

**SAMOA**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORTS AND  
CULTURE**

**National Curriculum Policy  
Framework**

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# 1 Introduction

Education is central to the future well-being of Samoa. It teaches young people the virtue of reason and plays a large role in maintaining and developing the cultural fabric of society. It develops in students the skills and attitudes needed to succeed in an ever-changing world. Today that role is expanding as not only will education continue to shape the nation's cultural future but it is also central to national economic and social well-being.

The curriculum plays a major role within education as it outlines the planned and structured learning experiences that schooling provides and is the basis of the teaching and learning programs provided by schools. Ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to local, national and international needs and that it equips the next generation to maximize the many opportunities they will encounter is an exciting challenge.

This publication outlines curriculum policies that have been developed to ensure that all young people are well prepared academically, socially and culturally and have the knowledge and wide range of skills needed to ensure that they all can contribute positively to the local and broader world community in which they live. It provides the national guidelines for the development of more detailed curriculum documents that describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject at different stages of development and outlines the essential skills and values that are to be developed which are central to the development of a just, prosperous and successful Samoan society.

This policy statement stands alongside other official Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture documents including the 'School Improvement Manual', 'School Management and Organisation Manual', 'School Staffing Manual', 'Corporate Plan', Education Policies 1995-2005 and 'Education Strategies 1995 – 2005'.

## 2 The Samoan Curriculum

### 2.1 Key Principles that Underpin Samoan Education

There are four overarching principles underpinning all aspects of Samoan education including the development of the curriculum. They are:

#### **Equity**

Equity requires that the system will treat all individuals fairly and justly in provision of educational opportunity. Policies and practices which advantage some social groups and disadvantage others will be avoided, while those which address existing inequalities in access, treatment and outcome will be promoted.

### **Quality**

Educational quality is exemplified by high standards of academic achievement, cultural understanding and social behaviour and results from a complex interplay of professional and technical factors, and social and cultural practices. Policies promoting these will focus on the learning institutions and specifically on day-to-day classroom practices including the monitoring, assessment and reporting of student outcomes and teaching effectiveness.

### **Relevance**

Relevancy in education implies a system which is meaningful, recognised, applicable and useful to ones life. It should enhance individual and community well-being and ultimately national development, including cultural, humanistic and spiritual aspects. Policy decisions will address what is relevant to the individual learner, to the community and nation.

### **Efficiency**

Efficiency in education is demonstrated by leadership and management practices which ensure optimum use of resources – human, financial and material – at all levels, efficient service delivery, effective communication and coordinated and transparent decision-making. Policies will reflect the need to be both efficient and effective.

## **2.2 Curriculum Principles**

The following principles have been developed in relation to curriculum. These principles give direction and consistency for the development of programs and related policies.

- **All students can be successful learners**  
The Samoan Curriculum recognises that **all** students can be successful learners when they are provided with sufficient time and support.
- **Students need to be engaged**  
The Samoan Curriculum recognises that for students to succeed, curriculum experiences must relate to student interests, needs and learning styles in order to engage students in their learning.
- **Programs must be planned**  
The Samoan Curriculum recognises that for students to be successful, programs must be carefully planned and use a range of teaching approaches in order to cater for the various learning styles of students.
- **Programs must develop the whole person**  
The Samoan curriculum recognised that programs must be broad and balanced and provide opportunities for the intellectual, social, spiritual and cultural

dispositions of each student to be developed so when students complete their schooling they are well prepared for work and further study.

- **Assessment must inform practice**  
The Samoan Curriculum recognises the need for teachers to use monitoring, assessment and reporting practices that help them evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching practices as well as provide an indication of student achievement against established standards.
- **Teachers make a difference**  
The Samoan Curriculum recognises the centrality of highly effective teaching in ensuring quality outcomes for students.
- **Community involvement assists learning**  
The Samoan Curriculum recognises that fa'asamoa must be upheld and that the community plays a large role in the education of students.
- **A sustainable future**  
The Samoan Curriculum emphasises the need to develop environmentally and socially sustainable practices. This applies not only to the physical environment but also in the way society structures itself socially, culturally and economically.

### 2.3 Curriculum Goals

The goals associated with the curriculum are:

- To ensure that all students achieve acceptable standards in all subjects and that schools establish high expectations for all students.
- To equip students to take an active role in the development of a just and prosperous society that builds on a rich cultural heritage and maximises future local and international opportunities.
- To ensure that indigenous and global knowledge occur within a bilingual language structure that develops existing knowledge, skills and values.
- To ensure that the total needs of all students including the academic, physical, spiritual, cultural and social needs are met through the programs and activities provided by schools.
- To develop in students an understanding of music, art and aesthetics and provide for the creative use of imagination and individual expression.
- To foster the development of each teacher's skills, knowledge and attributes so that they are able to maximize the learning potential of all students through

teaching approaches that encourage enquiry, problem solving, debate and independent thought.

### **3 Role of Curriculum in Achieving National Priorities**

Increasingly governments are seeing education as their highest priority as it through education that young people gain the knowledge, skills and values that they will use as adults. These skills, knowledge and values are developed through the curriculum that is taught.

The Vision outlined by the Government is:

*‘For every Samoan to enjoy an improved quality of life premised on a competitive economy with sustained economic growth, improved education, enhanced health standards and strengthened cultural and traditional values.’*

The Government has indicated that education is the key to the nation’s future as economic growth, social harmony and the learning of traditional values are dependent on the provision of quality education for all.

In order to improve the quality of education, three areas for improvement that have been consistently identified by the Government are:

- Improve teacher quality.
- Improve curriculum and teaching materials.
- Improve education facilities.

Through improvement in each of these areas, students will obtain a higher quality education and be better equipped to lead the nation in the future.

## **4 Curriculum Policies**

### **4.1 Learning Areas**

Learning areas are broad categories of knowledge within which related skills, understandings and values are developed. They organise related areas of learning into broad groupings.

The learning areas that describe the Samoan curriculum are:

- Samoan
- English
- Social Science
- Mathematics
- Science
- Health and Physical Education
- Performing and Visual Arts

In order to achieve a broad and balanced education, students are expected to study all seven learning areas from Year 1 to Year 11 with some specialisation thereafter. It is important that the curriculum is developed as a continuum from Year 1 to Year 13 with clear links between the various stages of schooling. Learning areas may be broken down into subjects; for example, in the science learning area there are a range of subjects including chemistry, physics and biology. Within the senior school curriculum the studies that students undertake should form a coherent program that prepares them for employment and/or further study and are directly linked to vocational education training programs or higher education.

The focus in each learning areas is on the attainment of ‘*key learning outcomes*’ that outline;

- what students are expected to know,
- what students are expected to be able to do,
- what students are expected to value.

For each learning area and year level, these key learning outcomes describe the content of the curriculum and are referred to as ‘*content standards*’. As well as content standards, ‘*performance standards*’ allow student progress to be measured against expectations. Performance standards clarify the level of achievement expected of students at different stages of schooling.

The focus on standards within each learning area is not new as teachers most often judge student progress on what students do and say against their own or shared standards of performance. The development of clear statements of the outcomes required for all students in all subject and at all levels and agreement on the levels of attainment expected at particular points in time is a central feature of the Samoan curriculum.

Outcomes are also relevant to the design of ‘Integrated Units’ as each integrated unit should indicate which outcomes from the various learning areas are being covered within the unit. Through this process there is the capacity to ensure all relevant outcomes are addressed over time.

#### **4.1.1 Details of each of the Learning Areas**

##### **Samoan**

Samoan is the first language of the majority of students in school. The development of a high level of competence in Samoan is a clear outcome that is required of students. The Samoan language plays a central role in maintaining, preserving and further developing Samoan culture. It is the language used by most Samoans in day-to-day transactions. It defines the Samoan way of life and carries within it the customs and stories unique to the Samoan character.

In developing a high level of skill in Samoan the focus is on using Samoan to develop the thinking skills of students including abstract thought and the development of complex concepts as well as developing their own sense of identity and an understanding of their culture. This means being able to use reading, writing, listening and speaking to understand, and to communicate in ways appropriate for different purposes. They need to be able to process information, to develop concepts and form generalisations and use the Samoan language to explore new areas of knowledge, to discuss concrete and abstract ideas and understand the importance of the Samoan language for governance and mediation and for the learning of traditional skills. The learning of Samoan occurs through all subjects where Samoan is used as a medium of instruction.

