, land acquisitions, elements of their governing councils and university financial records. The report suggests that a single national system could help promote the recognition of Australian degrees internationally and "progress credit transfer arrangements with other universities", allowing students to study overseas. "Inconsistencies between states and territories in, for example, actions over fake degrees and meeting requirements for offshore operations, could be removed," the report states.</p> <p>The Business Council of Australia recently warned the failure to pursue a nationally consistent approach also risked limiting opportunities for business and university researchers to collaborate.</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
ABC radio and online 20 Dec 2004	'Nelson proposes Fed Govt control of universities'	The Federal Education Minister wants to take complete control of all universities from the states. Brendan Nelson will today release a discussion paper on his proposal. He says the Federal Government should control universities because it provides most of the funding and it could eliminate red tape, duplication and inconsistent rules. "It's a question whether we as a nation ought to consider whether our 38 publicly funded universities would be better being accountable to one government instead of nine," he said. "They currently report different information at different times of the year to different Governments. ... "If in the end the states and territories and the university sector believe that on balance they don't want to do it, well of course we can't nor should we force it," Dr Nelson said. "Although the New South Wales Government has already indicated that it thinks the long-term interests of higher education are served by doing it."
<i>The Australian</i> 21 Dec 2004	'States split on Nelson's uni plans', by Samantha Maiden and Tom Richardson	EDUCATION Minister Brendan Nelson's plan to seize control of universities from the states has won in-principle support from NSW and a promise by South Australia to discuss it, but sparked an angry response from Queensland. As the debate over a shake-up of commonwealth and state higher education responsibilities continued yesterday, NSW Education Minister Andrew Refshauge said it was "more appropriate" that the arrangements were rationalised. ... Dr Refshauge said it would make sense for the federal Government to take over the 39 publicly funded universities because it was already responsible for 98per cent of their funding. "Our responsibility really is just having the legislation that enacts them and setting up their governing bodies," he said. "It does seem much more appropriate that the commonwealth take that full responsibility."
<i>The Australian</i> 8 Feb 2005 p. 7	'Parents back plan for national exam', by Samantha Maiden	PARENTS have backed a national Year 12 certificate being pushed by the federal Government Dr Nelson, who first raised the idea almost two years ago, said there needed to be a consistent high standard for final-year examination across Australia. "As Australia's Education Minister, I can't tell you that the standard of chemistry exam done in Year 12 in NSW is the same as that in Queensland," he said. "Parents and teachers and students are increasingly voting with their feet and they're talking up the international baccalaureate, which is an internationally recognised high school qualification. "If you think that 99.2 per cent of kids that sit the HSC pass the basic English standard, well you believe in the tooth fairy." In NSW, more than 95 per cent of students achieved the minimum standard across all courses and 99.2 per cent of those studying English passed the course with marks of more than 50per cent. While there is no barrier to students from one state attending university in another, Dr Nelson warned that the different systems in each state meant not all had the same opportunity. NSW Parents and Citizens' Council president Sharryn Brownlee said she would welcome other states embracing one, simplified system. "We're great supporters of national consistency and a national curriculum because when you're talking about a country of 20 million, why do we duplicate in eight different institutions?" she said. "Even in the defence force alone, 80,000 children move schools and states every year. It's very confusing because there's no consistency for starting ages either." ... South Australian Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith said Dr Nelson's proposal was an insult to state teachers and schools. "I take it rather badly when the federal minister implies we might not be doing our job properly or having suitable examinations," Dr Lomax-Smith said. "His policy-by-media approach is yet another attempt to bully states and impose centralised Canberra-based rules on our local schools without serious consultation." Northern Territory Education Minister Syd Stirling said he was prepared to look at the plan, saying: "It may be fairly simple to move to a national approach."
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 8 Feb 2005	'National HSC plan scores a low mark', by Kelly Burke	The Higher School Certificate would have to be "dumbed down" to fit a national examination framework, the State Government has warned. Responding to a Federal Government call over the weekend for a year 12 Australian Certificate, the NSW Minister for Education, Carmel Tebbutt, defended the state exam as internationally recognised, rigorous and robust. "Our HSC is not going to be dumbed down to meet some vague notion of a national test," Ms Tebbutt said. "It is hard to understand why [Federal Education] Minister Nelson believes a national exam is possible when we don't actually have a national curriculum ... what he's done is floated an idea that's not thought through, and on the way through had a go at the HSC." But in a radio interview yesterday, Dr Nelson suggested it was the HSC that lacked academic rigour, saying that accepting the claim that 99.2 per cent of students are passing the Standard English exam is akin to believing in the tooth fairy. "Universities are becoming increasingly concerned that the year 12 assessments throughout Australia are basically making it more difficult to differentiate between our highest-performing students at one end, and ... students who probably should not be considered ... to be satisfactory ... at the other," he said. According to data from the NSW Board of Studies, only 1.11 per cent of students who sat last year's Standard English exam scored in the lowest six bands, achieving below the minimum standard. Dr Nelson failed to mention that no student scored in the top band for this subject, lending weight to Ms Tebbutt's claim that the HSC "rewards students who study the more higher, more difficult courses".

