



## **PALAU 2000 MASTER PLAN FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT: EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION**

**Submitted to:**

**The Republic of Palau**

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**October 2006**

***Building Capacity Through Education***



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the spring of 2006, the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the Republic of Palau initiated a period of strategic planning to improve educational programs and services for the period 2006–2016. This work was carried out by the MOE with assistance from the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE) Project and Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL). The PRIDE Project is implemented by the Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific and is jointly funded by the European Union and New Zealand's International Aid & Development Agency (NZAID). PREL is a nonprofit educational agency based in Honolulu, Hawaii. This work represents the collaboration of North and South Pacific Islanders to improve education for all.

This report was made possible by the following groups and individuals:

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This product was funded by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. ED), under the Pacific Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center, Region XV, award number S283A950001. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. ED, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.



# PALAU 2000 MASTER PLAN FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT: EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

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## INTRODUCTION

### **PALAU 2000 MASTER PLAN FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT: EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION**

In 1995, the Republic of Palau completed a comprehensive educational improvement plan, the Palau 2000 Master Plan for Educational Improvement, to guide the nation's school reform and restructuring efforts into the 21st century. The Master Plan for Educational Improvement provides analyses of the condition of elementary and secondary education in the Republic of Palau, as well as detailed recommendations and timelines for implementing and evaluating these recommendations. This plan is the education component of the Republic of Palau's National Master Development Plan (1996).

The Master Plan was developed by a Task Force established by the Palauan National Congress, the Olbiil Era Kelulau (OEK), and was adopted by the OEK in 1996. Members of the Task Force were appointed by the President, with consent of the Senate, and were broadly representative of the educational, public policy, and local communities. The Master Plan was developed over the course of a year with the assistance and advice of hundreds of Palauan citizens.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate and document progress to date in meeting the intention of the Master Plan for the period 1995–2005, to understand historical events that promoted or hindered its realization, and to prepare for the next educational planning process.

### **REPUBLIC OF PALAU EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

Spread throughout 16 states and numerous villages and islands, students attend either one of Palau's 19 public or 2 private elementary schools (grades 1–8), or its 1 public (Palau High School [PHS]) or 5 private high schools (grades 9–12). Preschool is offered through Head Start, and two private kindergartens are also available. One institution of higher education is the Palau Community College (PCC) available to students living in Palau.

The Ministry of Education (MOE), one of the largest ministries in the government, manages the public school system, with 2004 general fund appropriations totaling \$6,398,000. This was supplemented by United States federal grant funds totaling \$2,346,622 in 2004. Education is compulsory from ages 6–17 or until graduation from high school.

Public policy related to educational and occupational development is provided by Public Law 4-57. As noted here, this law states that the National Government of the Republic of Palau will provide an educational system that enables citizens to participate in the development of the Republic and gain knowledge in all areas.

*The purposes of education in the Republic are to increase citizen participation in economic and social development, to unify the Republic by giving the people knowledge of their islands, economy, government and world, and to provide citizens of the Republic with the knowledge and skills required for self-development and the development of the Republic. These skills include professional and vocational, as well as social and political, abilities.*

Olbiil Era Kelulau  
House Bill #4-213-11-, HD2, SD3  
Final Action: September 17, 1996

The Palau MOE states a corresponding vision and mission:

- Vision: Our students will be successful in the Palauan society and the world.
- Mission: The Republic of Palau Ministry of Education, in partnership with students, parents, and the community, is to ensure student success through effective curriculum and instruction in a conducive learning environment.

### **PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

The curriculum offered by the Palau public schools is largely modeled on the U.S.-based system of education and is comprised of elementary (1–8) and high school (9–12) grades.



Schools implement the curriculum frameworks developed by the MOE for core subjects of English/language arts, math, science, social studies, and Palauan studies. Schools also provide curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the non-core subject areas of vocational education, health, physical education, and career guidance.

### STUDENT ENROLLMENT

In the 2004 academic year, a total of 2,989 students were enrolled in public (N = 2,419) and private (N = 570) elementary schools, and 1,139 students were enrolled in public (N = 728) and private (N = 411) high schools (Ministry of Education, 2005). Table 1 provides comparison figures for student attendance for 1994 and 2004. These figures indicate a 17% increase in overall enrollments during this period, with a 16% increase in the number of elementary students and a 20% increase in the number of high school students. The largest proportional increase has been for elementary student enrollments in private schools (35%).

Table 1. Student Attendance in Public and Private Schools for 1994 and 2004.