### **English**

The goal is for all students to be equally competent in Samoan and English. This requires that both languages are used as means of instruction as well as the learning of the different features of both languages. Students who are truly bilingual have the advantage of operating both socially and conceptually in either language.

Students need to be able to use English for reading, writing, listening and speaking to understand, to process information, and to communicate it in ways appropriate for different purposes. They must be able to process information, to develop concepts and form generalisations and use the English language to explore new areas of knowledge.

The introduction of English for students who do not speak English will be initially through conversational English. Over time, both Samoan and English will be used as the shared medium of instruction in primary schools. For secondary schools English will be the main medium of instruction and all secondary teachers, irrespective of the subject specialisation, are language teachers. For both Samoan and English, the teaching methods used to develop literacy skills should be based on the best research evidence available.

### **Social Sciences**

The focus of the social sciences is people as social beings. It is concerned with how people relate to each other and with their environment in local, national and international settings. It is concerned with learning from the past, with investigating the present, and in shaping the future.

Through the social sciences, students will gain an understanding of the place of individuals in society, their rights, responsibilities and privileges. They will explore the impact of various groups and individuals on society. They will develop an understanding of their own and other cultures, the significance of beliefs and value systems in society. They will be challenged to think critically about why people think and behave the way they do. They will examine the processes by which groups or institutions are formed, maintained and changed.

Students will learn to locate, to organize and evaluate information as the basis for informed decision-making.

For primary students the study of social sciences will involve stories, drama and begin with an understanding of themselves, their family and local community. For secondary students some specialisation may occur as they seek to understand the broader world.

### **Mathematics**

The study of mathematical concepts and processes is the search for patterns and relationships. It involves the ability to calculate, to estimate, and to reason logically and solve problems. It deals with the application of mathematics both to the physical world and to the more abstract social, economic, cultural and political contexts in which students have to operate.

Mathematics is both a necessary tool for social living and the language of the sciences. Practical applications in these areas provide a framework for deciding what underlying mathematical concepts, skills and processes students should acquire.

Through the study of mathematics, students will acquire concepts and processes that are:

- Associated with a broad definition of numeracy;
- Necessary for interpreting change and innovations in the environment;
- Essential to problem solving including making plans and decisions;
- Appropriate for understanding the application of mathematics to other content areas in the curriculum and the wider community.

Many other subjects of the curriculum contribute to the study of mathematics and different strands of mathematics will be studied depending on the developmental stage of students.

### **Science**

Science is fundamental to an understanding of our physical and biological world. It permeates every aspect of our daily life. Science education aims to encourage the use of investigative approaches. It also provides opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and understandings both by undertaking their own practical investigations and by studying the findings of others. Students' involvement in science will enable them to understand that it is a disciplined body of knowledge with a systematic approach to enquiry and problem solving. They will further develop curiosity about the physical and biological world and have the confidence to use investigative skills. As well as knowledge and skills, students will develop attitudes of responsibility towards the environment and natural resources, an awareness of the impact of science on society, and to explore courses of action regarding science related issues in society.

Agricultural science is an important part of this area of learning within the Samoan context. Through the study of agricultural science, students will acquire scientific knowledge and skills in decision-making and problem solving and be able to apply these to new situations for solving agricultural problems. They will develop skills in maintaining a sustainable agricultural system through proper management of Samoa's limited resources. They will develop positive attitudes, and an appreciation of the range of career opportunities that exist in agriculture.

For primary aged students, science will investigate their immediate world and build from those understandings to the broader world. Both in primary and secondary schools other subjects will contribute to the learning in this area and specialisation will occur in the senior years

### **Health and Physical Education**

Health and Physical Education includes the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions of an individual's growth and development. This learning area focuses on the increasing need to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make rational, informed decisions about their own health and the health of the community at large, and the importance of developing life long patterns of physical activity. It provided opportunities for students to learn about health, to practice desirable health behaviours, to demonstrate health care skills and to develop responsibility for personal and social health. It also provides opportunities for students to experience different kinds of physical activities and develop the necessary physical and social skills for lifetime participation in physical activity.

### **Performing and Visual Arts**

Performing and visual arts represent major fundamental forms of human expression, understanding, appreciation and communication. Their inclusion is a necessary part of a balanced, inclusive curriculum. Learning experiences in performing and visual arts develop in students an appreciation of and understanding of their own heritage and other cultures.

Through performing and visual arts, students will be given opportunity for self expression in order to explore, generate, shape and to communicate their ideas in creative ways. They will learn about appropriate techniques of traditional and modern performance associated with music making, dance and visual arts. They will develop critical awareness and enjoyment of the arts. Schools will ensure that students participate in a wide range of experiences in the performing and visual arts to provide for a balanced curriculum. The central role that music, drama and dance play within the Samoan culture is particularly recognised within this area of the curriculum.

### **Optional Studies (Years 9 to 11)**

In addition to the compulsory subjects, secondary students in Years 9-11 may undertake studies in approved optional subjects.

### Senior Years (Years 12 and 13)

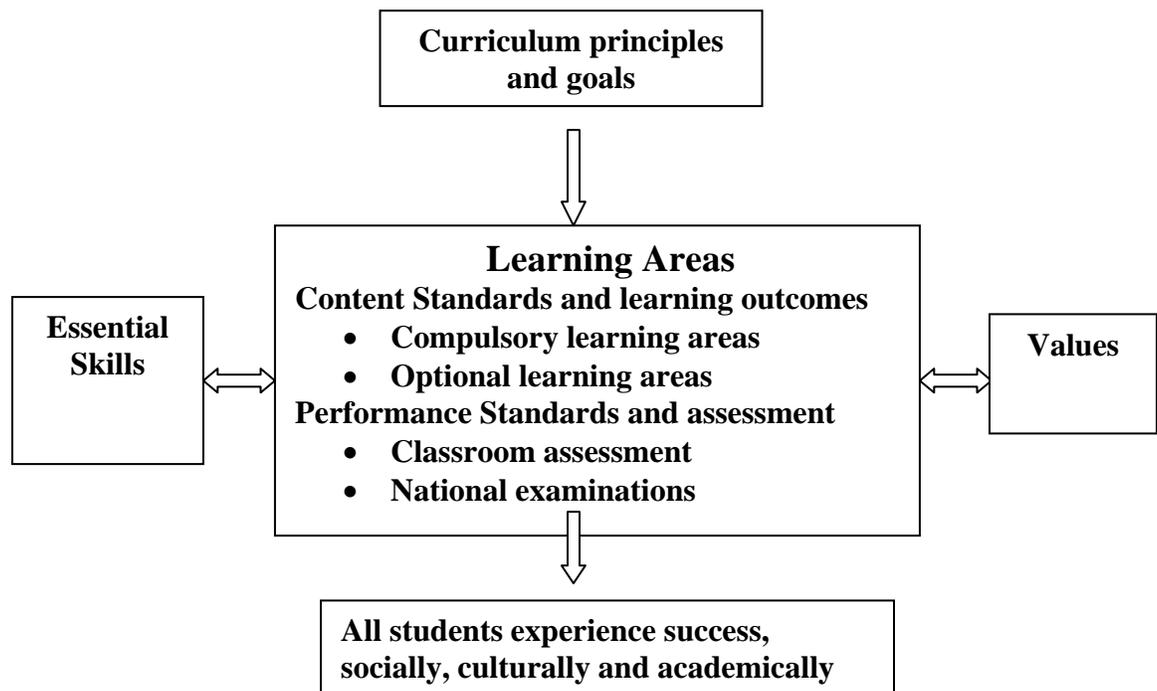
In the senior secondary years students must undertake the study of English and four other approved subjects.

## 4.2 Guidelines to Ensure Curriculum Coverage and Balance is Achieved

### 4.2.1 Linking Elements of the Curriculum

The principles and goals outlined provide the basis for the development of curriculum programs, materials and assessment practices. Through activities associated with teaching and learning in each of the seven Learning Areas students acquire specific knowledge and skills. However, some learning outcomes occur across the different Learning Areas and these are described as Essential Skills as all learning activities play a role in their development. Students also develop their value systems as a result of the total experience of school. The values that schools seek to instill in students through all activities are also outlined.

The relationship between curriculum principles and goals and the teaching and learning associated with each of the seven Learning Areas that assist with the development of the Essential Skills and Values is shown below.



### 4.2.2 Essential Skills

Essential Skills transcend the compulsory curriculum and are the broader skills that are developed throughout the years of schooling. The essential skills are developed as a result of the quality of the experiences provided in all classroom

and school activities and are used by students in all school activities as well as in their social and cultural world outside the school.