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

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<i>The Australian</i> 14 Feb 2005	'Nationwide test back on the agenda', by Jennifer Buckingham	THE idea of a national certificate of education was floated by federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson as early as 2003, and again in the federal budget presented in June 2004. Now it is an issue again. This time, the minister added fuel to the fire by criticising the NSW Higher School Certificate - which was bound to raise some hackles - and pointing to the small but growing number of students choosing the International Baccalaureate over state qualifications. The minister still did not provide any detail, but indicated that he had in mind a full, alternative national qualification.
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 5 Mar 2005	Letter by Mark Butler of Macmasters Beach	After attacking Brendan Nelson, Lyndsay Connors admits there would be considerable merit in our schools moving towards a national system of curriculum, assessment and credentialling ("Minister short of the mark in HSC attack", Herald, March 4). Her only argument against such a move seems to be the cost of setting it up. Did I miss something here? Surely the long-term financial benefits of replacing the seven existing bureaucracies with a single board of studies and assessment would far outweigh the initial cost of setting it up. It is time for our politicians and educational leaders to put self-interest and petty politics aside and seriously consider a national curriculum and assessment system for our schools.
<i>Australian Financial Review</i> 14 Mar 2005	'Federal system wastes \$2.4bn', by Mark Davis	Australian governments could save \$2.4 billion a year in public spending by eradicating duplication and overlap in their responsibilities for health and education, according to new research on the costs of the federal system of government. ... The new economic modelling confirms that Australia's federal system which gives overlapping powers and responsibilities to national, state and local governments is imposing significant costs on the community. ... Modelling by University of Canberra researcher Mark Drummond is the first attempt to calculate the cost of the division of responsibilities of Australia's different tiers of government compared with alternatives such as a unitary national government or shifts of responsibilities between different levels of government. ... Handing over responsibility for education to one tier of government would save \$1.4 billion a year, according to his estimates ... Mr Drummond said his research also suggested reforming federal-state relations could benefit the private sector by cutting the cost of handling separate federal and state regulation. Federalism also added billions of dollars a year to total public outlays because of the fixed cost of maintaining several government bureaucracies. Extra costs were also generated by the duplication of government effort and the need to spend money co-ordinating government activities.
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 14 Mar 2005	'Most want focus on year 12 and jobs, not uni', by Aban Contractor	Almost three in four adult respondents said helping teenagers get an apprenticeship, a traineeship or a job needed to be given greater priority in the poll commissioned by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, a not-for-profit body that promotes skills acquisition. ... Today the forum will officially release a separate report warning that one in four young people are in danger of "falling through the gaps" - not finding work, training or study - and almost half of year 10 leavers are still having trouble making the transition to work six months after leaving school. More than one in three Year 11 leavers have a "troubled transition". The report, Local Investment: National Returns, notes that - at a time when skill shortages "are a hot economic and political issue" - about 15 per cent of teenagers are neither in full-time education nor full-time work. It says a lack of co-operation between the federal and state governments has hampered the development of a system to help people leaving school early. "[There is] a confusing maze of pilots and duplication, gaps and dead ends, with a profound lack of cohesive effort and funding," the study finds. It argues that completing year 12 should be recognised as the new threshold of educational attainment, rather than the school leaving age.
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 25 Mar 2005	'NSW pushes national student ID plan', by Linda Doherty	NSW will lead a national campaign to introduce an identity number for Australia's 3 million school students so there is a seamless transfer of academic and medical records when they change schools. The Minister for Education, Carmel Tebbutt, said the issue would be raised next week with Education Department officials and support would be sought from private schools for a new student identification system. "We believe the idea of a unique student identification system has merit. It would allow student records to be accessed quickly and reliably throughout a student's schooling and if a student changes school," she said on Thursday. "With an estimated 80,000 students moving interstate each year it is clear that a national approach is required." The proposal from the NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations for student numbers to be held on a central database has been under discussion with the State Government and the Education Department for six months. All school records, including external test results, information on student bus travel and medical matters, such as allergies, and welfare concerns could be stored under the student number. The P&C state president, Sharryn Brownlee, said schools already kept this information but the data was recorded in different ways and was not automatically transferable between schools. Student information was often grouped according to age, a home class or a teacher's initial. "When students move schools the parents might write a letter to the old school asking them to transfer records," she said. "Then they write to the new school but when the student starts the paperwork still hasn't arrived." ... The State Opposition spokeswoman on education, Jillian Skinner, said "it was worth having the discussion" about centralising records, provided there were privacy protections. ... A spokeswoman for the federal Minister for Education, Brendan Nelson, said student identity numbers were a matter for the states.

