

The 2nd *Schooling for Tomorrow* Forum

“Learning from Schooling for Tomorrow - Advancing the International
Toolbox”

to be held

June 6 – 8th, 2004

At the

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Ontario

INTRODUCTION AND PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

The *Schooling for Tomorrow* Project and the International Toolbox

Schooling for Tomorrow is a major international project developing methods and tools for futures thinking in education. It is being carried out through OECD’s Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) and the different countries actively involved in the project. Its importance derives from the extent to which educational decision-making still tends to be dominated by the short term, which is clearly inadequate in a world of complexity and rapid change. The need for better balance between the short term and the long term is not unique to education for the young: *Schooling for Tomorrow* is contributing to a growing CERI focus on the future of learning, which includes universities and the learning society more broadly.

At the core of this project is the Toolbox for Forward-thinking, Innovation and School System Change. This is the ambitious endeavour to compile and develop approaches for forward-thinking in education. It has a crucial operational component, working actively with countries to apply these approaches to concrete issues and challenges on their reform agendas. To date, this operational component has been concentrated on a limited number of volunteer systems – the “inner core” – ready to devote the necessary resources to work closely with OECD on the Toolbox.

The Toronto Forum

The key international events punctuating the on-going analytical and operational activities are the Forums. The Toronto Forum is the second in this series, the first having taken place in Poitiers, France in February 2003.

The Toronto Forum comes at a critical juncture for the *Schooling for Tomorrow* project. First, the analytical challenge to refine the scenarios and to develop indicators of them now requires a more systematic input of expertise from different countries. Second, the work in certain of the “inner core” systems has advanced to a stage to benefit from the insights offered by other countries and to address how best to optimise its policy impact. Third, the range of countries contributing their forward-thinking initiatives to the Toolbox needs to be widened significantly beyond the “inner core” group (at present, England, Ontario, New Zealand, the Netherlands, with Australia joining in the course of 2004), if it is to become truly international. Fourth, the OECD and country-based activities have addressed a range of approaches – the “tools” – separately, which have yet to be brought together into a single source; the point has been reached where the international Toolbox itself needs to be put together.

The Toronto Forum will explore how futures approaches can foster dialogue, leadership, and policy innovation and specifically, in addressing the above points, it aims to:

- i) Help consolidate the network of analytical experts from different countries, engaged in both policy development and practice.
- ii) Review and discuss the progress made by the “inner core” Toolbox systems in using futures thinking in education.
- iii) Discuss how to increase the range of countries actively feeding into the International Toolbox for Forward-thinking, Innovation, and School System Change.
- iv) Provide guidance on how the Toolbox can be made an effective international resource for leaders and policy makers.

These aims are integral to the attached programme, which combines plenary and workshop sessions. The workshops will each have its own rapporteur and be organised around a team from one of the “inner-core” jurisdictions. They will be made up of participants allocated to each so as to provide an approximately even balance of numbers and countries who will then stay together for each workshop session.

The programme logic is to progress from the lessons and intended further initiatives of the “inner-core” systems on Day 1 to broader issues of how to promote futures approaches more widely on Day 2.

PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Sunday June 6th 2004

19:00 – Dinner

- Welcome by Ontario and OECD, and Keynote Address

Monday June 7th 2004

8:30 to 9:00

- Tea/coffee

9:00 to 10:45 in Plenary

Session 1: Schooling for Tomorrow at a Watershed – International and National Developments

- Introduction to the Forum – Aims, Programme, Expected Outcomes.
- The OECD/CERI Schooling for Tomorrow Project – Building the International Toolbox and Network.
- The national and provincial “inner core” initiatives - short ‘state-of-play’ presentations by Ontario (the Francophone and Teacher projects), England, Netherlands, and New Zealand
- Questions

- Tea/coffee

11:15 to 15:30 in Parallel Workshops

Session 2: Learning from the “Inner Core” Experiences

Following the short plenary presentations, each of the “inner core” systems will be responsible for running a workshop as Forum session 2. This will permit a detailed presentation of the on-going activities and their intended next steps. It will allow participants

from other countries to interrogate the approaches they have taken and to compare them with their own experiences and contexts.

- The impetus behind the specific country futures initiatives and the reforms being addressed.
- The different approaches taken, the target focus, the outcomes so far.
- What has been learned? What works well and less well?
- How do these insights compare with insights from the other countries in the Workshop?
- How might these approaches and experiences be reflected in the International Toolbox?

[For reference: Progress report from each “inner core” system]

- A buffet lunch will be available from 12:30 to 13:30 and tea/coffee from 15:30 to 16:00

16:00 – 17:30 in Plenary

Session 3: Panel Discussion – Insights from the Workshops

The rapporteurs will be interviewed from the Chair on the insights gained through the group discussions in order to open up the approaches featured and discussion in each Workshop to the Forum as a whole. The panel will be the occasion to raise broader questions concerning the potential of futures initiatives and their relation to policy.

- Overview on the questions addressed in the Workshops (impetus behind the specific country futures initiatives and reforms; different approaches, targets, and focus; lessons; comparative experiences).
- General issues - why and where futures thinking is being used; broad potential and specific challenges; tools to be included in the International Toolbox.
- Discussion

19:00 - Dinner

Tuesday June 8th 2004

9:00 – 9:20 in Plenary

Session 4: Introduction to Day 2

9:30 – 11:15 in Workshops

Session 5: Reviewing Futures Initiatives across OECD Countries

In these Workshops the focus shifts towards the other countries and systems at the Forum. Drawing on the “country notes” prepared in advance, this session will permit these further initiatives to be presented and discussed. It will discuss the potential avenues for further work in these other countries and how it might be reflected in the Toolbox.

- The impetus behind specific country futures initiatives and the reforms they address.
- The different approaches taken, the target focus, outcomes and lessons learned.
- Comparisons with other countries in the Workshop, including from the “inner core”, and possible tools to be included in the International Toolbox.

[For reference: country notes on forward-thinking initiatives in education]

- Tea/coffee

11:30 – 12:30 in Plenary

Session 6: Plenary Discussion of Country Approaches to Futures Thinking

The Workshop rapporteurs will be interviewed by the Chair on the insights gained through the group discussions. This will permit the Forum as a whole to learn about the approaches featured in each Workshop and address the general issues about realising the potential of futures thinking in international, national and provincial contexts.

- Overview on the questions addressed in the Workshops (impetus behind the specific country futures initiatives and reforms; different approaches, targets, and focus; lessons; comparative experiences)
- General issues - broader potential and specific challenges; what might usefully be included in the International Toolbox.
- Discussion

This Session will close with an introduction to the next workshop (session 7) on the International Toolbox.

12: 30 – 13:45 Lunch

13:45 – 15:00 in Workshops

Session 7: The International Toolbox for Forward-thinking, Innovation and School System Change

Having discussed the country-based initiatives, in the “inner-core” and other OECD countries, the focus now turns to what might be in the International Toolbox:

- Expanding the coverage of country experiences in the International Toolbox beyond the “inner core” group – how to do so and potential country interest?
- Desirable features for the International Toolbox (audience, format, accessibility, language etc.)

15:00 – 16:00 in Plenary

Session 8: Reporting Back and Concluding Remarks

This session will report back on the main ideas generated on the International Toolbox and discuss options for its future development; substantive concluding observations and closing remarks.

Forum ends at 16:00

Wednesday, June 9th 2004

An optional “Ontario Day” is being organised by the Ontario Ministry of Education for Wednesday, June 9th. Participants will have the opportunity to attend information sessions and visit educational sites of interest. More information will be sent directly to those who register for the OECD 2nd International Schooling for Tomorrow Forum.