#### *Communicating effectively*

Communication underpins all learning and includes reading, writing, speaking and listening, visual and graphic representation, non-verbal communication and the use of number and data to convey meaning.

#### *Solving problems*

This involves the use of inquiry and reasoning, of gathering data and processing information, posing creative solutions and evaluating outcomes. Mathematical concepts and skills are often used when solving problems.

#### *Utilizing aesthetic judgment*

This involves the use of the visual and performing arts as a means of expression and requires an appreciation of the aesthetic value of objects and experiences.

#### *Developing social and cultural skills and attributes*

The capacity to operate socially and to work effectively with others is an essential skill. It requires an understanding of context, of the cultural norms and expectations that exist and the ability to negotiate and reach consensus. It also involves individuals developing their ethical framework including an informed understanding of the issues associated with gender.

#### *Managing oneself and developing work and study skills*

Students need to be able to manage their time effectively to allow them to pursue personal, spiritual, sporting and academic interests. They need to know how to resolve conflict in constructive ways that allows all involved to feel that they have been treated with fairness and respect. They need to take personal responsibility for their choices and actions and learn from both their mistakes and successes. This includes responsibility for personal health and fitness.

#### *Integrating Knowledge*

While learning areas are used as the organizers of knowledge, the prime purpose of education is for students to understand the world around them and see the links between the various areas. This requires a deep and thorough understanding of subjects so the knowledge gained can be linked to experience and complex inter-related understandings developed.

#### *Effectively using Technology*

Technology involves the development of the skills and knowledge used to make and construct objects and products used in day-to-day living and in the pursuit of special interests. Technology also involves the use of information technology used to access information stored electronically. Over time, information technology will become more widely available and be increasingly used in all areas of the curriculum to create, locate and store information.

### 4.2.3 Values in the Curriculum

Like the essential skills, values transcend traditional subjects and are central to the personal development of each individual and the way the broader society operates. Values are not only developed by schools but by the broader community including the media. Values are the internal beliefs and attitudes held by individuals and groups that are used in responding to every-day events. The school curriculum will help individuals to develop and clarify their own beliefs and values. The values that underpin the Samoan Curriculum include;

*Fairness, in order to ensure that;*  
decisions and practices are viewed as having respected the opinion of others and where outcomes are accepted as just.

*Honesty, in order to ensure that;*  
there is a consistency and sincerity in what is said and done.

*Excellence, in order to ensure that;*  
high achievement is valued and celebrated.

*Responsibility, in order to ensure that;*  
students are responsible for their actions and undertake actions to assist others.

*Respect, in order to ensure that;*  
others are treated with consideration and sensitivity, the physical environment is maintained and cultural and spiritual values and societal rules are adopted by all.

*Tolerance, in order to ensure that;*  
the differences and diversity within society is respected and accommodated.

### 4.3 Subjects to be offered at Each Year Level and Time Allocations for Each Subject and Year Level

Guidelines for subject provision take account of the teaching practice that best meets the principles and goals of the system as well as allowing best classroom practice to be achieved. Classroom practice will vary depending on the developmental level of students. For younger students subjects will be more integrated than for older students. The teaching and learning of the essential skills and of the values outlined will occur across all areas of the curriculum. This will require all **teachers to have a sound understanding of the essential skills** and values that are incorporated into the curriculum. Schools must offer students the opportunity to study each compulsory learning area however arrangements may differ from school to school in order to meet the needs of students and the community.

In order to plan teaching approaches schooling is considered at various stages of development. For all stages and year levels the times are provided as a guide. In order to plan a curriculum that meets the individual needs of schools, schools

have the flexibility to create their own curriculum program within the guidelines provided. Details of subjects provided and the time allocated will be found in the each school's Curriculum Plan developed by the principal and staff.

### **Early Primary – Year 1 to Year 3**

In these foundation years the development of the foundation skills in literacy and numeracy will occur within an integrated curriculum that allows the student to link growing knowledge with their own world by using a theme or topic where a number of learning area outcomes will be realised through integrated activities. It requires sufficient time being allocated for literacy and numeracy to be effectively taught. Through the development of these foundation skills aspects of the physical, social and cultural world of children can be explored. The minimum hours of instruction for primary students in years 1 to 3 is 25 hours a week.

#### **Year 1**

Samoan (including poems, speech training and printing)	7.5 hours
English (initially oral English)	1 hour
Social Science (incorporating story and drama)	3 hours
Mathematics	5 hours
Science	2.5 hours
Health and Physical Education	3 hours
Visual and Performing Arts (including art and music)	3 hours
<i>Other (assemblies/recess)</i>	<i>2.5 hours</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 hours of instruction</b>

#### **Year 2**

Samoan (including poems and writing)	7 hours
English (initially oral English)	1.5 hours
Social Science (incorporating story and drama)	3 hours
Mathematics	5 hours
Science	2.5 hours
Health and Physical Education	3 hours
Visual and Performing Arts (including art and music)	3 hours
<i>Other (assemblies/recess)</i>	<i>2.5 hours</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 hours of instruction</b>

#### **Year 3**

Samoan (including writing, reading, listening & speaking)	6 hours
English (including writing, reading, listening & speaking)	4 hours
Social Science	3 hours
Mathematics	5 hours
Science	2.5 hours
Health and Physical Education	2.5 hours
Visual and Performing Arts (including art and music)	2 hours
<i>Other (assemblies/recess)</i>	<i>2.5 hours</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 hours of instruction</b>

As an example of how the timetable might operate on a daily basis the following is provided for Year 3.

<b>Time allocated</b>	<b>Learning Areas addressed</b>
8.00 – 10.00	Language activities (both for Samoan and English)
10.00 – 10.30	Recess
10.00 – 11.00	Mathematics including some integrated activities
11.00 – 11.30	Health and Physical Education
11.30 – 1.30	Integrated activities involving Social Science, Science, Visual and Performing Arts and language development.

### **Primary Years – Year 4 to Year 8**

As students' progress beyond the Early Years the skills of literacy and numeracy are well developed and greater emphasis is placed on developing important concepts across the disciplines. For many students this is a critical time in which to consolidate the foundation skills developed through literacy and numeracy programs. The minimum hours of instruction for primary students in years 4 to 8 is 25 hours per week.

Samoan	5 hours
English	5 hours
Social Science	3 hours
Mathematics	5 hours
Science	2.5 hours
Health and Physical Education	2.5 hours
Visual and Performing Arts	2 hours
<i>Other (assemblies/recess)</i>	<i>2.5 hours</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 hours of Instruction</b>

### **Secondary Years - Year 9 to Year 11**

Schools are encouraged to expose students to the full range of programs offered. In practice this may mean offering optional programs as an integral part of the curriculum when students may study outside compulsory curriculum areas. It is important that through optional programs students have the opportunity of linking school with their interests and talents. The minimum hours of instruction for secondary students in years 9 to 11 is 25 hours per week.

The suggested allocation of hours per week for compulsory subjects is:

Samoan	3 hours
English	4 hours
Social Science	3 hours
Mathematics	3 hours
Science	3 hours
Health and Physical Education	1 hour
Visual and Performing Arts	1 hour
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>18 hours</i>

In addition, optional studies may be undertaken in:

- Food and Textile Technology
- Design Technology
- Information and Communication Technology
- Agricultural Science
- Business Studies

The total time for optional subjects is 7 hours with at least two hours provided for each option studied.

*Total time of instruction 25 hours*

### **Senior Secondary Years - Year 12 and Year 13**

**In the senior secondary years students must undertake the study of English and then choose four subjects from the following options.** Both English and optional subjects shall be allocated a minimum time of 5 hours per week. Schools need to provide students and their parents with advice on the subjects to be chosen and may choose to develop a program approach where a group of subjects are linked to academic, vocational or employment interests. For example a student who wishes to seek a future career in agriculture needs to be advised of the group of subjects that will best equip them to pursue agriculture as a vocational training program, academic program or equips them for immediate employment.

The Year 12 and Year 13 subjects are:

- English (compulsory)
- Samoan
- History
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Science (year 12 only)
- Mathematics
- Accounting
- Economics
- Typing (year 12 only)
- Development studies (year 13 only)
- Agricultural Science
- Computer Studies
- Geography
- Food and Textile Technology (year 12 only)
- Design Technology (year 12 only)
- Design and Technology (year 13 only)
- Physical Education and Health
- The Arts

#### **4.4 Language and Bilingualism**

The vision for Samoa's education system is bilingualism. It seeks to ensure additive bilingualism, that is, the continuing development and maintenance of Samoan language whilst acquiring English with both languages developing high levels of proficiency.