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

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<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 1 Apr 2005</p>	<p>'Nelson leads charge against unis', by Mark Phillips and Matthew Thompson</p>	<p>The Federal Government is still looking to wrest control of universities from the states and territories, with the release of another discussion paper by the Education Minister, Brendan Nelson. Dr Nelson, who first raised the issue last December, yesterday called for a new debate about the division of responsibility for higher education between the states and the Commonwealth. At a conference in Melbourne, Dr Nelson said despite reform of university governance, there were questions about who should be responsible for higher education.</p> <p>The review is a by-product of federal frustration that although it has prime responsibility for funding tertiary education, the states and territories still control governance.</p> <p>Dr Nelson said no changes would be made to sharing control of universities without consulting the states. "This is not about the Commonwealth taking control of universities from the states and territories," he said. "It is about taking a serious look at how we can best achieve more consistent, efficient and effective higher education provision in Australia through co-operation at all levels."</p> <p>The chief executive of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, John Mullarvey, said he was pleased with Dr Nelson's proposal to further consult universities.</p> <p>The National Tertiary Education Union's policy and research co-ordinator, Andrew Nette, said the paper signalled "a more polite grab for the powers" of state and territory governments in higher education, but it was "a grab for power nonetheless".</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 12 Apr 2005</p>	<p>'Apprentice plan a sham, says Labor', by Samantha Maiden</p>	<p>THE Howard Government has finalised an aggressive new reform plan to seize control of vocational training from the states and encourage private providers to compete with TAFEs. Students will secure a national agreement to limit TAFE fee increases under the Howard Government's new \$4.9 funding offer to the states that threatens to slash funding if the states fail to back the plan. ... The \$4.9 billion reform blueprint follows the Government's abolition of the Australian National Training Authority last year.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 14 Apr 2005</p>	<p>'Let's not be too smart', by Ross Fitzgerald</p>	<p>The Howard Government has been criticised for its increasingly centralist tendencies. Yet universities have always been a federal responsibility, even though, through the post-colonial peculiarities of our constitutional arrangements, the sovereign states have substantial legislative powers in that area. Yet every year the states are becoming less and less sovereign across every area of their jurisdictions, largely at their own behest.</p> <p>... No debate about education, let alone tertiary education, can be divorced from the ongoing debate about how Australians choose to govern themselves in the 21st century. We must reach a new compact about federalism as it is to be practically arranged -- and the sooner the better. But as far as the universities are concerned, let competition for funding and infrastructure be between the institutions, not between the commonwealth and the states.</p> <p>The truth is that every Australian would benefit from a genuine national education system. That way we could further capitalise on the high level of mobility among Australians, through universally accepted, nationally tested educational outcomes among school-leavers and tertiary students.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 11 May 2005</p>	<p>'Local schools, global standards', by Kevin Donnelly, the author of 'Why Our Schools are Failing' and a former Coalition government staff member</p>	<p>A national certificate of education is not as simple as it sounds, writes Kevin Donnelly</p> <p>IS Education Minister Brendan Nelson correct; does Australia need a certificate of education? Given the waste and duplication caused by having eight different senior school certificates, each with its own expensive bureaucracy and complicated tertiary entrance system, a straightforward answer is yes. Add the confusion of families moving interstate and children having to confront different approaches to teaching and assessment, then it appears that different education systems are as antiquated as the previous century's state rail lines. If one adds to the argument that those countries that achieve the best results in international maths and science tests – such as Japan, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands – have centralised education systems, then the case for a national curriculum appears even stronger. Given Australia's relatively small school population – California, for example, dwarfs Australia, as does Japan and South Korea – the question also has to be asked as to whether the resulting economies of scale put us at a disadvantage.</p> <p>... instead of being forced to adopt the local certificate, individual schools should be free to implement alternative senior schools courses such as the International Baccalaureate and the Cambridge Certificate. Such certificates have global currency and are generally seen as more academic. In an increasingly competitive, transient global environment, why restrict Australian students to parochial approaches when there are better alternatives?</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

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AM program on ABC radio 13 May 2005	'Nelson outlines plan for national high school test', by Alison Caldwell	<p>TONY EASTLEY: The Federal Education Minister wants Australian schools to have a new voluntary national schools test ...</p> <p>... BRENDAN NELSON: We will be moving very shortly to have this developed. And I can inform the listeners of AM that the Australian Council for Educational Research has been chosen to develop a nationally consistent examination which can be undertaken by students right throughout Australia, voluntarily, which will be nationally consistent, of a high quality, and there are essentially four options that could be developed, and I would expect we'll probably get something like the student aptitude test which was currently run across the United States.</p> <p>... BRENDAN NELSON: Well our real challenge, and our responsibility in this century especially, is to recognise that we can't continue to have eight different educational jurisdictions within one country. For example, I can't with any confidence tell you that the standard of a chemistry exam in Western Australia in Year 12 is that which is sat by students in New South Wales. In fact, the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute has informed me this week that when students move interstate, they often have to repeat a year, and that students, for example, with excellent grades in Queensland actually struggle with basic first year maths at the University of New South Wales.</p> <p>What we envisage is that there will be a nationally consistent and recognised Australian certificate of education, which students can choose to undertake in Year 12 voluntarily, and that that will, if you like, be considered to be a consistent way of assessing their intellectual and academic performance, not just for engagement with the university sector, but also perhaps transferring to the labour market.