<b>Elementary</b>		<b>1994</b>	<b>2004</b>
	Public	2,135	2,419
	Private	370	570
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,505</b>	<b>2,989</b>
<b>High School</b>		<b>1994</b>	<b>2004</b>
	Public	579	728
	Private	333	411
<b>Total</b>		<b>912</b>	<b>1,139</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>3,417</b>	<b>4,128</b>

### FUNDING INITIATIVES

The Republic of Palau has obtained federal funds in the areas of Goals 2000, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (STW), Tech Prep, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA, formerly Job Training Partnership Act [JTPA]), and other United States-funded educational initiatives. As described by this section, each initiative is closely linked with the Master Plan educational reform, either in providing a preexisting infrastructure upon which planning has been developed, or in shaping the guiding principles toward which it is directed.

#### Goals 2000

The MOE has expressed its commitment to assist in the development and implementation of educational reform and to dedicate resources provided by the federal government under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Goals 2000 grants, issued in 1994 by a presidential task force, provided a major impetus in developing the Master Plan.

#### STW

Since receiving its first development grant award under the STW in 1995, the Republic of Palau's strategy has been to use these funds as a means of implementing the Master Plan's goals and objectives in professional development, standards and assessments, curriculum and instruction, business-education partnerships, instructional technology, and other educational improvement priority areas identified in the Master Plan.

#### Tech Prep

The structure established by Tech Prep has provided one of the major curriculum exemplars for designing educational reform. Academic and vocational education have been integrated. In addition, an assessment of work-related competencies has provided the means for initiating and structuring reforms for vocational education.

## WIA

The WIA has served as the conduit in receiving and administering STW funding. JTPA and the MOE were jointly responsible for the planning of STW, and together prepared all proposals, plans for action, evaluations, and progress reports.

## **EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Six priority areas were described by the Master Plan:

1. Curriculum and instruction standards
2. Family/school/community partnerships
3. Professional personnel and certification system
4. Preschool and kindergarten education
5. Governance and policy setting for education
6. Expand and upgrade facilities

The purpose of this evaluation is to document progress to date in meeting the intention of the Master Plan for the period 1995–2005 in relation to these stated priorities. To accomplish this, reviews of documents and interviews with current and past members of the Palau Master Plan Steering Committee and Task Force were carried out. Based on these data, a determination was made regarding whether the priorities and their concomitant subpriorities were either “accomplished,” “in process,” or “not accomplished.” Priorities considered “in process” may refer to activities that occur as ongoing activities of the MOE (e.g., facilities maintenance) or those that are initiated but not yet completed.

Table 2 describes the Master Plan priorities and subpriorities.

Table 2. Priorities and subpriorities of the Palau 2000 education Master Plan.

<b>I. Curriculum and Instruction Standards</b>	
A.	Establish mandatory school attendance through 12th grade or age 17
B.	Revise graduation requirements to be “performance-based”
C.	Assess student progress for grades 4, 6, 8, and 10
D.	Reform education program for grades 7–12 to better prepare students for the real world beyond high school
<b>II. Family/School/Community Partnerships</b>	
A.	Strengthen role of family as “first teacher” of children
B.	Improve parent and community involvement in education
C.	Improve collaboration of schools with other agencies serving children and families
<b>III. Professional Personnel and Certification System</b>	
A.	Establish a Professional Standards and Practices Commission and separate personnel system for teachers and administrators
B.	Establish teacher and administrator certification and performance evaluation system
C.	Improve ways to recruit, select, and develop teachers and administrators
D.	Improve incentives for professional educators, including increases in salaries and benefits to make Palau competitive in the Pacific region
<b>IV. Preschool and Kindergarten Education</b>	
A.	Expand opportunities for preschool education for children ages 4–5
B.	Charter and inspect all preschool programs through the MOE and the Ministry of Health
C.	Require all students to attend kindergarten beginning at ages 5–6
D.	Establish standards, curriculum, and staffing for new kindergarten program
E.	Conduct systematic evaluation and continuous improvement for kindergarten programs, once established
<b>V. Governance and Policy Setting for Education</b>	
A.	Strengthen the role of the Board of Education
B.	Expand the Board from five to seven members, and establish the Minister of Education as a nonvoting, ex-officio member of the Board

C.	Change Board from appointive to elective
D.	Ensure that members of the Board are lay citizens, not employees in education
E.	Establish procedures to secure professional staff input on policy decisions
F.	Establish policies to guide continuous educational improvement
<b>VI. Expand and Upgrade Facilities</b>	
A.	Upgrade school buildings
B.	Consolidate school facilities once the road is built
C.	Seek resources to construct a new facility for administration

Changes occurring over the course of the previous 10 years for each of these elements of the Master Plan are described below. These developments, from pre-Master Plan (1995) to post-Master Plan (2005), are used to evaluate the progress of the plan.