To be fully literate in both Samoan and English is ultimately to be able to communicate effectively in any situation or community where either of the languages is being used. This means being able to use reading, writing, listening and speaking to understand, to process information and to communicate in ways appropriate for different social and academic purposes. It is being able to use these skills to operate on a wide range of print and oral material at different levels of understanding, from understanding literal information to reflecting on the implications of it, to thinking beyond the texts where inferences are transformed into generalizations. It further involves being able to synthesise and transform information into coherent texts appropriate for different purposes and audiences.

Curriculum policies and practices uphold the status of Samoan language as the first language of the majority of its citizens, and its usefulness for social, academic and economic advancement as well as the need to acquire English. For young children it is especially important that they have the opportunity of exploring ideas and concepts in their first language as it is during this time that many fundamental concepts and understandings are established that build on the language of the home and family. An increasing number of students are entering in school who are already developing competencies in both languages. For these students programs need to foster this dual language ability. There is also a need to devote specific time to the learning of the literacy skills associated with both languages including reading, writing, listening and speaking skills as well as using both languages to learn in a variety of contexts.

Research will continue in order to ensure that bilingual policies and practices are evaluated and the findings used to develop better and more effective practices. The challenge is in implementing more effective teaching practices and developing the full range of materials needed, especially high quality Samoan books at all levels in order for student outcomes to realise the high bilingual aspirations of the community. As tertiary education is generally provided in English and as many of the text books used in secondary education are only available in English, there is a need for students to be highly proficient in English with students by Year 9 having a productive English vocabulary of at least 2000 words.

#### **Guidelines for the Medium of Instruction**

Samoan and English will be used as the Medium of Instruction in an arrangement that allows language and thinking skills to be developed in both languages while ensuring Samoan language maintenance.

### **Preschool and early Year 1**

Preschools and early primary schools should use Samoan as the general medium of instruction but English should be introduced early through songs, stories, rhymes, simple greetings, and social exchanges in day to day activities.

### **Year 1 -3**

At this stage when literacy skills in reading and writing are being developed English should also be introduced so that as students develop their Samoan literacy skills they are also learning about English and developing literacy in both languages.

For Samoan language development children should develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills for a range of purposes and experience the stories and symbols of Samoa and other cultures. They should develop and maintain their Samoan language and develop and discover different ways to be creative and expressive

For English language development children should have the opportunity to experiment with listening, speaking, reading and writing and using English during songs, poems, chants and exploring ideas.

*An integrated approach to teaching is encouraged. For Year 1, units of work should be developed in both Samoan and English with 90% of units prepared, taught and assessed in Samoan and 10% of units prepared, taught and assessed in English. For year 2, 80% of units should be prepared, taught and assessed in Samoan and 20% of units prepared, taught and assessed in English. For year 3, 70% of units should be prepared, taught and assessed in Samoan and 30% of units prepared, taught and assessed in English.*

### **Years 4-6**

As literacy skills are being consolidated in Samoan they should also be developed in English. Increasingly some units of work will be in English and students should continue to use English as part of their discussion of issues.

When speaking and teaching in either language teachers need to be highly competent in that language so as to act as models for the students. Teachers and students should read stories and other relevant material in Samoan and English and be able to discuss associated issues in both languages. The standards of competency expected of both languages should be the same. By the end of year six a student must realize and grasp the importance of being able to read, write and speak in both Samoan or in English. In Years 4 to 6, learning while still occurring through the use of integrated units, will tend to become more subject focused and the following guidelines are provided.

*Years 4 and 5, 60% of all units should be prepared, taught and assessed in Samoan with 40% prepared, taught and assessed in English.*

*For Year 6, 50% of units within each learning area should be prepared, taught and assessed in Samoan with 50% of units prepared, taught and assessed in English.*

### **Years 7 –8**

Samoan should be taught as a separate curriculum area with rich and varied Samoan language resources. Samoan should be used in a range of genres both fictional and non-fictional as the basis for research and exploring ideas as well as for developing students understanding of Samoan language, culture and current issues. For other learning areas, English will increasingly be used as the medium of instruction but where students seek clarification, Samoan should also be used to assist with learning.

*For Year 7 and 8, 40% of units within each learning area should be prepared, taught and assessed in Samoan with 60 % prepared taught and assessed in English.*

### **Years 9-13**

The teaching of Samoan should continue with rich resources and high expectation of students’ knowledge and use of the Samoan language for different purposes. As a study of language and culture, the content of the syllabus for each year should reflect a wide range of relevant topics and competency levels to be achieved in different genres and varieties of language use. Students will be introduced to the use of reference materials and other resources in English and Samoan. Where some students may benefit from the use of Samoan to understand a particular concept, this should occur with the concept then being explored and expressed also in English. Through these processes students should be equally appreciative of and proficient in both Samoan and English.

*English will be used for all learning areas and subjects except Samoan.*

In summary the following times should be used as the Medium of Instruction.

<b><i>Year</i></b>	<b><i>Samoan</i></b>	<b><i>English</i></b>
1	90%	10%
2	80%	20%
3	70%	30%
4 and 5	60%	40%
6	50%	50%
7 and 8	40%	60%
9 to 13	Samoan as a separate subject	English as Medium of Instruction

***NOTE:*** *The times for Medium of Instruction only apply to integrated units or subjects other than Samoan and English where specific times have been allocated in order to develop Samoan and English language and literacy skills. These literacy and language skills should be taught in Samoan for Samoan literacy and language learning and in English for English literacy and language learning.*

*Where the time to be provided to using either Samoan or English as the Medium of Instruction is specified, whole units or subjects should be taught in the prescribed language, for example, in Year 2 if 10 integrated units are used as the basis of an integrated curriculum, two of those units should be prepared, taught and assessed in English. For Year 6, where 50% of instructional time should be in Samoan and 50% in English, half the units of all subjects should be taught in each language.*

#### **4.5 Approaches to Teaching and Learning**

The role of teaching and learning involves learners, teachers, parents, support personnel and the community in a process where learners go through a sequence of transitions and insights to construct new understandings. The process is learner-focused with the teacher providing meaningful, realistic contexts, activities and effective instruction. The emphasis on learning focuses attention on what students are able to do and say as a result of what they have been taught and what they have learned.

Students need to be able to:

- relate new ideas to previous knowledge and experience,
- engage in debate and reflection,
- investigate,
- problem solve, and
- apply knowledge to generate and create meaning.

Teachers play a key role in this process and much of the quality of the learning that occurs is a direct result of the quality of the teacher. Teachers who use teaching methods that recognise and accommodate different learning styles, who encourage discussion, enquiry and problem solving and have a love of their subject, are the most effective. The practical implications associated with the different learning styles of various groups including boys and girls needs to be addressed and reflected in practice. The attitudes and efforts of individual learners are very important and must continue to be encouraged, but there must be a continued focus on developing each teacher's skills and knowledge as they play the major role in assisting each student to realise their potential. Subject associations play a key role in bringing together teachers who are able to share ideas and provide high quality advice on specific issues. They also provide an avenue for providing professional support to teachers.

#### **4.6 Guidelines for Developing Curriculum Materials**

In each of the learning areas the curriculum statement will address the following:

- *General Aims*: These outline the general knowledge and skills being addressed as well as the purpose of the proposed study.

- *Organising strands*: For many subjects the subject is categorized under strands or organising concepts, for example, Samoan for primary schools deals with the strands of reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- *Specific Aims*: These link the general aims to the outcome objectives.
- *Achievement objectives*: Describe what students need to know and be able to do for each subject and year level i.e. the ‘content standards’ associated with each learning area and year level.
- *Outcome Indicators*: These provide detailed descriptions of the expected level of learning to be attained by students as they progressively grow in knowledge and skills. They may describe progress in a variety of ways including – ‘not yet achieved the standards expected’, ‘barely achieved the standard expected’, ‘fully achieved the standard expected’ and ‘exceeds the standard expected.’ Through such a process the ‘performance standards’ expected of all students within each learning areas and for each year levels are known. This allows teachers to assess student growth and program effectiveness.
- *Approaches to teaching and learning*: The approaches to be used that maximise the involvement and achievement of students will be outlined.

