



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION NEW SOUTH WALES

ABN 33 266 477 369

PO Box A169, Sydney South NSW 1235

Level 9, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Telephone: (02) 9287 1555 Fax: (02) 9264 6308

Email: commission@cecsw.catholic.edu.au Website: <http://www.cecsw.catholic.edu.au>

8th April 2010

Inquiry into the provision of education to students with a disability or special needs

Mr Ian Baker, Ms Geraldine Gray, Mr Danny Rankin and Mr Anthony Weir appeared before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 on 22nd March 2010 on behalf of the Catholic Education Commission, NSW.

The CEC officers undertook to provide further information related to school counsellors and autism satellite classes.

A. Provision of counselling services in NSW Catholic system schools

1. The delivery of counselling services varies across New South Wales Catholic diocesan education systems.
2. The delivery of particular services to primary, secondary and central (K-10) schools also varies across diocesan systems.
3. The role of counsellor is primarily to support students. Counsellors also provide emotional and social support and links to the families of students in Catholic schools. This may include case management, support for students through working with their family in some cases and family counselling.
4. Counsellors are involved in preventative programs such as positive parenting courses. Some counsellors have a professional background which may include employment in Department of Community Services programs, family therapy practice and counselling.
5. Counsellors work closely with special education advisors and teachers to assist in meeting the needs of students with disabilities and their families.
6. A number of dioceses have an agreement with CatholicCare/Centacare, the Church's social welfare agency, which provides school counsellors to both primary and secondary schools.
7. Some diocesan systems employ a small number of educational psychologists in a consultative role.
8. In three dioceses, the role of the psychologist is to provide a range of consultation, assessment (inclusive of cognitive assessments), intervention and counselling services.
9. Only four diocesan systems have psychologists who complete psychometric assessments.
10. Otherwise, psychometric assessments are completed by outside providers, which may be CatholicCare/Centacare, with often some financial support provided to parents by schools or diocesan offices.

B. Autism satellite classes attached to Catholic system schools and cost to system

1. Autism satellite classes operate in conjunction with Catholic host schools across the majority of the diocesan education systems, with two to four centres in most dioceses.
2. The satellite classes are under the auspices of the ASPECT School which is registered by the NSW Board of Studies. Although located on the Catholic school sites, utilising in most cases facilities provided by the host schools and sharing in the life of the host schools, the autism classes operate as independent school campuses under the ASPECT Registration. They are not campuses of the Catholic schools and do not contribute Commonwealth or State recurrent grant funding to the host schools. The host schools do not count the enrolments in the satellite classes in their enrolments and do not receive government recurrent grants for them.
3. The satellite classes operate with their host schools under MOUs signed between ASPECT and the respective diocesan education office.
4. The host schools support the operational costs of the autism satellite classes in a variety of ways, such as:
 - salaries for full-time Teacher Assistants
 - provision of classrooms
 - maintenance and cleaning
 - classroom and administrative resources
 - payment for utilities in full or part (ASPECT may pay a small donation to assist with costs)
 - IT infrastructure
 - access to host school staff facilities and resources
 - access of satellite class teachers to host school professional development.
5. Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office, for example, in 2009 contributed \$374,300 in salary contribution to satellite classes and a further \$70,000 in directly identifiable costs. There is also indirect assistance from professional development, access to school equipment, administration support, classroom transition arrangements.
6. The small rural Wagga Wagga diocesan education office contributed \$121,000 in salaries in 2009 and an additional \$100,000 in refurbishing rooms to a suitable standard for ASPECT use.
7. The Parramatta education office has estimated the current cost for a full-time teacher assistant and associated resources for each satellite class at \$140,800. The Diocese hosts ASPECT classes in three primary and two secondary schools.
8. The range and level of costs is replicated across the satellite classes in other areas.

For further information related to this evidence, please contact:

Rosalie Nott

Acting Director of Education Policy and Programs

rosalie.nott@cecnsw.catholic.edu.au or 9287 1560