**PRIORITY 1: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION STANDARDS**

Priority 1.A.

Establish mandatory school attendance through 12th grade or age 17

This priority was accomplished. In 1997, new legislation was passed in the national legislature to modify the compulsory attendance law from age 14 to age 17 (Title 22; Subchapter V; Section 159).

Priority 1.B.

Revise graduation requirements to be “performance-based”

This priority was accomplished. In order to improve and assess the outcome of curriculum reforms, plans to develop academic content and performance standards have been made. The Palau 2000 Master Plan for Educational Improvement provided the groundwork for this reform by expressing the Republic of Palau’s intention to “expand use of standards-based performance tasks” (p. 63). General statements of how this would be enacted have been provided by the Palau School-to-Work: Partnership for the Future (1997) self-assessment report, in which strategies and recommendations for curriculum modifications prescribe the: (a) provision of training opportunities to educators in competency-based instruction, (b) use of existing skill standards to review all educational criteria, (c) completion of course and competency profiles for each course/program area, (d) establishment of performance standards and benchmarks for each course and program, (e) conduct of competency-based student/course/program assessments and evaluations, and (f) provision of training on the use and interpretation of the assessments and evaluations (p. 35–36).

In describing plans for the conduct of curriculum analysis and revision, several recommendations regarding the use of occupational skill standards were also provided by the Palau School-to-Work: Partnerships for the Future (1997) self-assessment. These include recommendations that occupations within each career cluster utilize business/industry/labor task forces in aligning Palauan and Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) skill standards with internationally defined standards. It further recommends that these skill standards be developed for all educational curricula.

Workshops have been conducted to modify the standards for high school graduation and to require the meeting of performance standards. In addition, a series of program guidebooks for each career academy has been completed. Guidebooks encompass skill standards/competencies and all related information pertaining to each academy. Their main purpose is to provide the direction necessary to help students, teachers, and counselors understand how career academies are structured and how students attain the competencies required to successfully complete high school.

In addition to course and program assessment instruments, a series of National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) tests specifically developed for Palau has been completed, but has yet to be implemented.



### Priority 1.C.

#### Assess student progress for grades 4, 6, 8, and 10

This priority was accomplished. In addition to teacher-developed tests, the MOE now utilizes several assessment tools to assess student achievement; these tools include the Palau Achievement Test (PAT), the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT10), and the Quarterly Assessments for grades 1–8.

The PAT is a locally developed criterion-referenced test used to assess student learning based on the curriculum frameworks of the five core subjects—English, Palauan studies, science, math, and social studies— and is administered to students in grades 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 at the end of April or beginning of May each year. The SAT10 is a standardized norm-referenced test developed in the United States and is used to compare Palauan student performance with the cohort of students in the United States who took the same test. The Quarterly Assessments are locally developed criterion-referenced tests administered at the end of each quarter to grades 1–8 to measure student achievement of the learning targets in the five core content areas. Results of the assessments are used to identify weaknesses and to develop strategies to further improve student achievement.

### Priority 1.D.

#### Reform education program for grades 7–12 to better prepare students for the real world beyond high school

This priority was accomplished. In the Palau 2000 Master Plan for Educational Improvement, curriculum revisions were recommended in the following areas: career planning, elementary-level vocational education, career and educational portfolios, improving the articulation of high schools and PCC programs, and a “Certificate of Mastery” requirement for high school graduation. These recommendations were incorporated into educational program improvements for elementary and high school, as described below.

#### *Elementary School*

Career Awareness, Exploration, and Guidance. Career awareness, exploration, and guidance planning was organized by two career guidance committees who did much to aid in its formulation. These groups have been engaged in the training of elementary, secondary, and college teachers; counselors; and administrators in the availability and use of career guidance principles, products, and methods. They have also been involved in pilot-testing an occupational interest inventory and occupational profile product with students and parents. Teachers and counselors received training in the development of the comprehensive career guidance and counseling program.

Career awareness activities begin as early as primary school grades (grades 1–5) and include self-awareness, career awareness activities, career days/fairs, and parent involvement activities. Many of these activities continue through the elementary level (grades 6–8) and are buttressed by career exploration activities, including career assessment and investigation, initial career planning, educational opportunities exploration, and employability skills training.