</p> <p>... BRENDAN NELSON: Well at the moment the problem is that if you go around Australia, it is a dog's breakfast in terms of how students are assessed. In some cases I am concerned about the quality of the assessment process. For example I've seen drivels ? that's how I describe it ? as a minimum passing example of essays that are done by students for the Advanced English in the State of New South Wales. You've got a different model of examination in each State. You've got different standards, and we think, and the average parent, the average person listening to AM this morning, would think it is long past time that we overcame our crippling parochialism as a federation, that hopefully there is some, there are some statesmen amongst the Premiers and the State Education Ministers, and that we can agree to move toward a common test.</p> <p>... ALISON CALDWELL: There is this equivalent national tertiary entrance ranking, ENTER, which is already being used across Australia to ensure consistency and high standards. Isn't that what you're talking about?</p> <p>BRENDAN NELSON: Well, at the moment there is a mechanism which I am told is used to assess the merit of a student applying for university in one jurisdiction who may have completed Year 12 in another. Now, if someone can explain that dark science to me, let alone the average person, then all I can say is bring it on.</p>
<i>The Australian</i> 16 May 2005 p. 16	'Ball rolling on national Yr 12 exam', by Jeremy Roberts	<p>BRENDAN Nelson has floated the idea of an Australian Certificate of Education (ACE) on many occasions, but last Friday the federal education minister put his plan into action.</p> <p>... He points to evidence that the HSC had been "dumbed down", he has lamented slipping standards, and last Friday he referred to the eight state-based examinations as a "dog's breakfast".</p> <p>... Speaking before his organisation won the tender, ACER chief executive Geoff Masters said the tender called for some basic questions to be examined. "These include, 'Is it sensible to have eight different state and territory certificates in a country our size?', " he said. Masters says another question could be whether there was "unnecessary duplication" by conducting "a large number of exams and programs in parallel".</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>The Australian</i> 23 Jun 2005</p>	<p>'States in disarray on maths teaching', by Luke Slattery and Paige Taylor</p>	<p>MATHS students in some states are missing out on learning core skills while others are being taught those skills too late, a leading maths education body has warned. The Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute says students are troubled by the "lack of consistency" in curriculum and assessment between the states. The mismatch can lead to pupils having to repeat a year when they move to school in another state or encountering skills problems when they reach university. Students in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia are believed to be particularly at risk of gaps in the maths curriculum.</p> <p>In a letter to federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson, the institute says a more nationally consistent curriculum would ensure that "core material" is not neglected and the full range of courses is offered to all students. "There are problems for students moving between states while schools have inconsistent standards at the various year levels," the letter says. "This can result in students having to repeat a year. It translates into further problems in post-secondary education. For example, students who receive excellent grades in Queensland may ... struggle with the basic first-year course in mathematics at UNSW (the University of NSW)."</p> <p>The institute's executive officer, Jan Thomas, told <i>The Australian</i> that maths students in one state, which she declined to name, did very little algebra and no simultaneous equations before Years 11 and 12. Many states allow primary students to use calculators for multiplications, she said, but they have become too reliant on them. "You don't want students to use calculators without understanding the underlying concepts," she said.</p> <p>In a separate development, the Australian Council of Deans of Science disclosed a "worrying decline" in the proportion of students taking advanced maths in their senior years. Many science faculties, in turn, have dropped advanced maths as a prerequisite. Council president Tim Brown said students were best served in Victoria and NSW, while Western Australia was flirting with the sorts of curriculum and assessment reforms that Victoria rejected in the late 1980s and early 90s.</p> <p>The Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute is concerned students in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, where secondary school spans only five years, compared with six in the other states, are missing out on essential skills.</p> <p>A spokesman for Dr Nelson, who is pushing for a nationally consistent education system, said: "Those families that move from one state to another know precisely how difficult it is to move across education jurisdictions, with systems so different that, in an educational sense, they feel they've moved to another planet."</p>
<p>ABC radio and online 23 Sep 2005</p>	<p>'Year 12 assessments face review'</p>	<p>The Federal Government says it will commission an analysis of Year 12 assessments across Australia. Education Minister Brendan Nelson says the study will examine the content, curriculum and standards across a range of subjects. Dr Nelson says it is clear that standards vary from state to state ... Brendan Nelson says the Government is concerned about the standard of English teaching for Year 12 students.</p>
<p>ABC radio and online 17 Oct 2005</p>	<p>'Govt's education expert raises prospect of national certificate'</p>	<p>An education expert says a single national certificate could replace Year 12 examinations in each of the states and territories. Professor Geoff Masters, from the Australian Council of Education Research, has been commissioned by the Federal Government to investigate options for an overhaul of the final two years of school. He says a new national certificate could replace or sit alongside existing certificates.</p> <p>The Prime Minister has expressed reservations about the idea saying he is not sure there is a need for uniformity.</p> <p>... "The fact that students are exposed to these different arrangements, different assessment procedures, different ways of reporting results is something that we need to look at," Professor Masters said. "It's time to look seriously at the idea of a single Australian certificate of education in the final years of school."</p> <p>Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson has not ruled out withholding education funding from states or territories who refuse to sign up to a national system of year 12 examinations. Doctor Nelson says he is determined students will face consistent standards across the country within a decade. ... "We think that anyone who places Australia's interests first and the interests of our children first, will support the development and finally the implementation of some nationally consistent examination procedures."