Classroom support materials indicate which objective(s) is addressed and relevant assessment options.

As well as content standards, performance standards answer the question, “How good is good enough?” Performance standards assist with the following:

- Defining expectations for all students
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on individual student performance
- Identifying students who require additional assistance
- Developing a profile of a class or group of students to support instructional decision making
- Help establish class and school improvement targets
- Provide evidence of improvement
- Assist with discussions with other teachers, parents and students

#### **4.7 Guidelines for Introducing New Subjects into the Curriculum**

From time to time there will be a need to introduce a new subject into the curriculum. While this may be more applicable in the area of senior secondary studies where the curriculum offered may need to be expanded to meet emerging needs and national priorities, there will be occasions when new subject may be introduced in the Years 1 to 11. While the curriculum provided must be constantly evaluated and reviewed so that the subjects offered reflect best local and international knowledge, there is a need to ensure that when introducing a new subject decisions are made as to what current subjects, or times provided for current subjects, are reduced or subjects removed in order to provide the time needed for the proposed new subject.

When new subjects are introduced the following process is to be followed.

- A proposal to introduce a new subject is submitted to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for consideration.
- The Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Curriculum, Materials and Assessment Division forms a recommendation to the CEO for determination.
- Advice on the proposal is sought from interested parties including the National Curriculum Council and School Operations Division.

## 4.8 Students with Special Needs

### **Developing an Inclusive Education approach for all**

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture is committed to providing high quality education to all Samoan students within a school culture based on respect and acceptance. A key component of quality education is the provision of appropriate programs for students with special needs or at risk because of social or economic circumstances. The principle that ‘*All students can be successful learners*’, recognises that all students can succeed when they are provided with sufficient time, support and effective teaching. This ensures that the aims of social justice and equity are seen in practice as all students, irrespective of race, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background can achieve quality educational outcomes. It acknowledges the right of all students to be successfully enrolled in schools and experience success through participating in inclusive educational programs. Where possible, all student needs should be met in mainstream schools as these provide the rich social and cultural setting to best develop the social and cultural skills necessary to fully operate in the broader community. For a small number of students learning will best take place in specialist settings where they are better able to learn both the social, physical and educational skills necessary to ensure their success in the broader community. These students will have ongoing and significant disabilities or impairments and be eligible to receive additional resources through inclusion in the Disability and Impairments programs (D&I) operated by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture such as attending a special unit where this is the best interest of the student. However care should be taken to ensure that such students are not isolated or labeled in a negative way. For all students the need to cater for their individual needs and develop appropriate skills, knowledge and personal attributes through a holistic approach to learning is at the centre of all educational programs.

### **Assisting Students with Special Needs**

Students with special needs are those whose health, abilities, performance or behaviour is significantly different from their peers. This will include students who are talented and gifted as well as those with high learning needs. While the vast majority of such students can be assisted with additional support as part of their regular classroom experience, a small number of students have disabilities or impairments that require ongoing specialist support and access to highly specialised programs and facilities.

This requires the development of differential programs to meet the diverse needs of all students. All programs should have intervention strategies built into them to assist those students whose development is of concern. These strategies will require specialist

assistance to be provided by the classroom teacher or other support personnel. For most students this will enable their progress to be accelerated so that they are able to achieve at similar levels to their peers. This is especially needed in the early years where foundation skills in literacy and numeracy are developed. Such programs should operate within the spirit of accelerating development and not on a deficit model of intervention.

Students who are gifted in one or more areas also have special needs. For these students it is important that programs are provided that extend their abilities and assist them to develop their intellectual, artistic or other talents to their fullest potential.

### **Resourcing Students with Severe Disabilities or Impairments**

A small percentage of the total special needs students will require highly specialised assistance beyond that provided for other students. These are special needs students with an officially recognised disability or impairment in the following areas.

- Physical disability
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Visual impairment
- Severe behaviour disorder

Students who are identified as meeting the eligibility requirement for the Disability and Impairment program are eligible to receive additional assistance such as enrollment in a special unit.

### **4.9 Progression Policy**

Under the *Education Amendment Act 1991-1992*, all children between the ages of 5 and 14 years, or until the completion of year 8 (normally at the age of about 12 or 13) are required to attend school unless exempted by the Chief Executive Officer.

The principle that “All students can be successful learners” places the onus on schools, teachers, training institutions and the Ministry to maximize conditions for success. This requires the constant development of innovative and highly effective teaching approaches in schools. The development of clearer outcome statements and the ongoing professional development of teachers will improve learning outcomes for all. The general practice is for students to progress through schooling with their appropriate age group; however there will be times when this may be varied. Such examples may be developmental delay in young children where an additional year in the early primary program may be appropriate. Where such a decision is made it must be made in consultation with parents and approved by the district School Review Officer.

The Year 8 examination also provides an important occasion when decisions about repeating a year arise. Decisions to repeat Year 8 should only be made where there is clear evidence that the student will not succeed if promoted to year 9, additional help has been provided during the primary years. Where such a

decision is made it must be made in consultation with parents and approved by the district School Review Officer.

In the senior years care should be taken when advising students of the courses they might undertake, to ensure that they are aware of the range of post secondary courses available especially those in the area of Vocational Education and Training. Through such a process the high number of students who repeat Year 12 can be drastically reduced. While a decision to repeat a year may be justified, decisions must be made in consultation with parents and approved by the district School Review Officer.

There is also the opportunity for students to be accelerated. This may entail opportunities for gifted students to miss a year level or for secondary schools to conduct accelerated programs where a group of students may complete their secondary studies in less than five years. For a school to conduct an accelerated program the Chief Education Officer must approve the proposal. Where students skip a year level, parents and the School Review Officer must be consulted.

For identified “Special Needs Students”, progression should be based on social grouping rather than on performance, as it is important that these students are successfully integrated within their peer group.

#### **4.10 Early Childhood**

Learning begins at birth and there is increased recognition of the importance of the early years as it is in these years that much learning takes place and patterns of social behaviour are established. For many children the home provides the basis for preschool learning but increasingly early childhood education centres are being established to complement the role of family and local community in providing additional support for the high quality social, cultural and cognitive education for young children.

Government legislation requires that all early childhood education centres must be registered by an approved organisation or where no approved organisation exists, by the Chief Executive Officer. The Ministry is also required to support teachers to fulfil their duty of care to students and to otherwise seek to protect the welfare of students in early childhood education centres. In order for the Ministry to fulfill this role, early childhood education centres are required to meet Ministry policy and accountability guidelines. To assist in the development of guidelines that address areas including approved curriculum, staff/student ratios, minimum physical requirements, approaches to teaching and learning and accountability, advice is sought from organisations such as the National Council of Early Childhood Education in Samoa in formulating policy. The National Council of Early Childhood Education in Samoa, as an approved organisation, has responsibility for registering all Early Childhood Education Centres. Inspection of centres may occur at any time.

It is important that preschool programs and the early primary programs provided by schools are well connected and mutually supportive through the establishment of preschool to school transition programs.

## 5 Assessment

### 5.1 Assessment and Reporting at School Level

Assessment and reporting are key elements of teaching and learning and the capacity of teachers to provide fair and accurate assessments of student achievement is central to effective classroom practice and in the reporting of the achievement of students. Assessment is undertaken in order to gather information from a variety of sources using different assessment tools that together build an accurate picture of each student's educational progress. Assessment is only meaningful when there is a clear sense of purpose and anticipated outcome and where assessment tasks are explicitly linked to the curriculum and classroom program. Teachers need to ensure that students receive immediate feedback on areas that need improvement for assessment to achieve its full potential.

The purpose of classroom assessment is to:

- Identify what individual students and groups of students know and what they still need to know to achieve the stated learning outcomes.
- Provide the basis for future teaching plans.
- Inform teachers of areas where additional support is needed.
- Provide a basis for evaluating program effectiveness.
- Develop a sense of partnership between parents, teachers and students.
- Enable students to be selected to undertake particular programs

In order to undertake assessment effectively teachers need to know how students learn, the standards sought and how to make judgments concerning the achievement of those standards including the learning growth that has occurred. The provision of '*performance standards*' is central to this process as they indicate how well a student has performed against established expectations. In forming judgments about student progress, teachers should use a range of assessment techniques including:

- *National examinations and assessment against performance standards*: In key areas these provide evidence of the comparative quality of student achievement at a point in time as well as diagnostic information.
- *Local Tests*: assess student knowledge, ability to solve problems and think logically.
- *Class exercises and activities*: provide regular opportunities for teachers to observe and note achievements.
- *Projects and portfolios*: present evidence of inquiry, of writing reports and of quality of work produced over time including the visual arts.
- *Observations*: allow individual and group performance to be assessed in areas of music, dance and drama and speaking.