To assist in establishing an effective career guidance program for students, a model guidebook was developed to promote a uniform and systematic approach to providing students in the Republic of Palau with career-related information. In addition, a product has been selected as the general method for career assessment beginning in grade 7. The first procedure of the career guidance reform is the assignment of a teacher or counselor to each student, beginning in grade 7, to provide mentoring and guidance. This teacher or counselor heads a team, comprised of teachers, parents, and community mentors, that is responsible for providing guidance to the student. Each team meets at least twice a year to assess students’ progress toward their career goals. In addition, at grade 8, students enroll in a broad for-credit career investigation course. This course results in the preparation of a career portfolio to be used by employers when deciding to train or hire youth.

#### *High School*

Many of these activities are also carried out at the secondary level, including the determination of a career major, developing career portfolios, occupational field trips, and job shadowing. Certain activities, notably mentoring, continue at the postsecondary level.

*Career Academies.* The curricula at Palau High School are organized around five career academies:

- Agriculture
- Business Information
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Construction Technology
- Automotive Technology

Career Academies involve a close working partnership between the high school and local businesses. All students select a career pathway upon which to focus their studies while in their last 2 years of high school. They are enrolled in an integrated curriculum with a minimum of three academic classes and one vocational-technical course in a block scheduling format each semester. Teachers integrate their curriculum and orient students toward graduation and receipt of a fully credited diploma. Lessons focus on developing workplace skills used and needed by local employers.

*Collaborative Agreements between Schools and Employers.* PHS's vocational program includes work-based learning under supervision of local employers through job shadowing (10th grade), career mentoring (11th grade), career practicum (12th grade), and a summer work experience program, all of which are designed to expose students to a variety of professions and proper work ethics. Work-based learning provides opportunities for students to gain skills and knowledge in the workplace, as well as connect or apply what they learn in the classroom to the world of work.

Collaborative efforts between educational institutions and the business sector include cooperative education business courses at the high school level and internships through both PCC and the WIA. Efforts to link business and education as part of the STW reform were initiated by the recruitment of members of the business sector on both the STW Council and the Tech Prep Committee.

*Collaborative Agreements between Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions.* The need to articulate courses and programs between elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions has been emphasized by the Master Plan, which indicates that "major reform and restructuring of the educational program at grades 7 through 12 . . . will involve major changes in curriculum and instruction and require new partnerships with PCC and employers in Palau" (p. 6).

The process of formulating articulation agreements by content areas and by programs is still ongoing. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Palau MOE and PCC was developed, as were committees to review course guides and program standards and competencies.

Articulation consultations between PCC and PHS have allowed dual enrollment in both institutions. Students in the 12th grade are now able to initiate college education while in their senior year. Under this arrangement, students earn both a high school diploma and transferable college credits upon graduating from high school.

Similarly, vocational programs at both institutions collaborated on developing joint learning activities and sharing resources to serve both high school and college students. A positive example of this collaboration was a joint project in which agriculture students at both institutions teamed up to raise crops and poultry under the supervision of their PCC and PHS instructors. In addition, during Education Awareness Week, vocational students from PCC and PHS showcased projects and were instrumental in marketing their programs to other high schools and elementary students.

#### *Coordination with Economic Development*

According to the Palau National Master Development Plan (1996), three of the most important sectors of the Palauan economy are tourism, agriculture and forestry, and marine resources and environment. The tourism sector is currently one of the most prominent and is projected to continue to grow robustly. The Health/Human Services career academy has a special focus on meeting the needs of this industry by providing students with academic and technical skills and the work habits required in tourism and hospitality industries and related careers.

Agriculture and forestry is another sector identified as important in achieving long-term economic growth. This sector is expected to grow with the development of the Palau Compact Road and increased commercial production. Recommendations for human resource management regarding this sector of the

economy include bolstering the availability of agricultural and forestry courses in both high school and college curricula. The career cluster, "Natural Resources," focuses on occupations in the area of agriculture and forestry, among others.

The third sector considered vital to economic development is marine resources and environment. Specific focus is recommended on the tuna industry and the need for involvement in the managerial, quality control, and technical aspects of this field. The Ministry of Commerce and Trade has identified related training needs in management, accounting, customer relations, packaging, marketing, environment, and conservation. While the marine environment has obvious significance to the natural environment of the Republic of Palau, there presently exists no sufficient secondary or tertiary program of training in marine or environmental occupations.

A further consideration in developing the educational reform initiative has been to provide training to native Palauans in occupations that are currently held by foreign laborers. This number is substantial in the private sector, with as many as three to four times the number of foreign to native employees. Occupations held by foreign employees are largely in the areas of fishing, domestic help, carpentry, food service, farming, and masonry. To address this issue, one of the tasks described by the STW program in the Republic of Palau is to develop a plan for providing technical training in occupations presently held by foreign laborers (STW Progress Report, November 1995).

