



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & YOUTHS
EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND CURRICULA**

**NATIONAL REPORT ON
THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION
IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
DURING THE PERIOD
1990/91 - 1999/2000**

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- Planning Development and Institutional Evaluation Office;
- Legal Affairs Dept.;
- Testing, Assessment and Educational Evaluation Center;
- Curricula and Educational Material Development Center,
- K G Department;
- Technical Education Dept.;
- Adult Education Dept.;
- Private Education Dept.;

Translated by : Dr. Ibrahem Mostafa

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Introduction

Fully aware that the real wealth a nation possesses is its own human resources and its capability to monitor and invest their riches, and to explore further resources for the future;

Aware of the significance of providing equal educational opportunities, and confronting the development challenges imposed by the knowledge upsurge manifested in the information revolution which depends mainly on advanced knowledge and the optimum utilization of information;

The Government of the UAE allocated considerable funds for developing education at all levels and sectors, and for restructuring education according to the requirements of development and in the light of future aspirations.

Highly keen on establishing an educational system that combines the genuineness of values and principles with the political, economic and cultural challenge of the present, and capable of preparing individuals to cope with rapid developments in the world, the Ministry of Education developed a significant strategic document stating its vision for education throughout the period for 2000 to 2020. The vision reflects the prospective status of education and its outcome for the UAE.

This report highlights the major educational reforms and innovations that took place during the last ten years with special emphasis on the last biennium achievements.

The report follows the theoretic framework set by the I.B.E.. The information included is characterized by novelty and transparency to secure true picture for education development in the UAE during the last decade.

1.1 MAJOR REFORMS AND INNOVATIONS INTRODUCED IN EDUCATION SYSTEM DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS:

a) The legal framework of education

i) The Constitution

The constitution of the State is the major source of laws and legislation governing the political, economic and social affairs of the State. As regards education, the Constitution includes provisions providing considerable directives. In article (7), the Constitution stipulates that Islam is the official religion of the State. Article (17) states that *"education is one of the major factors for achieving the society's progress. Education is compulsory in the primary stage and free in all its stages. The law shall develop the plans necessary for spreading and universalizing education at all levels and eradicating illiteracy"* thus contributing to deep-rooting national unity. To achieve this end, article 120 stipulates that the Federal Government is responsible for legislation and execution in the area of education. Article 12 also stipulates that *"individuals and organizations are allowed to establish private schools according to the provisions of the law provided that they shall be supervised by the competent public authorities"*.

ii) Compulsory education law No. 11 for 1972:

This law has been issued in July, 1972 to deal with compulsory and free education for the UAE citizens (males and females) starting from the age of six. The law stipulates that the State shall be committed to provide all facilities.

iii) Private Schools Law No. 9 for 1972 was issued to face the phenomenon of the increasing expatriates.

iv) **Federal law No. 1 for 1972** identifies the Ministry's mandate and competence as stated in article 58 of the Constitution: *"to undertake education affairs, through developing, disseminating and providing it for all citizens, rendering it compulsory in the primary stage, and laying down the educational plans, curricula, exams, literacy courses in addition to establishing private schools"*.

v) **Educational Policy:**

In its Session on 25th June, 1992, the Cabinet assigned the Ministerial Commission on Education by preparing a report on educational policy. The Commission then entrusted the Ministry of Education to form a committee to do the task in the light of the principles adopted by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien / Thailand, March, 1990) emphasizing the quality of education. In April 1995, the Cabinet adopted the Educational Policy document proposed by the Ministry. The document stressed upon the democracy of education which entails its dissemination in all remote areas and villages. The document also stressed upon quality through sound educational planning within the framework of overall socio-economic development planning. The document suggested – in this respect – that higher and competent councils for education should be established, educational zones should be promoted, and curricula should be reviewed, modernized and localized. This, as well, applies to other areas such as evaluation methods, exams, technical and scientific skills, audio-visual aids, school buildings, teacher preparation and training. Decentralization, in addition to developing functional relations between the educational institutions and the local environment are also emphasized by the document..

vi) The Ministry's organizational structure:

In fulfillment of the requirements of educational development and to achieve a higher quality for the educational content, the Ministry's organization has had to be restructured to help promote development plans. In this respect, a new organizational structure has been adopted by the Cabinet's Decree No. 19 for 1999. The new structure deals with a number of organizational aspects regarding the competencies of the Minister, the Under-secretary and his assistants, the various departments, committees and units.

vii) Other Legislation:

◆ **Cabinet's Decrees dealing with:**

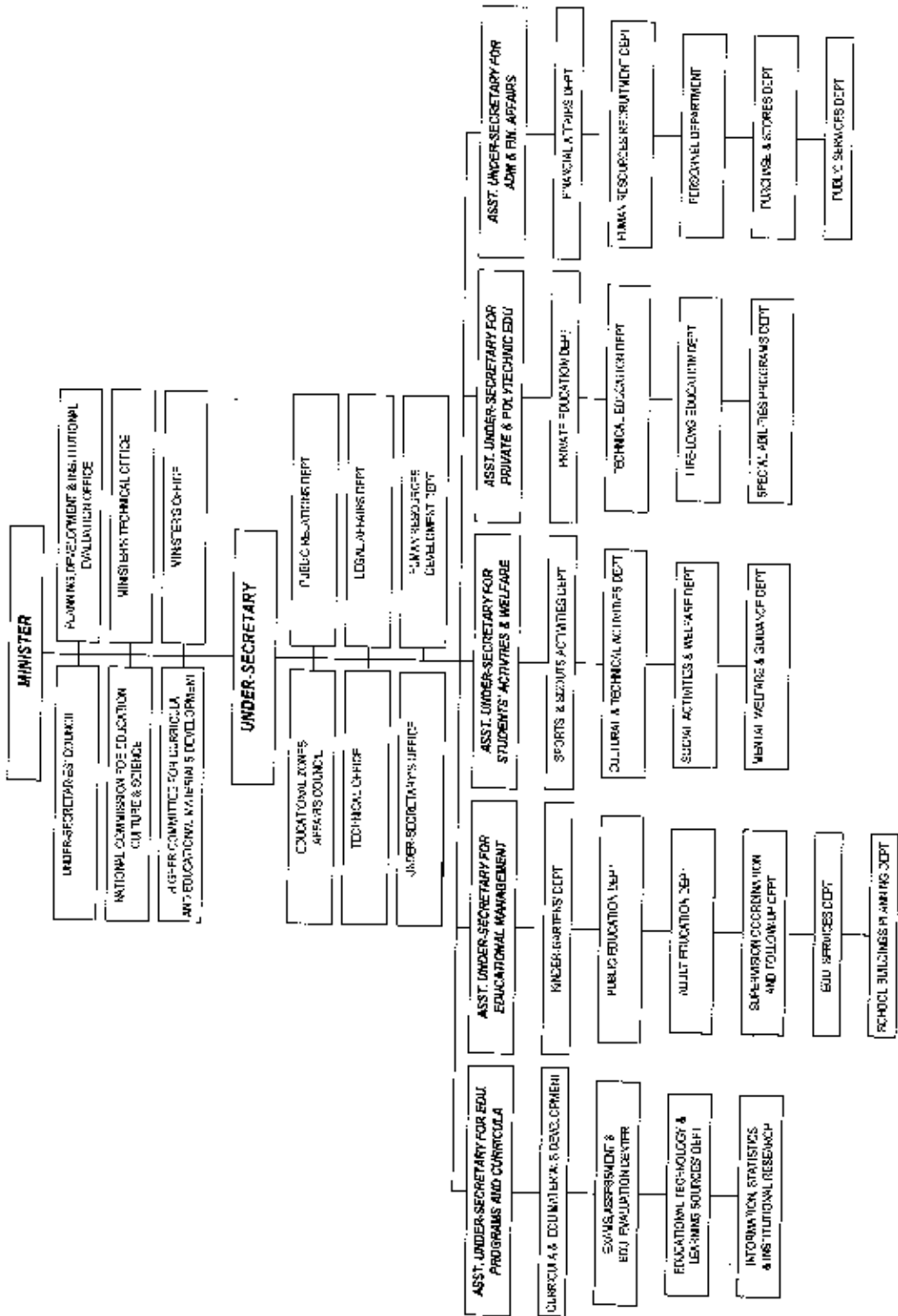
The Ministry's organizational structure, the Ministerial Commission on Education, educational leaves and training courses for the Federal Government personnel, technical education development plan and membership of the technical schools of the Ministry in the International Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training.

◆ **Ministerial Decisions dealing with** the various councils of the Undersecretaries, the educational zones, school directors, school activity, parents and teachers, students, in addition to other statutes dealing with students' behavior, students' councils, educational supervision, senior teachers, school plans, and special education.

B. Educational System: Organization, Structure and management :

Education in the UAE follows the educational cycles' system: K.G., basic education (1st and 2nd cycles), and then secondary, in addition to private education (national and foreign schools) that operate under the supervision of the Ministry. Educational ladder begins with the basic education through (5-4-3) years.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & YOUTH - UAE**



Within its comprehensive integrated program for education development, the Ministry gives special concern to the development of basic education (1 - 9) being the corner-stone of the educational structure. The major aspects of development are:

- adopting modern educational concepts such as: self learning and Life-long-learning and knowledge integration;
- switching from knowledge storing concept to competency building and life skills acquiring;
- accomplishing education for all through universalizing and developing basic education and raising its internal and external efficiency to block up sources of illiteracy;
- providing free standard compulsory basic education in two integrated cycles, and linking education with productive work;
- Emaratizing (localizing) the teaching staff up to the end of the first cycle of basic education through confining teaching to the female teachers and through the optimum utilization of the female staff;
- adopting the "area teacher system" up to the end of grade 5 primary for teaching the basic subjects; and linking between all branches of knowledge;
- turning focus of the educational process from teacher-centered to student-centred education, and from teaching to learning, in addition to using professional teaching methods and evaluating learning outcome;
- caring for talented students, promoting creative aptitudes and giving the opportunity to the distinctive students to complete the basic education stage in eight years instead of nine.