- *Products*: includes objects constructed from various materials, food or visual art and models.
- *Discussion*: allows teachers to explore conceptual development and values and to assess the development of key areas of the essential skills required of students.

In making judgments teachers need to collect evidence and build a picture of what each student knows and is able to do that accurately define achievement levels. Outcomes based assessment allows comparisons to be drawn and achievement analysed that enable teachers to report on progress over time to show the improvements made by each student and by groups of students.

## **Reporting**

Schools are responsible for reporting on student progress to students, parents, other teachers in the school, the school committee and community and to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

### *Reporting to students*

- Monitoring and assessment that is continuous and informative will lead to opportunities for teachers to discuss with students the results of different assessment tasks.
- Students need to understand the purpose of all assessments and have the opportunity of receiving constructive and helpful feedback.
- When assessments techniques such as the use of portfolios, projects and performance are used, these provide an opportunity to provide constructive comments including future directions.

### *Reporting to parents*

- Reporting to parents is concerned with teachers sharing their knowledge about what each student has achieved and how that compares with the learning of others.
- Reports should indicate the improvements made and areas that require further development.
- Reports need to be clear and regular and may take the form of informal meetings with parents to explain new approaches and programs being adopted by the school to formal written reports provided at least twice a year.
- Reports should outline key activities and show the achievement of key outcomes across all subjects.
- Comment should also be made in relation to the student's social development and indicate areas of strength and concern.

### *Reporting to the school committee and school community*

- Each School Committee is responsible for developing a School Annual Plan that includes a Curriculum Plan and report on progress in relation to implementing the plan.

- Other key members of the community including church leaders play an important role in supporting students and need access to reports.

#### *Reporting to other educational institutions and employers*

- Primary schools need to provide comprehensive reports on each student's achievement to secondary schools so that programs build on what each student knows and is able to do.
- Secondary schools also have an obligation to pass on to tertiary institutions and employers, details of each student's achievements.

#### *Reporting to the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture*

- Through the Annual Report, schools report to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture on the achievement against their school Curriculum Plan and School Improvement Plan as part of their Annual Report. The Chief Executive Officer will use the information to monitor and improve local and system performance.

## **5.2 National Examinations**

National examinations assess whether a student has met expectations or performance standards for a year level. Students are asked to apply the skills and concepts they have learned to complete complex, realistic tasks in order for teachers, parents and students to compare student performance with national standards. They provide an independent indication of what each student has learned and achieved.

The following principles underpin the national examinations program.

- Examinations must be *valid* and test the Samoan curriculum taught in schools and reflect the expected outcomes or content standards of the published curriculum
- Examinations must be *reliable* and provide consistent results across various groups and locations and are viewed as not containing bias.
- Examinations must be *fair* and conducted in a way that allows students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

### **Purposes of National Examinations**

National examinations serve a number of purposes including:

#### *Individual Reports on student achievement*

These reports provide a profile of individual student's performance against established standards and expected outcomes. The information allows individual achievement to be monitored against other students' performance at school, district and national level. It provides information to validate assessments that have occurred locally. Reports will indicate the success of students in achieving

officially recognised certificate levels and be the basis of the awarding of some educational credentials such as the Pacific Secondary School Certificate.

#### *Classroom Reports*

By looking to reports that provide information on the performance of each class, teachers and principals are able to look to the effectiveness of teaching methods and approaches. For teachers it allows them to reflect on the outcomes of their own classroom assessments to see if their judgments are consistent with those provided through examinations. It also it allows them to look to the performance of their class, to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and discuss with colleagues ways of improving performance across the school. It allows principals to have highly focused discussions with staff and to develop professional development programs that address areas of concern.

#### *School Reports*

By providing whole of school data principals are able to discuss with teachers and their School Committees, areas of success and areas of concern. By comparing performance against district and national norms, informed comparative judgments are able to be made and new performance targets established for schools. School Review Officers are able to note the performance of schools and provide strategic support where needed.

#### *National Reports*

By collating performance across all schools the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture is able to monitor performance annually and note changes. It also allows the Ministry to evaluate the effectiveness of new approaches and materials provided to schools. In addition it allows resourcing decisions to made that address areas of concern.

#### *International Reports*

Where students' results are compared internationally, assessment can be made on the quality of the national education provided and help to celebrate success and identify areas that need further development. Through this process the Ministry can act strategically and efficiently to improve performance.

### **Schedule of National examinations**

National examinations occur at the following times:

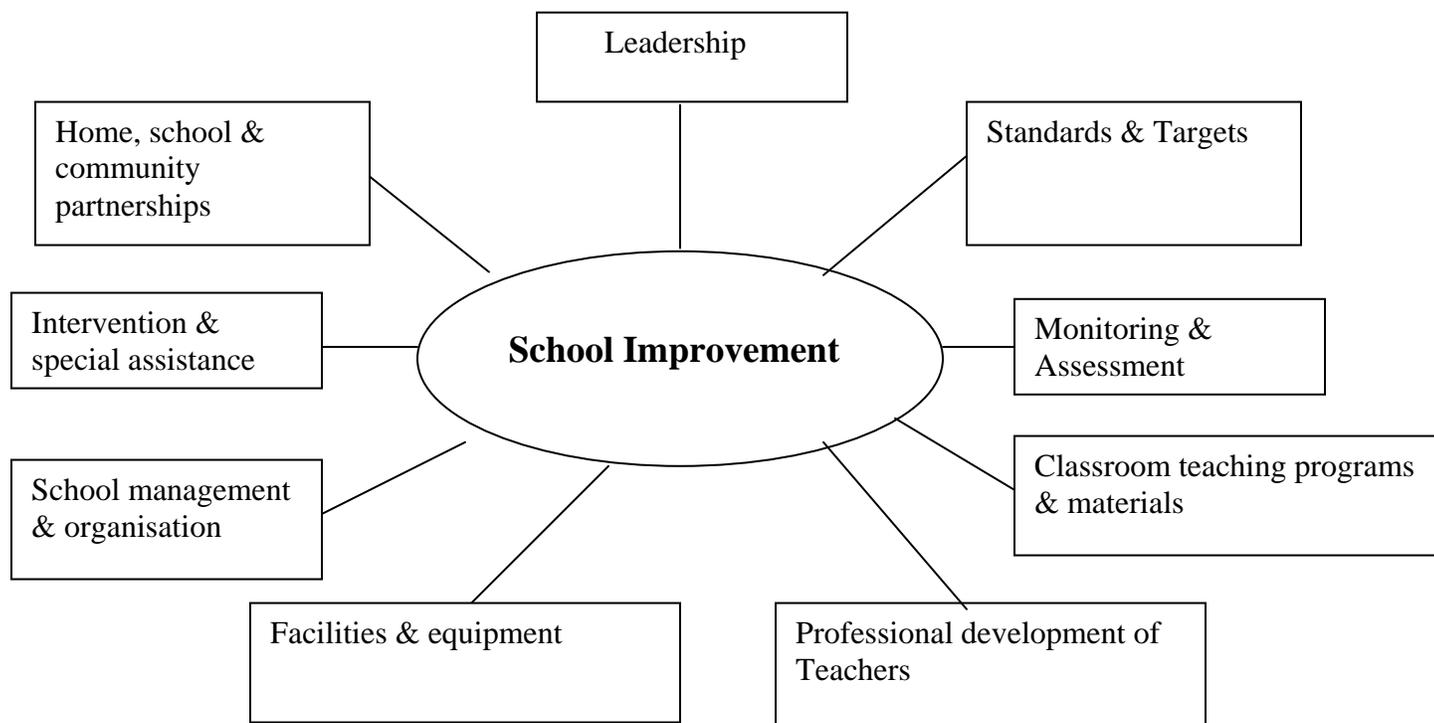
- Year 4: Samoan Primary Education Literacy Levels (SPELL)
- Year 6: Samoan Primary Education Literacy Levels (SPELL)
- Year 8: National Year 8 Examination
- Year 12: Samoan School Certificate
- Year 13: Pacific Senior School Certificate (PSSC)

- The SPELL tests the levels of achievement of all students in years 4 and 6 in the core subjects of Samoan, Mathematics and English and provides diagnostic information to help teachers address concerns.
- The national Year 8 examination tests all final year primary students in all core subjects. The tests are used to report on the performance of schools and teachers and to select students for entry to the highly regarded select entry secondary schools.
- The Year 12 Samoan School Certificate provides students who choose to leave school at the end of year 12 in order to seek employment or further training, with a certificate that recognises that they have successfully met the requirements of the Samoan School Certificate. The certificate also provides a basis for selecting students for year 13.
- The PSSC is conducted through the Pacific Board of Educational Assessment and is a regional test conducted at the conclusion of schooling and is used to select students for entry to tertiary institutions.