## **PRIORITY 2: FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

### Priority 2.A.

#### Strengthen role of family as "first teacher" of children

This priority was accomplished. In establishing the Belau Family, School, and Community Association (BFSCA) to aid in the development of educational reforms, the MOE took a step toward realizing the first phase of the action plan recommendations made by the Master Plan to "organize a 'Partnership' planning group composed of representatives of various levels of school administration, teachers, parents, and community leaders" (p. 59).

Prior to the development of the Master Plan, parents in Palau were less involved in education. In September 1996, a group of over 25 parent and community representatives were invited to formally give feedback on the process of educational reform. Soon thereafter, this group created the following:

- An association name (BFSCA)
- A mission statement
- An articulation of their role in providing:
  - Leadership and student advocacy
  - Policy input to the MOE
  - Networking between parents
  - Activities at the school and village level
  - Parent education
  - Dissemination of best practices
  - Evaluation of parental impacts in education

After these beginnings, the new organization did the following:

- Created an association manual of procedures
- Created a survey of the needs and interests of parents and surveyed parents before the start of the next school year
- Determined the resource and information needs of the association in order to carry out its mission
- Developed a process to allow the association to provide policy input to the MOE and the legislature
- Developed and presented a series of parent education workshops
- Developed standards for parental involvement
- Designed a process of self-evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the association

### Priority 2.B.

#### Improve parent and community involvement in education

This priority was accomplished. The activities of the BFSCA have grown over time to include regular meetings, training on best practices in education, annual conferences, MOE supported training, computer training, radio and TV shows, school plans, and achievement awards. Among the educational issues that have recently been the topics of discussions are career and academic programs at the high school in conjunction with block scheduling, the number of teachers who only have a high school diploma, teacher and school administrator certification programs, and the school lunch program.

A 2004 report on activities associated with the Territories & Freely Associated States Education Grant Program describes these major activities and topics of discussion:

- Regular meetings between parents, community members, and business organizations
- Best and promising practices for effective partnership between school, community, and business sectors have been identified and people trained
- Annual conference of school personnel, parents and community members, business representatives, and local leaders
- Parents, community members, and business leaders gain knowledge and skills to assist the MOE
- Parents are being taught on the use of computers to enhance communications between the school and the home
- A series of radio programs and talk shows has been conducted regarding important educational issues that the community should be aware of
- School plans have been updated annually with the involvement of parents and community members
- Parents and community members who contributed to the development of education programs were recognized during an annual parent organization conference

### Priority 2.C.

#### Improve collaboration of schools with other agencies serving children and families

This priority was accomplished. The management of educational reform was delegated to Council members who were selected and appointed by the President of the Republic of Palau to represent education, labor, and community groups. The Council has attempted to encourage the participation of many of the Republic's education, labor, employment training, economic development, and community organizations in providing direction and governance toward the development of educational reform. Specific organizations participating in the development of the reform include the MOE, JTPA office, PCC, Palau Community Action Agency, Economic Development Office, Chamber of Commerce, Palau Small Business Association, Women's Association, and the Palau Youth Association.

Since its beginning, the Republic of Palau's educational planning and decision making has been made with the collaboration of multiple relevant stakeholders. The MOE continues to support the BFSCA, which was formed in 1996 to work on training parents in various ways to better help their children achieve academically. The MOE has established a partnership with local businesses through the Belau Employers and Educators Alliance (BEEA), which is a formal nonprofit partnership between the MOE and local businesses to improve educational opportunities for students. Through this partnership, students shadow, observe, and learn from employers and employees at actual job sites.

An MOU with the Belau Head Start Program has allowed closer collaboration in providing services to students and staff in the areas of curriculum, transition, training, disability, and food service. There is also a close collaboration between the MOE and PCC to articulate courses and programs to meet the needs of students and teachers, including the following:

- A dual enrollment program for PHS seniors, providing students with an opportunity to enroll in college-level English and math courses
- An accredited education associate of arts degree program designed to meet the needs of MOE classroom teachers
- An ongoing MOE Teachers' Cohort Program where teachers continue to pursue higher degrees in the education field with a 4-year higher learning institution through PCC
- A Talent Search Program offered by PCC as an after school endeavor to provide tutoring services to students

The MOE also has an MOU with the Ministry of Health for closer collaboration to provide health services for students. Students receive free health care services from a doctor, nurse, and counselors provided by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health continues to provide free and preventive services, including dental and physical examinations to all elementary school students on a regular basis.

An ongoing program with the Ministry of Justice provides innovative programs for students at PHS and elementary schools. The Law Enforcement Explorers Program (LEEP) is being conducted as an after school program by police officers at various elementary schools to instill leadership skills, discipline, and teamwork among the students.