</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 17 Oct 2005 p. 1</p>	<p>'National exam may spell end for HSC', by Justin Norrie</p>	<p>With 65,888 NSW students to begin HSC exams this morning, a push is under way to overhaul the exam system with a national certificate focusing more on "employability skills".</p> <p>The education expert commissioned to develop options for a national year 12 certificate told the Herald that submissions he had received advocated replacing the HSC and other state exams with one assessment scheme. Geoff Masters, the chief executive of the Australian Council of Educational Research, said exam changes could not be introduced next year, but "after that there are things that could be changed quite quickly". Professor Masters is due to report to the federal Minister for Education, Brendan Nelson, by late December. "At the moment we have seven different models from states and territories. There's a recognition that there's a lot of duplication," Professor Masters said. "There's quite an openness to the idea that there could be a single certificate that would evolve from the others over time."</p> <p>Any change to state exams would require the agreement of their education ministers, but Dr Nelson has previously overridden the states by tying federal policy measures to school funding. ... Dr Nelson this year foreshadowed four models for a national year 12 certificate: a certificate that would function as an alternative to the state exams; a test based on the International Baccalaureate; an aptitude test; and a certificate that evolves from and replaces state certificates. The last option had received the strongest support in submissions, Professor Masters said.</p>
<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 19 Oct 2005 p. 11</p>	<p>'Marking outside the boundaries', by Geoff Masters (chief executive of the Australian Council for Educational Research)</p>	<p>RECENTLY there has been discussion about an Australian Certificate of Education for the final years of secondary school. The Federal Government has asked the Australian Council for Educational Research to investigate options for a certificate, to canvass these options with employers, universities, parents, students, curriculum authorities and others, and to report by the end of the year.</p> <p>... As we have explored senior secondary school arrangements, it has become obvious why this topic is worth investigating. Nine senior certificates are awarded by state and territory authorities (Victoria has two), meaning that students' experiences can be very different from one state to another.</p> <p>There is a bewildering variety of subjects across the country. Sometimes, the subject names (for example specialist maths, maths A, extension maths) used in different states obscure what is common. More often, the use of the same name (such as English) obscures what is different. Added to this are differences in terminology (for example, courses, subjects, studies); in minimum requirements for the certificate; in assessment procedures (for example, examinations, or school-based assessment only); and in the ways student results are reported (for example, a mark out of 50 or out of 100; how the level of achievement is recorded).</p> <p>Nobody we have spoken with believes these differences reflect, or are a response to, different student needs in different states. Instead, they reflect different histories and philosophical positions, and the influence of individuals and committees. It is far from the case that these interstate differences are in the best interests of students. And employers tell us that they find the differences confusing. One consequence is that it is not possible to compare subject results across state borders. ... No doubt, for users of senior certificates, this limits the usefulness of subject results. Another consequence is the considerable duplication of effort. Australia develops seven physics syllabuses, and their associated examinations and assessments, for essentially the same group of tertiary-bound students. If several systems were to work on a shared physics syllabus, might that free up resources - perhaps to develop other science courses for students who will not go on to tertiary education?</p> <p>Could states and territories agree on common requirements for the senior certificate? Might it be possible to agree on a core of common learning in particular subjects? Are there principles, ideas and skills that all students should learn in biology, regardless of where they live? What would it take to benchmark the senior biology curriculum against international standards?</p> <p>... Whatever is decided, it seems clear that there would be advantages to students, families and employers, and to Australia's position in the international education marketplace, in greater national consistency in senior secondary school arrangements.</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>Canberra Times</i> 25 Oct 2005</p>	<p>'ACT maths syllabus is flawed, says academic', by Elizabeth Bellamy</p>	<p>An academic has criticised mathematics courses taught in Year 11 and 12 in the ACT as a scathing report of maths syllabuses and assessment reveals major disparities across the nation. International Centre of Excellence for Education in Mathematics director Professor Garth Gaudry said while advanced-level courses in the ACT were adequate, the structure of intermediate-standard offerings meant students had too many subjects to choose from and were potentially failing to cover core maths topics needed for further tertiary study. While the quality of courses was good, the ACT's schools-based assessment system was problematic, and an external exam was needed to ensure better standardisation across schools.</p> <p>Professor Gaudry's comments follow a report issued this week by the centre of excellence and its parent body, the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute, which found mathematics subject matter covered by Australian Year 11 and 12 students varied so widely that those in some states were disadvantaged. NSW was singled out for praise for offering an advanced maths course that was more ambitious than any other in the country and for its "definite and fixed" syllabus. However, maths courses in Queensland and South Australia were condemned for offering many essential topics as optional, with Western Australia roundly criticised for omitting important material. The report was commissioned in response to concern from universities that undergraduates were ill-versed in core maths topics required for tertiary studies in engineering, science, actuarial studies and other quantitative areas.</p> <p>... Australian National University Faculty of Science Dean Professor Tim Brown agreed with Professor Gaudry's assertion that the level and content of mathematics courses taught in Year 11 and 12 varied across the country, a phenomenon which later proved detrimental for some students at university. While he urged for caution on reform, he said Professor Gaudry's call for a national independent audit of maths courses was a necessary step.</p>