## 6 Curriculum Planning and Review at School Level

Curriculum planning and review occur as part of a whole school approach to improvement. School improvement is concerned with raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching and learning process. Many factors affect the quality of teaching and learning and these factors are outlined in the following diagram.

### A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO IMPROVEMENT



When seeking to improve performance all of the above factors should be addressed.

### **Curriculum Planning and Reporting**

Within the Whole School Approach to Improvement, curriculum planning is the process used by schools to determine the subjects to be taught including times allocated, the outcomes sought and approaches to be taken for teaching and evaluation. Each school is required to develop an Annual Curriculum Plan that outlines:

- *Curriculum provision*: subjects taught and times provided.
- *Course of study statement*: details of each subject offered.
- *Assessment and reporting program*: process used by the school to monitor, assess and report on performance.
- *Professional Development Program*: programs designed to improve performance and to introduce new programs and materials.

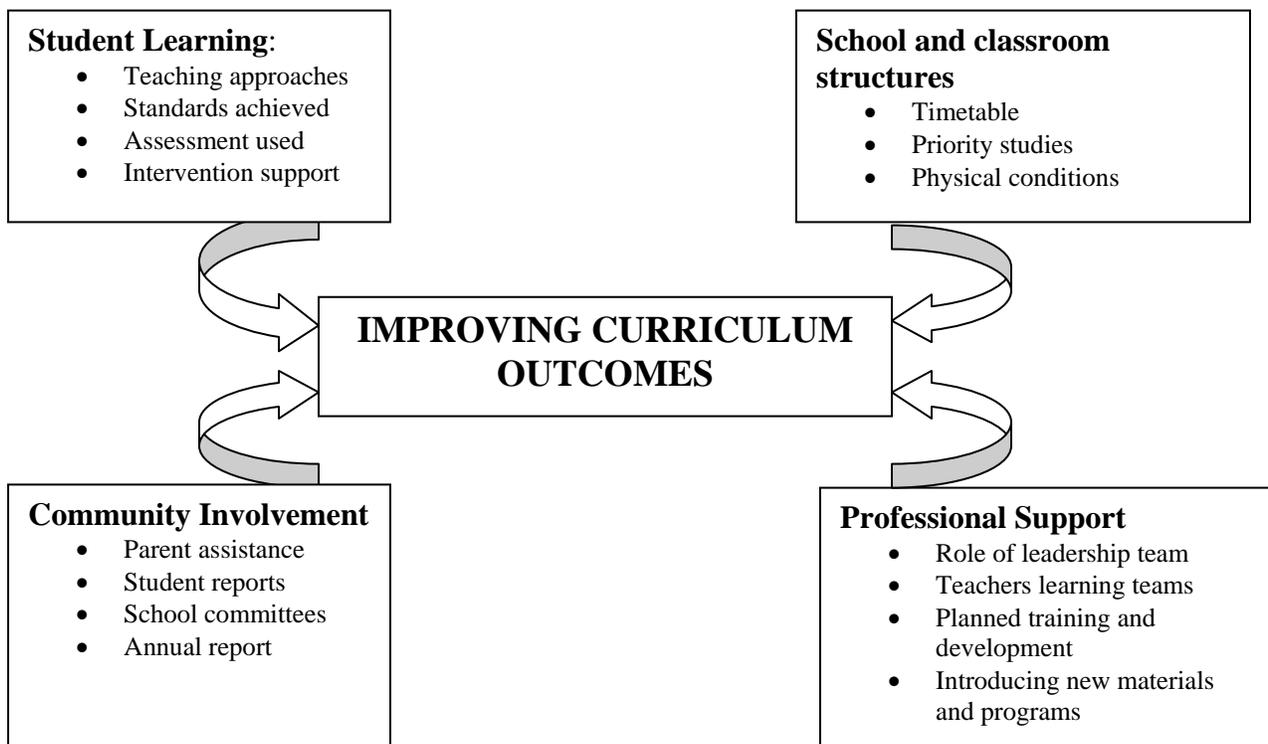
The Curriculum Plan is part of the School Annual Plan and an annual report on the achievement of the outcomes associated with the Curriculum Plan are provided as part of the School Annual Report which is provided to the community, parents and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

### **Curriculum Review**

Curriculum Review is the process used by schools to evaluate and review curriculum provision, student outcomes, structures and assessment procedures and plan for improvement. It involves the use of data and the development of priority action plans. Where possible, schools should involve relevant people outside the school to assist them with this process.

### **Curriculum Improvement**

Curriculum improvement requires schools to identify through the review process, areas of concern, establish outcome targets and develop a strategic improvement plan. The plan should involve the whole school as curriculum improvement is a whole school activity. Such a plan should address the following areas:



### **Role of Principals**

Principals play the key role in curriculum improvement. They are able to guide and direct action that will enhance the skills and knowledge of teachers and create a common culture of high expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge and hold individuals accountable for their role in the quality of education that is provided for students.

### **Teacher professional development**

The Faculty of Education (FOE) plays a key role in curriculum design and implementation through pre-service courses and professional development programs provided for teachers. The aspirations of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture that teacher graduates are well prepared to meet the needs of students and have a thorough understanding of the Samoan curriculum and associated pedagogy requires that a close and supportive relationship is developed between the Ministry and the FOE. As professional standards are further developed for teachers, these will play an important role in this relationship.

### **Use of national data on student performance and examination results**

Data plays a major role in assisting with improvement. National data provides teachers and schools with data that is able to be compared within and across schools. It allows schools to make comparative judgments about their performance and establish realistic but ambitious targets. It allows schools to share concerns and successes with others. It allows district to plan professional development programs to address shared areas of concern. It allows resourcing decisions to be reviewed so that resources are directed towards priority improvement areas.

## **6.1 Monitoring and Review of Curriculum Provision**

Curriculum Provision refers to the range of subjects provided by schools and districts. For senior secondary schooling it is a critical issue as the subjects offered need to meet the needs and aspirations of students, parents, the community and national priorities. As senior secondary schools develop academic and vocational programs, it is important that flexibility is provided that allows students to pursue varied and diverse interests.

Through a process of regularly reviewing curriculum provision in districts and schools, structures can be developed that more efficiently and effectively meet the curriculum needs of students and the community. This may require schools to specialise, particularly when specialist equipment and facilities are required. Additionally it may require staff to work within a district of schools where there is a limited supply of specialist teachers and facilities.

The aim is to maximize the subjects and programs offered to students so that they are able to pursue their personal goals and plan appropriately for their future.

## **6.2 Role of Parents and the Community**

Parents and communities play important roles in the education of children and young people. They provide encouragement and guidance and assist with the school program in a range of ways. Increasingly parents are viewing education as a major influence on their child's future and they expect to be informed of not only their child's progress but the performance of the school.

Formal partnerships have been developed between local communities including villages and districts and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. Villages and district communities provide the school buildings, furniture and are responsible for the maintenance of the school and its equipment. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture appoint the principal and the teachers and pay their salaries and provide stationary and curriculum materials to the school. The principal is responsible for the operation and management of the curriculum programs conducted in the school however the programs and practices must be within the guidelines and policies outlined by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

In developing the school Annual Plan including the Curriculum Plan, schools need to address how parents may assist the school to achieve agreed learning targets. Parents can assist with classroom programs, assist with the preparation of activities and excursions and provide advice on the curriculum needs of the school. Schools have a responsibility to report to parents and to ensure that parents are familiar with the school Annual Plan. It is when a trusting relationship is developed with parents and communities that schools can best realise the ambitions of parents, teachers and the community.