### **PRIORITY 3: PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM**

#### Background

In 1998, Palau passed a civil service retirement act mandating that all civil servants, including public school teachers, retire after 30 years of service. One result of this legislation has been a rather dramatic turnover in the teaching force. In the 2-year period following this legislation (1999–2001), 76 of the 266 teachers (29%) retired from teaching. There was not a sufficient pool of adequately trained personnel to replace such a large number of retirees and, as a result, the schools were forced to hire teachers who lacked formal teacher preparation. The legislation has now been revised to allow the MOE to retain employees up to 5 years beyond the mandatory requirement criteria if a replacement is not found or if the employee is deemed critical to the needs of the Ministry.

Proposed legislation currently under debate in the legislature would raise the minimum education level necessary to be hired as a teacher to a bachelor's degree. This proposal is seen as a way of increasing instructional quality in the schools. While the proposal would be phased in over several years, it will require a large number of teachers who want to continue teaching to become bachelor's degree holders. As Table 3 illustrates, only 28% of teachers met this requirement in 2004.

Table 3. Number of Public School Teachers by Degree Attained in 2004.

<b>Highest Degree</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
High school graduate	102	41%
Associate's degree	79	31%
Bachelor's degree	63	25%
Master's degree	7	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Priority 3.A.

##### Establish a Professional Standards and Practices Commission and separate personnel system for teachers and administrators

This priority was not accomplished. Certification plans for teachers were completed and submitted to the National Congress for approval. Certification plans for administrators were submitted to the President. However, these plans have not yet been approved. As a result, provisions for associated subpriorities (B, C, and D, below) have also not been approved. The MOE cannot fully implement these changes until the law is amended to reflect these provisions.

#### Priority 3.B.

##### Establish teacher and administrator certification and performance evaluation system

This priority is in process. As noted earlier, many teachers lack the bachelor's-level education required for proposed Palau teacher certification requirements. Teachers are able to take some courses at PCC, which is especially important for those who have a high school diploma only. PCC, in collaboration with the MOE, has established a set of core courses for teachers and students interested in the field of education and is now offering them. Other teachers who have AA/AS, BA/BS, and/or MA degrees, but do not have education credentials, are encouraged to take these courses and meet the certification requirements. If the course needed is not offered at PCC, online courses can be arranged through PCC

with other institutions of higher education, such as San Diego State University, United States International University, and the Hawai'i Leadership Academy.

Palau National Congress passed a law requiring all teachers to take the National Teachers' Examination (NTE) Praxis test, to assess and/or determine their individual needs so that appropriate training can be provided to all teachers. Praxis Test I deals with teaching reading, math, and writing. Praxis Test II deals with knowledge of the content areas. The results of the Praxis tests will assist the MOE in understanding what training will be provided to help teachers meet the teacher certification requirements. Teachers will also be required to take workshops and other related training on teacher standards.

#### Priority 3.C.

##### Improve ways to recruit, select, and develop teachers and administrators

This priority is in process. Because changes associated with instructional staff were described in the previous section, this section focuses on administrative staff. The hiring process for principals now includes a formal interview and recommendations from the interview committee. Assessments are also being developed for all principals. Principals are required to take the NTE Praxis test. Training plans will be developed immediately after the principals' needs assessment has been completed.

While the MOE is in the process of assessing principals' training needs, a series of three training sessions was offered in using computers to compile and transmit student and school data to the central office. Training in basic computer skills, Internet, email, and Microsoft PowerPoint and Word applications was conducted for all school principals. In addition, training has been provided on school improvement, data management, and school management and planning.

Training plans and a timeline of workshops are also being developed for the principals to begin training in the six major standards for school administrators. These plans are being completed and principals can begin the training this summer and next school year.

#### Priority 3.D.

##### Improve incentives for professional educators, including increases in salaries and benefits to make Palau competitive in the Pacific region

This priority is in process. The Education Professional Classification system became effective by Executive Order No. 170 on October 11, 1999, and salary changes were requested through the executive branch and OEK. The revised special guidelines for the classification of academic and vocational teacher and school counselor, principal, and vice principal positions are designed to eliminate disparities between the salaries of academic and vocational teachers, classify all positions based on level of education and years of experience, increase the number of pay levels available to employees in order to extend their career path, and simplify the classification process.

On January 1, 2006, all civil employees were reclassified. Work is currently in process to reclassify MOE personnel. This MOE Professional Classification is a uniform standard and applies to all educators, including academic and vocational classroom teachers, school counselors, education area specialists, principals, vice principals, and field supervisors. The classification system applies to Palauan citizens, U.S. citizens, and third country nationals, and covers all contract appointments.