The Ministry believes that reorganizing the primary education ladder in five school years could help achieve the aforementioned educational development principles. It would also help improve learning quality in the primary stage through improving inputs such as curricula, teaching methods, (teacher competencies) and evaluation, and through decreasing the class density in the primary stage. Less populous classrooms in this stage allow more care and concern to students and more consideration to the individual differences.

All these trends have rendered the alternative educational ladder more responsive to development requirements and more consistent with the needs of society and the students' growth characteristics. Besides, it represents a better means for utilizing the structure and human resources available.

The educational reasons behind the adoption of the new structure of the educational ladder (5-4-3) can be summed up in the following lines:-

- It helps proceeding towards Emaratizing the teaching staff in the primary stage and having schools encompassing homogenous students;
- It allows students from grades 1-5 to be in the same school thus facilitating the process of recruiting the necessary number of "area teachers";
- The stages of the new ladder take into consideration the physical growth of the child. Children move from a stage to another in equilibrium with their age, and mental growth. They gradually go through standards that conform to their development and performance levels which constitute the actual criterion for cognitive and knowledge growth that decide the stages of educational development.

- The new system allows the distinctive students to overstep one of their basic schooling years, thus they can complete the whole stage in eleven years;
- Reorganizing primary education in five years instead of six would result in less populous classes which in turn would allow certain improvements in quality, and more consideration for individual differences;
- The new system helps improving teaching and evaluating methods through the utilization of "area teachers" and observation cards, which monitor students' progress and growth. It also diminishes dependence upon the experimental tests in the first three grades. No doubt that meeting more than one teacher a day would help form sound objective assessment for the student performance. School management would thus be able to develop complete data basis on students' progress so as to help them achieve their teaching goals;
- Emaratization of the teaching staff of boys' schools up to grade five requires the annexation of grade 6 to the higher stage of basic education. This attitude has provided an ample opportunity for promoting performance in primary schools;
- Encompassing the students from grade 1 to grade 5 in one school should yield an overall development for the teaching process. It will also save money and efforts due to non-over-lapping. Students will be under the control of one teaching mechanism, either that of the area teacher (Arabic, Islamic education, science, mathematics and social studies) or the major teacher. Assessment shall be standardized in accordance with clear-cut competencies supposed to be mastered by the end of grade 5. Besides, homogeneity in age is another privilege, as age will range between six and ten. Under this system, failure at this stage is improbable as teaching and assessment methods depend

mainly on competency acquisition. Teachers do their utmost to help their students master these competencies rather than pass exams. The concept of certificate acquisition shall be replaced by the concept of competency acquisition. Assessment tests shall be designed to make sure that students have mastered skills and competencies at a specific age.

New educational Ladder Scale

Stages		Stage by age	Educational level	Other types of education
Secondary		12	5 th	- Technical - Commercial - Religious
		11		
		10		
Basic stage	Second Cycle	9	4 th	
		8		
		7	3 rd	
		6		
	First Cycle	5	2 nd	
		4		
		3	1 st	
		2		
1				
Kinder-garten	This stage covers two-years from 4 th to 6 th : - KG1 : 4-5 years - KG2 : 5-6 years			

The following lines give a brief description of the various educational stages in the UAE according to old educational scale which is to be changed by the end of the school year 2000/2001:

1.1 Pre-basic education, namely the 2 years' kindergarten stage (KG1 and KG2) for children ranging between 4 and 5 years. At this stage, children receive some sort of social and emotional education, which nurtures their aptitudes and qualifies them for the primary education.

1. 2. Basic education (1-9):

This stage is considered the basis of education. Duration of study at this stage is nine years, and children enrolled range from 6-14. Education at this stage is compulsory. Basic education aims at developing students' abilities and aptitudes. It satisfies their inclinations and provides them with the necessary dose of Islamic values that render them committed to Islam and its principles. In the meantime, it provides them with knowledge and scientific skills.

1.3. Secondary education:

This is the pre-university stage that covers a three years of study and embraces an age category ranging between 15-20. This stage aims at preparing students for life and university. It also contributes in deep-rooting religious, behavioral and national values, and promotes students' affiliation to their Arab nation. Besides, it develops their intellectual skills of reasoning, analysis and criticism, and provides them with useful scientific and technological knowledge.

1. 4. Religious education:

Students are free to choose this type of education at the beginning of the preparatory stage. It aims at providing religious guidance and qualifies students to join higher Islamic studies.

1. 5. Technical education:

Students are free to choose this type of education at the beginning of the secondary stage. However, this type is divided into three sections: commercial, agricultural and industrial. It aims at providing students with suitable technological knowledge to enable them to absorb the basic methods and types of technology, industry, agriculture and commerce.