## **Homework Policy**

Homework is an important part of learning and a time when parents and the community can provide direct support to students. It is important that parents are informed of the details of the programs and teaching approaches that are being used by the school so that when they assist their children at home, they complement the learning that occurs at school. While each school will determine its own homework policy the following guidelines are provided in relation to homework

### *Early Primary Years (Years 1 to 3)*

Parents play a vital role in these foundation years. Through activities such as reading to children, telling stories and teaching dance, important learning is taking place. Parents should read to and listen to children read, assist them to use measurement in day-to-day activities and undertake activities that complement the schools program. *Formal homework should be kept to a minimum and not exceed 30 minutes daily.*

### *Primary Years (Years 4 to 8)*

During these years students may be undertaking studies that investigate their local community and links with the broader community. Students should be encouraged to develop projects and activities that link to the curriculum. Homework that is set should enable student to read, write and consolidate mathematical skills. *Formal homework should not exceed 45 minutes per day for years 4 to 6 and 1 hour per day for students in years 7 and 8.*

### *Secondary (Years 9 -11)*

These are important learning times for students. Students will be developing personal study skills including time management so that they can manage the competing demands on their time. As they develop their independence and increase their capacity to inquire and find information, schools may need to provide opportunities for students to access information after school hours. Projects and homework set can explore new areas and require students to locate and use information. *Formal homework should nor exceed 1½ hours per day.*

### *Senior Secondary (Years 12 and 13)*

These are critical years for students as they lay the foundation for further study or employment. Students are more able to manage themselves and determine their own homework study timetable. During these years students will undertake much of their study in their own time when they will complete set tasks, revise work and prepare for the Year 12 and Year 13 examinations. While study is important, students need to balance study with other spiritual, social and sporting activities. *It is anticipated that students would spent at least 2 hours per day on study outside the school program.*

In summary the following daily recommended times that should be allocated for homework are:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Maximum time for Homework</b>
1 to 3	30 minutes
4 to 6	45 minutes
7 and 8	1 hour
9 to 11	1 hour and 30 minutes

<b>Year</b>	<b>Minimum time for Homework</b>
12 and 13	Students should spend at least 2 hours per day in self directed study

## **7 Curriculum Planning and Review at the National Level**

As schools are required to review their performance in relation to how well students are learning and the effectiveness of the programs offered, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture also needs to review national curriculum and assessment policies and programs. Reviews need to be conducted at least every five years to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the national curriculum for schools. Issues such as the relation of the curriculum offered in meeting new challenges and opportunities will ensure that the curriculum planned for schools is the best available to meet new opportunities and challenges. In addition reviews need to be conducted to ensure that the expectations or performance standards developed within the curriculum are appropriate. By using the review and evaluation cycle established with the Curriculum, Materials and Assessment Division, these processes can be put in place.

Through regular review processes the community can be assured that the role that schools play is relevant to the current and emerging needs of Samoan society and meet high international standards.

## **8 Pathways for Students after Completing their Schooling**

Schools assist students to value education as a life long process. Schools need to recognise the various pathways that students will take after completing school and ensure that academic, vocational and employment pathways are valued and reflected in the programs conducted by schools. This requires that the programs offered meet the needs of students, parents, employers and post school providers. Students need to be counseled on the value of all post school options including those associated with vocational education and training.

Districts need to collectively plan programs at the school and post school level that maximizes local cooperation and connections. In developing any plan, the views of the community, employers and post school providers should be sought. This will enable all involved to structure a district program that utilises the available resources creatively and efficiently to best meet the needs of students, the community and government.

The National Curriculum Council (NCC) provides one forum where curriculum continuity and linkages are discussed at the national level. The council provided high-

level advice on a range of educational matters including links between schooling, employment and further education.

The Samoan Qualifications Authority (SQA) has as part of its charter, the development of pathways for students in secondary schools into technical and professional education. To achieve this, the SQA seeks to establish connections between the senior school curriculum and vocationally oriented programs offered within vocational and higher education. Senior secondary student may undertake studies as part of their school education that will carry credits within a range of post-school vocational programs. This will enable a seamless process to be established for students to proceed beyond school to further study. This will widen opportunities for all Samoans to acquire employment related skills and knowledge. Schools are encouraged to work with the SQA to establish suitable programs for senior secondary students.

### **Non-formal Education**

The provision of “non-formal education” provides students with the opportunity of undertaking programs in areas of interest without the pressure of formal examinations that are linked to recognised qualifications. This provides students who may not wish to follow an academic pathway with the opportunity of continuing their education. For a number of students non-formal education will provide them with the skills and confidence to enroll in formal courses in vocational and higher education. In order to ensure that non-formal courses meet Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture’s expectations, non-formal providers must comply with relevant legislation.

### **Students Seeking Re-enrollment**

There will be occasions when students who have left school for various reasons wish to return to study in order to maximize future opportunities. Students under the age of 18 years of age may be enrolled for Year 12 and Year 13 provided the district School Review Officer supports their application.

## **9 Involvement of Young People in Secondary Education, Tertiary Education, Vocational Education and Training, Non-formal Education and Employment.**

All 15 to 20 year olds should be involved in secondary education, tertiary education, vocational education and training, non-formal education or employment. Through involvement in education, training or work young people are able to contribute constructively to the development of a Samoan society that is socially, spiritually, culturally and economically strong. Village councils can play an important role in support of this policy through meetings of the village fonofono. This will ensure that all play an active role in the future of this country as a leader in the Pacific and wider international community.

## 10 Definition of Terms

- *Assessment*  
Assessment is concerned with gathering information from a variety of sources that together build an accurate picture of each student's educational progress. It informs what needs to happen next in the educational program and helps plan experiences that meet the identified learning needs of students.
- *Course of study*  
A Course of Study outlines for each of the learning areas the content to be covered, teaching approaches, assessment to be used and outcomes to be achieved.
- *Curriculum*  
The curriculum is the planned and structured learning experiences provided by schools. The national curriculum is the approved statement of learning that applies to all schools.
- *Curriculum Targets*  
Curriculum targets are ambitious levels of achievement that schools aspire to achieve but not currently achieving.
- *Essential Skills*  
Essential skills are the generic skills and knowledge students need to acquire to enable them to fully participate in society. They are acquired through activities undertaken in all learning areas.
- *Examinations*  
Examinations test the understanding of students through formal assessment processes that generally involve supervised conditions. They must be valid, reliable and fair.
- *Goals*  
The curriculum goals outline what the Samoan education system aspires to achieve for students. They state the overall intent of the curriculum provided by schools.
- *Learning areas*  
The learning areas are broad categories of knowledge within which skills, understandings and values are developed.
- *Learning Outcomes*  
Learning outcomes describe what students are expected to know, understand, value and be able to do.

- *Levels*  
Levels are broad bands of achievement objectives. They represent realistic progression in gaining competence within the learning areas. They are generally associated with year levels, however students could be achieving at different levels in different areas. Some programs may be multi-level.
- *Non-formal education*  
Non formal education is any education or training undertaken in addition to formal school or post secondary education that does not purport to provide students with any formal qualification.
- *Outcome based curriculum*  
Outcome based curriculum focuses on the knowledge and skills students' exhibit as a result of schooling. This contrasts with a focus on the inputs or intentions of the curriculum. Outcomes are measurable and assessable and outline defined skills, behaviours and values associated with each learning area and level.
- *Pathways*  
A pathway describes the progressive actions needed to best achieve a desired goal. For schools it means connecting school programs with post school options so that a clear pathway is created that builds on previous experience and achieves a clearly stated outcome. It also means that different levels of education need to be directly linked and connected so that there is a clear pathway between the curricula provided in primary schools with that provided in secondary schools.
- *Post-secondary education*  
Refers to the education of students who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance nor undertaking a course of secondary education in schools.
- *Principles*  
Curriculum principles are the framework of guiding ideas that shape the opportunities, structures and organisation of the curriculum. The programs provided by schools and teaching methods used in classrooms must be guided by the principles that underlie the curriculum.
- *Progression*  
Progression refers to the process of promoting students from one year level to the next year level.
- *Standards*  
Standards are often referred to in two ways;

- *Content standards* describe what students are expected to know, understand, value and be able to do in each learning area and year level. They are often referred to as ‘learning outcomes.’
  - *Performance standards* describe how adequate at a particular age or year level stage of schooling is a student’s performance. They allow judgments to be made concerning how well a student or group of students are achieving.
- *Subjects*  
These are discrete areas of knowledge found with learning areas. For example, within the Social Science learning area, history and geography are separate subjects.
  - *Values*  
Values are the internal beliefs, values and dispositions used by people in interpreting experience. The same experience will be interpreted differently by different people depending on the values they hold.