<p><i>The Daily Telegraph</i> newspaper 25 Nov 2005</p>	<p>'National exam to be based on HSC'</p>	<p>THE HSC is set to evolve into a standardised national course under radical changes aimed at producing an Australia-wide end-of-school qualification. And NSW's world-class Year 12 exam is expected to become one of the foundation planks of the planned Australian Certificate of Education. The Daily Telegraph has learned that building on the established and highly regarded HSC is the most likely outcome of a national inquiry into school leaving credentials.</p> <p>... Parent and employer groups support retention of the HSC which they believe, in time, will develop into a nationally accepted standard. ... Employers have told the ACER investigation that duplication and parochial rivalry between education systems was holding Australia back. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry said it favoured a national qualification which "evolves from the existing state and territory certificates". "This option also could strengthen support for development of national curriculum in key areas of learning," the chamber's submission said.</p> <p>... ACER chief executive Geoff Masters said the inquiry was concentrating on how to achieve consistency in curricula across Australia. "We are saying there must be some key principles, concepts and knowledge that all students should have access to," he said. "All states have different ways of reporting students' achievements ... so you can't make comparisons."</p> <p>... Dr Nelson already has announced a review of Year 12 English, mathematics, physics and chemistry. "It is clear that standards vary from state to state," he said.</p> <p>... Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations president Sharryn Brownlee said there were close links between curriculums in Australia. "Parents and the wider community are calling for more consistency in what is being taught around the country," she said. "We need to build on the best practice of our HSC and let it evolve into a national standard."</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 26 Nov 2005</p>	<p>'Nelson in class of his own' by Samantha Maiden</p>	<p>FOUR years after he took over the portfolio, Education Minister Brendan Nelson has a message for academics and teachers suffering reform fatigue: It's not over yet. ... Nelson is also proposing to introduce significant teacher training reforms to tackle children's literacy skills and considering a new national Year 12 certificate with common curriculum in key areas including physics, maths, English and chemistry. Urging the states to put away their "understandably parochial interests", he argues the reforms are in the national interest. "You can't say to people they should learn the same thing, on the same day, on the same week of the year and have the same test," he says. "But in some areas, surely, elements of mathematics, physics and chemistry are common to everyone; [it] doesn't matter where you are."</p> <p>... "I think that early childhood education is a mess. It's a question of luck in many parts of Australia as to whether your child will get access to early childhood education and, if so, what the quality will be," he says. "I think that is one of the major frontiers for further reform that is a product of federalism at its worst."</p> <p>... Nelson admitted to a closed session of education experts this week that a national curriculum is common sense to talkback callers. He argues he is aware of the philosophical debate among conservatives over the issue and is not in favour of an iron-clad national curriculum.</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>Canberra Times</i> 25 Mar 2006 p. B8</p>	<p>'Uniform education': Letter by Scott Larsen of Belconnen</p>	<p>Regarding Page 1 today ("ACT Liberals scuttle pre-school plan", March 24). Well, at least ACT liberals know that this plan is definitely not workable. Instead of adding to our ailing education system, the Federal Government should be working with the states to fix up what we have. Make it a uniform system of education so that no matter what state you live in, the education is exactly the same, including the final Year 12 exam. It's a joke that each state has it's own version. Let's make it so that future students who have to move interstate because of a parent's job aren't penalised just because our over-governed country can't get its act together.</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> 1 May 2006 p. 3</p>	<p>'National Year 12 rating planned', by Samantha Maiden</p>	<p>A PLANNED national certificate for Year 12 will tackle "inconsistencies across Australia" in key subject areas such as maths, English and physics.</p> <p>Just days after John Howard condemned the "rubbish" and "gobbledygook" being taught in some schools, a significant report commissioned by the federal Government has recommended an overhaul of Year 12. The report rejects a push to impose a new national exam on students but finds the system is failing students, employers and universities eager to compare results across state borders. The proposed new Australian Certificate of Education would not replace the existing state-based Year 12 assessments. It would allow easier comparison between the different state assessments and offer improved "job ready" or employability ratings for students. It is designed as the first step towards a single national curriculum.</p> <p>But critics say the report fails to tackle critical flaws in how students are taught maths and English in some states. Education consultant Kevin Donnelly, who was a member of the committee that helped develop the draft report, said it did not go far enough. "Based on my involvement in the committee and reading the draft report, in my view it's a very predictable, safe report that does nothing to assess the significant issues about falling standards in Year 12," Mr Donnelly said. "It caters for the status quo in terms of the existing state and territory control of curriculum. "It fails to benchmark what we are doing with strongly performing countries overseas. I don't understand why we didn't look at countries overseas."</p> <p>A draft copy of the report, obtained by The Australian, warns that the present system is letting down the estimated 90,000 students and their families who move to different states every year. "Currently, it is not possible to compare achievement in particular school subjects from one state to another," the report says. "It is not possible to compare achievement in accounting in NSW with accounting in Victoria or achievement in biology in Queensland with biology in Western Australia. "Inconsistencies in curriculum and assessment arrangements and certificate requirements almost certainly create difficulties for students who do move."</p> <p>Commissioned by former education minister Brendan Nelson, the report, prepared by Australian Council for Educational Research executive director Geoff Masters, was handed to the Howard Government early this year. It prompted Opposition claims yesterday that Education Minister Julie Bishop had kept parents and students in the dark over the proposed changes. Labor's acting education spokeswoman, Penny Wong, urged Ms Bishop last night to release the report immediately. "Australian parents and students deserve to be told what's going on with planned changes to school exams, but Julie Bishop has been sitting on the report," Ms Wong said. A spokesman for Ms Bishop refused to comment on the report's findings last night.</p> <p>The minister is expected to announce shortly that the Australian Council of Education Research has also won the tender to investigate common curriculums for maths, English and science, angering conservative critics of the current system.