1. 6 Special education: The Ministry gives due concern to the students of special needs through:

1.6.1. Special classes for special education students whose level of acquisition is lower than their fellow mates.

1.6.2. Establishing scientific clubs to assist the educational process and create incentives for creativity for the talented learners.

C. Evaluation policies, methods and instruments:

1. Educational evaluation status:

1.1. Educational evaluation is one of the major components of the educational system. Through evaluation, teachers collect data and evidence that could help them decide about students' promotion and assist in conducting diagnosis and treatment. Evaluation also helps teachers to get feedback not only as regards acquisition but also as regards the other components of the educational process.

1.2. Students' evaluation in the UAE is conducted on the basis of two regulatory statutes one for the primary stage and the other for the preparatory and secondary stages. The two statutes, which are in effect since 1996/97, identify the disciplinary and administrative aspects of examinations.

1.3. The two statutes emphasize the necessity to raise the level of school tests and determine a set of qualities and functions for evaluations, namely, comprehensiveness, diversity and continuity. They also indicate the different types of evaluation: preliminary, diagnostic, formative and summative. They as well determine the system of evaluations, prerequisites of exams, formation of committees, and exam procedures.

1.4. Students' evaluation in all stages depends upon a two-semester system. Each semester is treated independently and separately. Yet, the final mark is decided by adding up the two semesters' marks. Students' promotion to upper grades is determined accordingly. This helps student focus his/her attention on the subject of study in each semester separately.

1.5. Continuing evaluation is conducted through the daily class work either verbal, written or practical in addition to student activity inside and outside class. 50% of the mark is devoted to such activity. The other 50% are devoted to the final exam's mark.

Students of the first three primary grades are promoted if they obtain at least the minimum mark, or if they pass in all subjects that have minimum marks. In the other grades of this stage, student is promoted if he/she obtains the minimum marks in all subjects. However, promotion to higher grades is permissible in this stage under certain conditions.

1.6. Evaluation at the third grade secondary is applied throughout the two semesters and through the final exam of the first semester as it is the case in the promotion grades. However, students sit for a general exam at the end of the school year covering all subjects studied in both semesters. Students who pass such exam obtain general secondary school certificates, or diploma of the secondary technical, commercial or agricultural education.

Students who fail in these subjects at most have the right to sit for a second session exam.

1.7. According to the regulations stipulated in these two statutes, maximum and minimum grades are the criteria behind interpreting the student's marks and the basis for taking an educational action. However, this method is being criticized for a number of defects but the Ministry of Education is trying its best to improve the situation through its development plans. Decisions adopted are also affected by the minimum and maximum grades, in addition to the span of time devoted for answers throughout the two semesters' exams, the first and second sessions of the 3rd grade secondary. This is also applied on the extern students who sit for exams without being registered as regular students.

1.8. The two statutes pay due concern to punctuality and sound educational behavior at school and consider them as basic pre-requisites for sitting for

final exams. They also emphasize acquainting parents regularly with their children's assessment to help them contribute in the efforts exerted to improve their children's standard.

1.9. A survey conducted in 1997/98 by the Ministry on the effectiveness of assessment and evaluation methods proved that the present exams focus on the least levels of the cognitive aspect. They focus on memorizing the information given at class, and do not give due concern to assessing the intellectual skills of thinking, creativity, and problem solving. They as well, do not evaluate the skills and emotional aspects. The survey also stated that the written forms are the commonest testing methods especially the essay questions and few multiple-choice items. Besides, schools adopt the unified testing method, which depends on model answers quoted from the textbook.

As for class and final test, teachers depend on a set of specifications for the examination paper stipulated by the two statutes as criteria for testing.

2. CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING REFORMS IN EVALUATION POLICIES AND METHODS.

2.1. Considering that evaluation plays a vital role in educational development and reform, "Education Vision 2020" lays much stress on improving its policies and methods. In addition to developing the methods and tools of students' evaluation, it has given much concern to developing the methods of evaluating teachers' performance to raise their efficiency and achieve better quality for the educational system. It has also emphasized the development of curricula, educational programs and institutional evaluation in general so as to be based upon performance, responsibility and accountability.

2.2. To start with such development, a specialized mechanism affiliated directly to the Minister has been established under the name of: Planning,

Development and Institutional Evaluation Office, in addition to a center for Exams Development and Educational Assessment and Evaluation.

2.3. The task of the center is to lay down the criteria for assessment and evaluation in the light of the latest developments at the international level. Besides, it has to utilize the modern techniques of assessment and educational evaluation, and to develop consistency between the competencies decided by the curricula Center and the assessment methods proposed by the Evaluation Center. The Center also exerts considerable efforts to conform the national education system to the world contests such as the math's and science Olympics. It adopts a policy that seeks higher acquisition rates, and effective participation in the international evaluation surveys. In this way, it promotes one of the pillars of education, namely: learning for constructive interaction and for living together.