### **PRIORITY 4: PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION**

#### Priority 4.A.

##### Expand opportunities for preschool education for children ages 4–5

This priority was not accomplished. For this reason, the other related priority (4.B) did not occur.

The MOE currently has a memorandum of understanding with the Belau Head Start program for collaboration in providing services to students and staff in the areas of curriculum, transition, training, disability, and food service.

In addition, the Early Education Curriculum Committee (EECC) is now developing an Early Childhood Education Program (ages 0–5) that intends to provide a seamless connection to 1st grade curriculum. Plans for this program are intended to be finalized in 2006, and the proposal for mandating the program in

connection with MOE grades 1–12 will be subsequently submitted to the Palau legislature for action. This may provide an opportunity to integrate preschool and kindergarten with 1st grade and beyond.

Priority 4.B.

Charter and inspect all preschool programs through the MOE and the Ministry of Health

This priority was not accomplished.

Priority 4.C.

Require all students to attend kindergarten beginning at ages 5–6

This priority was not accomplished. There was an effort on the part of the National Congress to revise the compulsory entrance age from age six to age five, mandating kindergarten attendance, but it was not carried out. As a result, the other related priorities (4.D and 4.E) were not accomplished.

Priority 4.D.

Establish standards, curriculum, and staffing for new kindergarten program

This priority was not accomplished.

Priority 4.E.

Conduct systematic evaluation and continuous improvement for kindergarten programs, once established

This priority was not accomplished.

**PRIORITY 5: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY SETTING FOR EDUCATION**

There are five levels of educational policy setting and governance in the Republic of Palau: national (legislative, executive), Palau Board of Education (as of April 1999, pending appointment of members), Palau Ministry of Education, school-level, and United States federal.

Priority 5.A.

Strengthen the role of the Board of Education

This priority was proposed by the Certification Plan provision, but was not accomplished. Because new members to the Palau Board of Education were not appointed, there are currently no members on the Board. For this reason, none of the other related priorities (5.B, 5.C, and 5.D) were accomplished.

Priority 5.B.

Expand the Board from five to seven members, and establish the Minister of Education as a nonvoting, ex-officio member of the Board

This priority was proposed by legislation, but was not accomplished.

Priority 5.C.

Change Board from appointive to elective

This priority was not accomplished.

Priority 5.D.

Ensure that members of the Board are lay citizens, not employees in education

This priority was not accomplished.

Priority 5.E.

Establish procedures to secure professional staff input on policy decisions

This priority was accomplished. The MOE has a management team and committees that provide guidance on policy issues.

#### Priority 5.F.

##### Establish policies to guide continuous educational improvement

This priority is in progress. The need for accountability and the benefit of program evaluation efforts for purposes of program improvement and outcome assessment are well documented in Republic of Palau education-related materials. For example, in the Palau School-to-Work: Partnerships for the Future (1997) self-assessment report, the benefit of multiple data sources and data collection methods in establishing progress toward specific goals and objectives is expressed. The Palau 2000 Master Plan for Educational Improvement (1994) likewise emphasizes the importance of program monitoring efforts in aiding program improvement, increasing the focus on program achievements, and providing a source of motivation to carry out program implementation efforts.

The Palau 2000 Master Plan for Educational Improvement further suggests that a national reporting system should be instituted to aid in the routine collection of program information, including career and labor market data and measures specific to program objectives. This data collection effort would be coordinated by the collaboration of representatives of the MOE, PCC, STW Council, and other groups.

As a result of this emphasis over the course of the 10-year period, there exists a Palau National Code for Education; the first draft of an Education Policy Manual has been developed; schools have formulated school improvement plans; a uniform grading system is now in place; and, in 2008, all teachers will be required, at minimum, to possess a college degree at the associate's level.

### **PRIORITY 6: EXPAND AND UPGRADE FACILITIES**

#### Priority 6.A.

##### Upgrade school buildings

This priority is in process. School campuses and buildings house and contain the majority of student learning activities carried out by the MOE. Nearly all public schools have classrooms, computer laboratories, libraries, cafeterias, and sports facilities. Due to financial constraints, many buildings are old, substandard, and do not meet expanding demands for quality and performance.