</p> <p>International Centre of Excellence in Mathematics Education director Garth Gaudry said yesterday that he was disappointed the report had been "kept behind closed doors or fallen into a dusty heap". "We did a study in mathematics and discovered there are extreme differences between the states," he said. "There are gross differences and certainly the strongest of the states by a long way is NSW. "Victoria is also good and the ACT. Once you move to Queensland, there are significant gaps in basic knowledge in the top level mathematics subjects (and) also in South Australia, which is very weak at the top end."</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p>PM program, ABC radio and online 5 May 2006</p>	<p>'Call for national school graduation certificate', by Gillian Bradford</p>	<p>MARK COLVIN: A leading education think-tank is pressing the States to adopt a single, standard graduation certificate for Year 12 students across the country. The Australian Council for Educational Research says the current lack of consistency between States is neither in the best interests of senior school children, nor the community. The Federal Government is warm to the idea, but it's the States who have the ultimate say and at least one is decidedly cool on the idea of giving up its own higher school certificate. From Canberra Gillian Bradford reports.</p> <p>GILLIAN BRADFORD: Ask any student who's moved interstate towards the end of high school and they'll tell you it's far from easy to pick up where you left off. Across the States and Territories there are big differences in subjects, standards and assessment. And according to Professor Geoff Masters from the Australian Council for Educational Research, it's students who are missing out.</p> <p>GEOFF MASTERS: I do think there is a questions about whether the current arrangements we have in Australia in the senior secondary school are in the best interests of students and whether they are in the best interest of parents and users of certificates as well.</p> <p>GILLIAN BRADFORD: The new Federal Minister for Education, Julie Bishop, likes the idea of a single high school certificate. But with the States already locked in a High Court battle with the Commonwealth over its new workplace laws, she insists this is not about a Commonwealth take-over of education.</p> <p>JULIE BISHOP: I believe that there is a concern that there is no basis for directly comparing standards in Year 12 results across the States and Territories. And this is a matter of concern not only for students and parents but also for employers and tertiary institutions.</p> <p>GILLIAN BRADFORD: Any change to the current system would need to be driven by the States, and New South Wales has serious reservations. Its Education Minister is Carmel Tebbutt.</p> <p>CARMEL TEBBUTT: I still remain very sceptical about the value of this whole exercise. There's already a lot of work that's occurring to ensure greater national consistency. That's been underway for a long time now and the issue of a national certificate or an Australian certificate is not one of the education issues that gets raised with me on a regular basis. There doesn't seem to be a huge community demand for an Australian certificate of education. Always our concern in New South Wales is that the risk you get when you try for greater national consistency is that you can end up lowering standards, and that's not something that New South Wales would ever be prepared to accept.</p> <p>GILLIAN BRADFORD: Professor Geoff Masters though is urging the States to consider a single certificate.</p> <p>GEOFF MASTERS: A first question is whether in this country we can afford to have nine separate certificates. We are a country with a population about the size of some American states and yet in the final years of school we have nine separate certificates. So there is no guarantee in this country that students living in different parts of Australia have the same opportunities to learn the essential knowledge, the essential ideas and principles that underpin school subjects.</p> <p>GILLIAN BRADFORD: This is a big change in education, but you obviously think it's one that's vital.</p> <p>GEOFF MASTERS: It's in our national interest, including our future economic interest to have the same high expectations of senior secondary students regardless of where they live in the country. So yes, I do think that's important. What we've done is to propose a kind of road map for getting there. It's not a massive change that we are proposing. It's a change that would occur in an evolutionary way, in a sequence of steps.</p> <p>GILLIAN BRADFORD: So what is the biggest weakness of each State and Territory having its own system?</p> <p>GEOFF MASTERS: Some universities have said to us in the course of this work that they don't believe that students from some States are as well prepared as students from others. So that's one issue I think. There is no guarantee that students in different parts of the country have opportunities when they are studying something like economics or biology, there is no guarantee that they have access to really important ideas and knowledge.</p> <p>MARK COLVIN: Professor Geoff Masters ending Gillian Bradford's report.</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 22 May 2006 p. 3</p>	<p>Tests put year 10 certificate in doubt', by Anna Patty</p>	<p>THE year 10 School Certificate will become irrelevant under a system of national testing and should be scrapped, high school principals and Catholic education chiefs say.</p> <p>The Federal Government has this month taken its first steps towards a national year 12 certificate, which would replace all state and territory qualifications. From next year the Government also plans to introduce national tests for literacy and numeracy in year 9. These will be similar to external tests given in year 10 for the School Certificate. The move has led to the president of the Secondary Principals Council, Chris Bonnor, labelling the year 10 credential moribund. "The School Certificate is a dead man walking," Mr Bonnor said. "NSW is the only state that has external testing for a year 10 leavers' certificate. "The coming Commonwealth benchmark testing for year 9 is going to make it superfluous."</p> <p>The executive director of the NSW Catholic Education Commission, Brian Croke, said the move towards national testing had placed the School Certificate under the microscope. "The new national year 9 tests from 2007-8 force us to face a question that we have been avoiding in NSW for too long," Dr Croke said. "Whether we like it or not, we will have to look again at the purpose and place of the School Certificate."</p> <p>The president of the NSW Teachers Federation, Maree O'Halloran, said the union supported a review of the School Certificate because more students remained at school until year 12. "However, it is important to recognise that there are still students who leave school at the end of year 10," she said.</p> <p>The state Minister for Education, Carmel Tebbutt, is now examining how NSW tests would work with proposed national exams for students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. She has appointed Professor George Cooney of Macquarie University to conduct the review. His report is due next month. Ms Tebbutt said there would always be a need for an end-of-school credential at year 10. "The NSW Government has no plans to abolish the School Certificate," she said. "I will look closely at Professor Cooney's recommendations with regards to the national assessment system."</p> <p>The Opposition spokesman on education, Brad Hazzard, said the NSW School Certificate should be reviewed, but that Ms Tebbutt would not "rock the boat" before the election next March.</p>