2.4. Since its establishment, the Center has been cooperating with the Office of Planning, Development and Institutional Evaluation in reviewing and modernizing the present system of evaluation and assessment to render it capable of meeting the requirements of the Education Vision. It also seeks to make educational evaluation a means for improving the standard of teaching through a number of specific values, criteria and standards. The Center also endeavors to change the existing static system of evaluation which is mainly concerned with assessing the students memorization levels. It seeks to turn it into a dynamic interactive system based on assessing the functional competencies of scientific research skills, critic thinking, problem solving and strengthening relations among individuals and groups in the school environment. This should create a new type of teaching and learning based on constructive dialogue and not on copying and submission; teaching which turns from rote learning to exploring, from repetition to creativity, from dependence to sharing. Thus teaching is changed into learning, and in turn, the textbook, curriculum, activities, teacher-student relations are affected,

and the desired quality is achieved. Among the projects adopted by the Center is the establishment of an electronic item bank for the major subjects of the secondary stage, namely: Arabic, English, maths and science.

2.5. Assessment in the primary stage has received due attention. The Ministry started two projects: the first for building a set of criterion reference diagnostic tests in the basic study subject of the basic primary stage in order to identify students' weaknesses and strengthens. The second project is for assessing the basic skills of students at this stage.

2.6. The Ministry has adopted management by performance to improve performance in all organs of the system and to adopt an institutional culture capable of achieving higher levels and true achievement. It has been a necessity to conduct a qualitative development in the administrative and organizational evaluation system for all levels of personnel at the Ministry's headquarters and educational zones. Such development is based upon an integrated set of performance indicators related to the nature of tasks and roles assigned to all these levels and units in order to achieve the stated goals of the organization. These indicators serve as referential framework for each level of performance, and help to maintain the highest administrative and organizational efficiency. They can also identify the areas of strength and distinction, and the areas of weakness. Thus, it can take the necessary action that would help raise performance level, efficiency, effectiveness, quality and productivity through a special mechanism responsible for improving and developing performance in all the sectors of the Ministry.

D. PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF THE CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING REFORMS:

The UAE leadership believes fully in the significant and vital role of education in national and human development. It is fully aware of the inevitability of establishing an educational system that combines originality

with modernity. That is to say, a system which combines the genuineness of Arab Islamic heritage, and the modernity of the age. Such age whose science and technology pose political, economic and cultural challenges which cannot be encountered without an effective educational system based on strategic objectives, new scientific content, modern teaching methods and skillful and efficient human resources .

Development Requirements:

To start educational reform and improve its quality, a development project has been laid down with the aim of improving the education system in the coming twenty years so as to secure better education for bigger number and at a lower cost. It also calls upon mobilizing effort and resources and training all competence to absorb and use technology, and to provide and utilize information.

Development also necessitates the contribution of all categories of the society and all those engaged with educational institutions. Education reform is a societal concern. The development program has necessitated the following procedures:

- a) Diagnosing, analyzing and evaluating the existing situation's problems and achievements in order to identify the urgent issues and the critical problems which hinder the system's process and cripple its action.
- b) Developing long-term goals reflecting rationalism and strategic directives. The year 2020 has been chosen as a target year.
- c) Developing strategies which form the general plans for dealing with problems; methods of analysis and alternatives have been used so as to select the most effective and realistic, and the most appropriate from the financial point of view.
- d) Developing long and medium term operating plans and linking them with the State's overall development plans, as education reform should be developmental in all its goals, contents and directives.

e) Building formative and summative evaluation systems to get the development process on the right track and to judge its accomplishments.

f) Giving due concern to the elements of quality which reflect the very goals, methods and contents of education and various study subjects provided to learners in addition to their teachers' technical competencies and teaching capacities, and the various evaluation methods. Vision 2020 adopts seven strategic themes, which serve as basis for all general policies operating plans, executive programs and projects pertaining to educational development in the UAE. They are as follows:

1. Education as a motive to national developments.
2. Intensifying the system's productivity and its cost effectiveness.
3. Quality and constant development.
4. Education as an incentive to culture and knowledge.
5. Flexible and appropriate infrastructure.
6. Societal partnership, contribution and support.
7. Restructuring and integrating educational stages.

Major reforms and their characteristics:

To achieve the aforementioned, the Ministry considered all means for releasing the creative energies to proceed smoothly towards a better future, fulfilling its requirements and adopting scientific methods for educational renovation supported by all the organizations of the society on the assumption that education is the responsibility of all the society. The process covers the following:-

- Restructuring the Ministry to allow greater support to educational development programs.
- Developing kindergarten's stage.
- Organizing and developing private education.
- Strengthening primary education .

- Evaluating the national plan for literacy.
- Preparing programs for students of special needs.
- Modernizing literacy and life-long education; and
- Developing school management.