#### Priority 6.B.

##### Consolidate school facilities once the road is built

This priority is in process. School consolidation is a major and controversial issue in Palau. In 1999, pursuant to RPPL 5-15, the MOE created a consolidation plan for the public elementary schools on Babeldaob. The plan recommended that the consolidation of schools be implemented in three phases, beginning with Phase 1—the immediate consolidation of schools that do not require additional facilities. A portion of Phase 1 has been completed, whereby Ngatpang Elementary School has been consolidated with Aimeliik Elementary School. The remaining portion of Phase 1, consolidating Ibobang Elementary School with Ngeremlengui Elementary School, is in progress. Phase 2 consolidation will be implemented for schools that require intermediate restructuring, including an assessment of additional required facilities. This pertains to the consolidation of Ngaraard and Ngardmau Elementary Schools. Phase 3 consolidation will be implemented for schools that require extensive restructuring, including an assessment of major facilities and infrastructure developments that are required. This pertains to the consolidation of Ngchesar and Ngiwal Elementary Schools with Melekeok Elementary School. Phases 2 and 3 have yet to be implemented.

#### Priority 6.C.

##### Seek resources to construct a new facility for administration

This priority was accomplished. A new education administration facility was completed in 1998.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Republic of Palau's STW educational reform initiatives are being incorporated within a comprehensive restructuring of the nation's educational system, as provided by its 10-year education master plan, Palau 2000: A Master Plan for Educational Improvement. Because of the close relationship between the Republic of Palau's national educational improvement initiatives and STW initiatives, this assessment frequently cites STW documents as a chief source of information on the components and directions of the country's emerging Palau 2000 Master Plan accomplishments.

Table 4 lists the 6 priorities and 25 subpriorities of the Master Plan and a summary of the implementation results. Overall, 36% of the subpriorities were accomplished, 24% are in process, and the remaining 40% were not accomplished. Priorities considered in process are activities that occur as ongoing activities of the MOE (e.g., facilities maintenance) or those that are initiated but not yet completed.

Major accomplishments include improvements in Priorities 1 and 2, such as compulsory high school attendance, curriculum and instruction with a workforce development emphasis, and parental involvement. There was a general lack of accomplishment in Priorities 4 and 5 regarding governance and policy setting and preschool and kindergarten education. Some progress has been made in Priorities 3 and 6, such as professional personnel and certification systems and the expansion and upgrading of facilities.

These findings should be utilized in the development of the next educational Master Plan. This planning process should address whether to continue to pursue priorities established in 1994 that have not yet been accomplished. For example, does sufficient interest exist to continue the pursuit of legislation to certify teachers? Is there adequate motivation and funding to enact a policy for preschool and kindergarten education? Is an active school board still desired? Should school consolidation continue? What new priorities for the 21st century take precedence over those developed in 1994?

Table 4. Summary of Implementation Results.

Priority	Accomplished?		
	Yes	In Process	No
<b>1. Curriculum and Instruction Standards</b>	<b>X</b>		
Establish mandatory school attendance through 12th grade or age 17	X		
Assess student progress for grades 4, 6, 8, and 10	X		
Reform education program for grades 7–12 to better prepare students for the real world beyond high school	X		
Revise graduation requirements to be “performance-based”	X		
<b>2. Family/School/Community Partnerships</b>	<b>X</b>		
Strengthen role of family as “first teacher” of children	X		
Improve parent and community involvement in education	X		
Improve collaboration of schools with other agencies serving children and families	X		
<b>3. Professional Personnel and Certification System</b>		<b>X</b>	
Establish a Professional Standards and Practices Commission and separate personnel system for teachers and administrators			X
Establish teacher and administrator certification and performance evaluation system		X	
Improve ways to recruit, select, and develop teachers and administrators		X	
Improve incentives for professional educators, including increases in salaries and benefits to make Palau competitive in the Pacific region		X	

Priority	Accomplished?		
	Yes	In Process	No
<b>4. Preschool and Kindergarten Education</b>			<b>X</b>
Expand opportunities for preschool education for children ages 4–5			X
Charter and inspect all preschool programs through the MOE and the Ministry of Health			X
Require all students to attend kindergarten beginning at ages 5–6			X
Establish standards, curriculum, and staffing for new kindergarten program			X
Conduct systematic evaluation and continuous improvement for kindergarten programs, once established			X
<b>5. Governance and Policy Setting for Education</b>			<b>X</b>
Strengthen the role of the Board of Education			X
Expand the Board from five to seven members, and establish the Minister of Education as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board			X
Change Board from appointive to elective			X
Ensure members of the Board are lay citizens, not employees in education			X
Establish procedures to secure professional staff input on policy decisions	X		
Establish policies to guide continuous educational improvement		X	
<b>6. Expand and Upgrade Facilities</b>		<b>X</b>	
Upgrade school buildings		X	
Consolidate school facilities once the road is built		X	
Seek resources to construct a new facility for administration	X		
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (36%)</b>	<b>6 (24%)</b>	<b>10 (40%)</b>

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