<p><i>Sunday Telegraph</i> 4 Jun 2006 p. 2</p>	<p>'Plan for uniform school-start age', by Glenn Milne</p>	<p>ALL children would start school at the age of 4 1/2 under a Federal Government plan to improve long-term graduation rates. Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop will propose the uniform starting ages at a meeting of state and territory education ministers next month. Ms Bishop's campaign follows a report into the issue commissioned by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. Copies of the findings have gone to the states but have not yet been made public. A copy of the executive summary, obtained by The Sunday Telegraph, concluded that the existing system, under which states and territories have different minimum starting ages, is too confusing. "The cost/benefit analysis shows that the benefits for Australian schooling and the wider economy and society associated with the achievement of commonality in minimum age of school commencement are likely to be substantial and permanent," the report said. "The reform would benefit generations of future Australian children over their years of schooling, potentially leading to many more Australian children completing a full 13 years of school education." The report said the benefits would later extend to student's participation in the training and university sectors and into their working lives.</p> <p>While the report finds that an entry age of 4 1/2 years would be optimal in terms of social benefit, it also finds that it would be expensive, requiring substantial structural change across most states and territories. "For the approximately 80,000 annual student movements across state and territory borders, commonality is perceived as potentially bringing significant educational benefits," the report said.</p> <p>Ms Bishop will argue that major economic and educational benefits will flow from a uniform starting age. It is expected that she will nominate 4 1/2 as the optimum age at which children should start school. If she wins agreement at next month's meeting, she plans to also standardise the age for entry to high school. There are now five minimum starting ages across the eight states and territories. There are also a range of different dates at which a child is allowed to enrol, depending on when they turn five. The reforms would particularly help 80,000 school-age children who move interstate annually. "Over the long-term, the 4 years and 5 months option would have the greatest national 'social' benefit. However, the introductory costs would be higher than for any other option," the report found. "The 4 years and 8 months option would see the highest level of 'social' cost, long-term," it said.</p>

Table 4A-1 (Continued)

Publication and Date of Report	Heading and Reporter(s) or Author(s) if Known	Extracts from Report
<p><i>The Australian</i> 1 Jul 2006 p. 8</p>	<p>'Canberra in push for uni control', by Dorothy Illing</p>	<p>THE Howard Government is planning to seize control of university accreditation from the states. As South Australia leads the push to attract foreign universities to establish local campuses and bring in more fee-paying overseas students, federal Education Minister Julie Bishop wants to take away the power of the states to approve new operators. Central to Ms Bishop's bid for greater federal control of higher education is a national accreditation agency. More universities and private colleges are expected to open in Australia in coming years as the federal Government promotes stronger competition and diversity across the sector. A national accreditation agency would be attractive to them and increase competition with the 39 existing universities. But the Bishop plan is likely to be rejected by the states and territories at next week's meeting of education ministers in Brisbane.</p> <p>This month, Ms Bishop renewed her attack on the states, saying that if they did not spend more money on universities they should relinquish control of them. She was reviving a federal-states battle first mooted by her predecessor, Brendan Nelson, but which was seen as a no-win situation because of Labor's dominance across the states. Universities are funded by the federal Government but established under state acts. For many, that means complying with more than 100 pieces of state and federal legislation and a lot of red tape. Ms Bishop has vowed to cut the bureaucratic requirements faced by universities, which mushroomed under Dr Nelson. And she sees a national accreditation agency, or "one stop shop", for new universities and private colleges as one way of doing this. "An organisation (wanting to offer degrees) across multiple jurisdictions faces a bewildering array of time-consuming, inconsistent and bureaucratic processes and wide variation in fees," she says in a paper to go to next week's meeting. "It would be surprising if this situation did not deter all but the most determined provider."</p> <p>It did not deter US university Carnegie Mellon, which was offered a \$20 million carrot from the South Australian Government to set up a campus in Adelaide this year. South Australian Premier Mike Rann has said he was negotiating with another US university and two British institutions to join them.</p> <p>Education consultant David Phillips said the logic of a national accreditation agency was "very strong". But it would require the states to refer powers to the commonwealth, and new state legislation. The plan is likely to be viewed with suspicion by university vice-chancellors, who will be wary of any system that hands the commonwealth more power.</p> <p>Next week, education ministers will discuss the guidelines surrounding the national protocols for approving universities.</p>
<p>ABC radio and online 6 Jul 2006</p>	<p>States urged to hand over uni accreditation powers</p>	<p>The Federal Education Minister says she will ask the states to hand over their higher education accreditation powers at a ministerial meeting today. Julie Bishop is meeting with the state and territory Education Ministers in Brisbane. She says she will table plans for a new Commonwealth agency with the responsibility of accrediting higher education institutions. "Currently universities, or potential higher education institutions, face a bewildering array of state legislation, because each state establishes universities, and so there's duplication, there's layers of bureaucracy, there's red tape that I believe we can do away with," she said. She says she will ask for support for a national agency to approve higher education institutions. "I'll have a discussion with the education ministers, and I hope that they'll see reason that this is in the interests of our higher education institutions, in the interests of universities, and of course in the interests of students, to ensure that we don't have unnecessary red tape and duplication," she said.</p>

Bibliography for Appendix 4A

[Note: The publications below don't include those already listed in Table 4A-1 above]

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