All views agree on the fact that the major principles for current and forthcoming reforms are:

1. Giving due appreciation to the role of teachers and promoting the basic courses for their scientific and professional development.
2. Developing common dialogue to reach a decision that conforms to the real facilities of the society organizations. In this connection, a plan has been initiated in cooperation with the UAE University and other organizations for developing man-power and planning education. The goal of the project is to develop citizens' abilities and skills, and to intensify their contribution. Besides, there is a project for issuing teaching license to qualify the graduates of the non-pedagogical majors for teaching posts in the Ministry's schools by adding one supplementary academic year for this purpose.
3. Developing a document for educational policy to cope with the national, regional and international variables, and adopt policy, strategies, curricula and programs that respond to present and future goals, and reflect the real situation and ambitions through a societal partnership.
4. The educational policy document identifies specifically the following goals and characteristics.
 - Stressing five major criteria, namely: quality, distinction, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Stressing upon the concept of school future functions and its societal dimensions.

- Regarding education as a major and vital component for all development plans.
- Providing the necessary resources for education development and its Quantitative and qualitative aspects.
- Giving greater concern to scientific research and to the significance of knowledge and experience.
- Upgrading the educational content .
- Rehabilitating and training all who are engaged with education and

MAJOR QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST DECADE:

Educational system in the UAE started in the 20th century seventies with the establishment of the Federal State of the UAE. . An expansion process took place, as education was a top priority, thus considerable achievements were accomplished compared to the short span of time given. Such achievements have been the outcome of a vision developed on the assumption that if the true wealth of any society lies in its human resources abilities and knowledge, built up by education, a number of experiences should be integrated within the educational programs to help students' growth.

QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT:

The following tables show the various educational achievements throughout the decade (1990/91 – 1999/2000):

Table 1: Total Govt. education and growth rate (90/91 – 99/2000).

Item School year	School	Classes	Students	Adm., Tech., and Hdu. staff
1990/91	499	9441	257773	20074
1999/2000	710	12540	314275	27493
Growth rate	42%	33%	22%	37%

The above table shows that the number of schools in 1990/91 was 499. In 1999/2000 it increased to 710, at a rate of 42%. In 1990/91 the number of classes was 9441, raised to 12540 in 1999/2000 at a rate of 33%.

The number of students in 1990/91 was 257,773 boys and girls. The number increased to 314,275 in 1999/2000 at a growth rate of 22%. As for the administrative, technical and teaching staff, the number in 1990/91 was 20074, but in 1999/2000, it reached 27493 at a growth rate of 37%.

Following are statistical tables on general education and growth rate throughout the last decade 1990/91 – 1999-2000:-

Tables: Schools by stages

Stage/ year	kg	primary	Prep	Second	Relig.	Tech.	total
1990/91	17023	154548	53030	30689	1717	766	257773
1999/2000	20942	149865	79028	61136	1591	1713	314275
1999/2000	23%	-3%	49%	99%	-7%	124%	22%

**Table 3: Enrolment in public schools
by stages (1990/91 – 1999/2000)**

Stage/ year	Kg	Primary	Prep.	Sec.	Relig.	Tech.	total
1990/91	646	5619	1830	1244	67	35	9441
1999/2000	964	6165	2811	2439	64	97	12540
1999/2000	49%	10%	54%	96%	-4%	177%	33%

**Table 5
Total Private education (1990/91 – 1999/2000)**

Item Year	School	Class	Student	staff
1990/91	270	5354	126137	8076
1999/2000	427	11050	234541	16734
1999/2000	58%	106%	86%	107%

The above table shows the figures of private education in 1990/91 and 1999/2000. The number of schools in 1990/91 was 270 increased to 427 in 1999/2000 at a growth rate of 58 %. Classes grew from 5354 in 1990/91 to 11050 in 1999/2000 at a growth rate of 100%. Students increased from 126,137 (boys and girls) to 234,541 at a growth rate of 86%. The number of staff grew from 8076 in 1999/91 to 16734 in 1999/2000 at a growth rate of 107%.

Table 3. Total literacy and adult education centers throughout 1990/91 - 1999/2000.

Item	Schools	Classes	Students	Staff
Year				
1990/91	135	997	19209	2657
1999/2000	108	940	16553	2541
Growth rate	-20%	-6%	-14%	-4%

The above table shows the total figures regarding literacy and adult education centers throughout the period 1990/91 – 1999/2000. In 1990/91 the number of the centers amounted to 135, yet the figure decreased to 108 in 1999/2000 (- 20%). Classes were 997 in 1990/91 and decreased to 940 in 1999/2000 (- 6%). The number of students reached (19209 in 1990/91 but dropped to 16553 in 1999/2000 (- 14%). Staff as well dropped from 2657 in 1990/91 to 2541 in 1999/2000 (-4%).

Reading through the figures, one can conclude that illiteracy in the UAE is declining after launching the overall literacy campaign, and adopting the recommendations adopted of the World Conference on Education for All (Jorntien/Thailand), March, 1990. The Conference called upon all countries to work hard for eradicating illiteracy by the end of the 20th century. Therefore, a national plan was adopted to emancipate citizens from alphabetical and numerical illiteracy.

a) ACCESS TO EDUCATION:

The Constitution of the UAE stipulates in its article No. 17 (Section 2) that *“Education is one of the major factors of progress. It shall be compulsory in its primary stage and free in all other stages. The law shall lay down the plans necessary for spreading and universalizing education at all its levels, and for eradicating illiteracy”*.

Pursuant to the Constitution, the State - through the Ministry of Education - provides access to all children. Accordingly, the first statute governing enrolment and admission to the public general and technical education schools and to literacy centers, has been issued in 1989.

Adult Education.

Ministerial Decision No. 2843/2 for 1996 was issued with regard to enrolment and admission to literacy and adult education centers. The decision's eight sections articulated all issues regarding registration; namely: the eligible categories, registration dates, location, documents, transference among centers, changing from evening classes to morning classes, private schools students admission, absence, dismissal and other general provisions.

Table 7: New enrolments in 1990/91 - 1999/2000.

	Item year	Public Education	Private Education	Total
1990/91	Total	24320	17437	41757
	Males	12162	9570	21732
	Females	12158	78867	20025
1999/2000	Total	22614	25746	48360
	Males	11177	13893	25070
	Females	11437	11853	23290

New enrolments:

The IBE defined the new enrolments as those who are being registered for the first time in the first primary grade and range between five and six years. On the basis of this definition, table 7 has shows the numbers of new enrolments in the public and private education throughout the years 1990:91

and 1999/2000. Gross enrolments in the public schools (general, religious & technical) reached 41757 in 1990/91 – 21732 males and 20025 females. As for private education, new enrolments in 1990/91 amounted to 17437 (9570 males and 7867 females), while in 1999/2000 they reached 48360 (25070 males and 23290 females). Enrolments in public schools in 1999/2000 reached 22614 (11177 males and 11437 females). In private schools, enrolments amounted to 25746 (13893 males and 11853 females).

However, previous figures show that the gross enrolment rate range between 103.5% and 104.9% in 1989/90 and 1998/99. Net enrolment rate amounted to 98.3% and 97% for the same period.

Table 8
Gross apparent and net intake rates for 1st grade primary 1990/91

Sex	New entrants of all ages			New entrants of schooling age			Population of schooling age	Gross apparent ratio	Net ratio	Gender parity index
	Total		Private	Total		Private				
	Public	Private		Public	Private					
Male	43259	26906	16353	40531	24507	16024	41225	104.9	98.3	1.01
Female	22355	13594	8761	21388	12804	8584	21455	104.2	99.7	
Gross total	20904	13312	7592	19143	11703	7440	19770	105.7	96.8	

Note: Number of school entrance age population (6 years) has been added to the ratio of children of 5 years of age as both categories represent the total number of children who can have access to 1st grade primary.

Table 9
Gross apparent and net intake rates for 1st grade primary 1999/2000

Sex	New entrants of all ages			New entrants of schooling age		Population of schooling age	Gross apparent ratio	Net ratio	Gender parity index
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public				
Male	49274	23747	25527	46172	22708	23464	103.5	97.0	0.99
Female	25459	11938	13521	23548	11390	12158	104.2	96.4	
Gross total	23815	11809	12006	22624	11318	11306	102.7	97.6	

Note: Number of school entrance age population (6 years) has been added to the ration of children of 5 years of age as both categories represent the total number of children who can have access to 1st grade primary.

According to tables 9 and 10, the gross enrolments ratio in grade 1 primary in 1990/91 was 104.9% while in 1999/2000 it was 103.5%. This indicates that access to education is provided to all children of schooling age. Comparing between the two years figures, it appears that the apparent ratio has been reduced from 104.9% in 1990/91 to 103.5% in 1999/2000, thus proving that all children of schooling age have equal opportunities.

Net intake ratio in 1990/91 was 98.3% while it was reduced to 97% in 1999/2000. This means that all children of primary school age are enrolled categories in the UAE.

B) EQUITY IN EDUCATION:

Since the rise of the UAE on December, 2nd 1971, education been regarded as a productive investment of the individuals and society and a fulfillment of the State's needs of development rather than a public service. Therefore, the State has been keen on supporting education. Article 17 of the Provisional Constitution stipulated that *"education is a basic pillar for the society's progress. It shall be compulsory in its primary stage and free in all stages. The law shall lay down the necessary plans for disseminating and universalizing education and for eradicating illiteracy"*.

In July 1972, the Federal Law No. 11 of 1972 on compulsory education was issued. Accordingly, compulsory primary education for boys and girls of six years of age was put into effect. The Ministry then undertook the responsibility of universalizing education throughout the Emirates on the basis that it is one of the basic rights of citizens, males and females, young and old. Due to the big number of non-nationals living in the country, private education was given due concern. Article 18 of the Provisional Constitution stipulated that *"individuals and organizations may establish private schools*

in accordance with the law provided that they should be observed by the competent public authorities”.

All political, strategic and educational planning documents adopted by the State in the field of education have reflected sincere efforts for achieving a qualitative move that secures a lively interaction with beliefs, values and legacy. They also express open-mindedness on tomorrow’s world with all its challenges, developments and innovations.

Under this sincere patronage, education has witnessed a quantitative and qualitative leap forward that can be reflected in the following statistics.

EQUITY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION:

**Table 10: Development of Public and Private Education by students
(1990/91 - 1999/2000)**

Gender		Public Edu.	Private Edu.	Total	%	Equity index
year						
1990/91	Males	128303	68538	196841	51.3	0.95
	Females	129470	57599	187069	48.7	
	Total	257773	126137	383910	100	
99/2000	Males	156512	125961	382473	51.3	0.95
	Females	159679	108580	268259	48.7	
	Total	316191	234541	550732	100	

The above table confirms equity in both public and private education at all stages in the years 90/91 and 99/2000. Equity index amounted to 0.95%. Males reached 51.3% and females 48.7%. This means that growth ratio for all stages in 10 years have reached 100% thus reflecting the State's great concern over non-distinction between males and females. This emanates from the fact the UAE is an Islamic community that believes in equity and does not distinguish between males and females. The ratio also reflects the significance of the role assigned to both categories in the field of reconstruction, and the attitude of the families in the UAE that intensifies the role of education regardless of gender. This, in turn, reveals the culturally civilized community of the UAE.

As a branch of general education in the State, religious education starts by the secondary stage; three religious institutes for males only are operating

Besides, there is technical education for boys only with three majors: industrial, commercial, and agricultural. Growth ratio in this type has developed throughout the last decade to reach a percentage of 123.6%.

The above line shows the attention given by the UAE to girls' education without any distinction whatsoever. Equal educational opportunities are provided to both. Though the 1995 census shows a higher ratio for males compared to females, yet all indicators state that both ratios are almost equal.

EQUITY IN PRIVATE EDUCATION:

Observers of private education development in the UAE may notice that citizen, Arabs and non-Arabs have shown a great demand. Growth ratio of KG amounted to 49% with 51.7% for females and 47.6% for males. Such enormous growth in the number of entrants of both public and private education could be referred to two factors:

1. The social demand on education for being the major promoter to higher social status;
2. The material and spiritual encouragement and motivation provided by the State to the learners at all levels of education.

EQUITY IN ADULT EDUCATION:

A great development in the field of adult education has been achieved specially in the diversity of activities and institutions, and the quantitative and qualitative increase in the number of classes, learners and staff.

Table 11

Literacy and Adult Education Centers Learners **(1990/91 -1999/2000)**

Gender Year	Males	Females	Total
1990/91	8545	10664	19209
1999/2000	7005	9548	16553
Growth ratio	-(18 %)	-(10.5 %)	-(13.8 %)

According to the above table, the number of literacy and adult education centers is decreasing, thus indicating the success of the overall literacy campaign launched by the State to eradicate illiteracy and diminish disparity between males and females as regards illiteracy.

The table also shows that the number of females is higher than that of males. This proves that the State is keen on providing equal opportunities to both sexes. The number of males in 1990/91 was 8545 and females were 10664, while in 1999/2000, males were 7005 against 9548 females.

C) QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION:

The educational process has been monitored towards a specific goal, namely the positive and accurate equilibrium between the inputs and outputs of education, quantitatively and qualitatively, on one hand and the curricula and courses on the other. Being the organization concerned with education, the Ministry has been committed to satisfying the individual and societal needs in the light of their interests and requirements. The achievements and the statistical figures proving them show conformity between these achievements and the vision planning in a way void of any laziness. Thus, major qualitative achievements have been accomplished by the Ministry in the fields of public, private and adult education throughout the period 1990/91 – 1999/2000. The following lines show the most significant achievements.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF THE UAE:

In April 1995, the Cabinet approved the Educational Policy Document developed by the Ministry in cooperation with representatives of all society categories and thinkers. The document, which derives its major resources from the basic essentials of educational endeavor in the UAE, has been based upon the directives laid down in the following sources:

1. Islam, being the State's religion;
2. The Constitution, being the source of all laws and legislation governing the various political, social and economic affairs;
3. The national heritage and history, being a part of the Arab Islamic heritage with specific national environmental traits;
4. The social and demographic status which indicates a constant increase in the number of the indigenous people – under 15 years of age – who are supposed to accede to education and receive full support which entails more expenses for educational and health services;
5. The economic status and the high rates of growth entailing higher gross national product, and contribution on the part of the non-oil sectors in the local product;
6. The State's policy at the national, sub-regional, regional, Islamic and international levels, and its relation to curricula development;
7. The educational system status and its achievements in the late decades quantitatively and qualitatively which indicate an expansion in all stages, types and curricula;
8. Future challenges and prospects, as education's typical mission is to prepare for future. The more educational authorities are aware of future expectations, the more capable they can be in preparing generations with effective and positive interaction with their future.

Educational policy has identified six basic principles emanating from the State's leadership attitudes, and reflecting the real status of the society and its future ambitions. The following six principles have been identified as directing principles for the educational process:-

1. **CITIZENS AND SOUND ISLAMIC EDUCATION:**

To bring up the UAE citizen on the basis of the sublime Islamic religion, and to develop an education committed to its teachings in all matters relating to worship and behavior.