



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 2

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2008-2009

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2

Education and Training

Wednesday 15 October 2008

Answers to be lodged by: Monday 10 November 2008

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Questions relating to the portfolio of Education and Training

15 OCTOBER 2008, 4.45 pm – 6.00 pm

Questions from Ms Cusack

1. Further to the Minister's announcement of \$31 million to be spent over the next 4 years on support for first year teachers please advise:
 - a. how much money was expended on mentoring in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 and how many teachers were actually mentored in each of those years?
 - b. advise the budget allocations; the number of schools and the number of teachers to be mentored for each of the four years of the programme?
 - c. what share of the funding is allocated to school budgets?
 - d. how many non-school based staff are working on the programme and what proportion of the funding is being expended on non-school based aspects of the programme?

Questions from Ms Parker

2. NAPLAN tests: what percentage of students recorded scores in the lowest two bands in every subject tested in Year 3, 5, 7 and 9?
3. How long after test results became available to the DET were families told about high lead levels in school water supply at Gresford Public School in the Hunter Valley and at other schools similarly affected?
 - a. Have any blood tests been carried out on students attending this school, or at any other school where tests results showed high levels of lead in the water?
 - b. If not, why not? What has been done to keep families informed of developments across the state on this health issue?
 - c. Has a lead poisoning symptoms guide been distributed as called for by worried parents so they can check whether children have suffered from contaminated school tank water?
4. Do you agree with the Federal Govt's view that underperforming schools should be closed or merged and underperforming teachers sacked?
5. What has been done and how much spent to resolve the appalling conditions at Airds High School where teachers have been forced to carry umbrellas and wade through ankle deep floodwaters to get to classes? What has been done to alleviate Third World conditions at Melville High School in Kempsey where severely disabled and wheelchair-bound students have been housed in two rundown and rusting demountables? What is the current backlog in school maintenance?
6. What has been done to relieve teacher shortages at schools such as Condobolin High where students have missed up to 400 lessons this year due to absences, forcing parents to protest in the streets? What new incentives have been offered to attract experienced teachers to Condobolin?

Inclusion statistics – children with disabilities

7. What measurement is undertaken to identify teaching strategies/tools/technology which produces the highest learning results in children with physical, intellectual or other disabilities in mainstream schools and classes (not segregated classes/schools)?
8. If measurement is undertaken, how are the results reported and are the results publicly available?
9. How do schools, Regions and the department identify technology/teaching strategies most appropriate to individual students with disabilities and what training is given to all teachers of those students to equip them with relevant training/tools?

Further questions on students with disabilities

10. How many students with disabilities are educated in NSW?
11. How many government special schools are there in NSW?
12. How many non-government special schools are there in NSW?
13. How many students with disability are educated in the government school system?
14. How many students with disability are educated in the non-government system?
15. 67% of students without disability are educated in the government sector and 33% of students without disability are educated in the non-government sector. However, with respect to students with disabilities the disparity between the sectors significant with 85% of all students with disabilities educated in the government sector and while only 15% of students with disabilities are educated in the non-government sector. Can the Minister explain why this disparity exists?
16. Can the Minister explain whether students with disability in the non-government sector are funded at a percentage of the cost of educating the AVERAGE student in a government school or whether students with disability are funded at a percentage of the cost of educating a child with a SIMILAR DISABILITY in a government school?
17. Of the students with disabilities educated in the government sector, how many have physical disabilities?
18. Of the students with physical disabilities how many have intellectual disabilities?
19. Of these students how many have intellectual disability diagnosed because they have had insufficient physical access to wheelchairs, physical aids and the like which prevented their access to physical learning which, as has been clinically proven, aids intellectual learning --- learning by doing?
20. In this respect will the Education Department pursue a whole-of-government approach to the education of students with disabilities in order to address this very real issue?
21. How many students in NSW have an intellectual disability only?

22. How many are in mainstream schools?
23. How many are in special classes in the mainstream setting?
24. How many students with physical disabilities are educated in the non-government sector?
25. How many of those students also have intellectual disability?
26. How many students with disabilities in the non-government sector have intellectual disability?
27. How many students with intellectual disability in the non-government sector have moderate/severe/profound intellectual disability?
28. How many students with intellectual disability in the non-government sector have moderate/severe/profound intellectual disability are in the mainstream setting?
29. How are the outcomes measured for students with disabilities educated in the non-government sector in terms of post school employment, if additional tertiary education is undertaken, vocational training, length of employment if employment is secured, whether employment is secured in open employment or supported employment in order to maintain an overview of what is or is not working in the education of students with disabilities?
30. Can the Minister advise what measurement is undertaken to identify the students with disabilities who come into contact with the criminal justice system when they leave school?
31. If such measurement is undertaken, how are the results reported and are the results publicly available?
32. Is the alarming increase in young people with intellectual disabilities coming into contact with the criminal justice system in anyway linked to shortcomings in their education?
33. Can the Minister advise whether in 2007/2008 in-service training courses for teachers covered the specific issue of inclusion of students with disabilities and strategies to make inclusion of students with disabilities a priority?
34. If there were such in-service training courses please advise details thereof, which schools participated, how many teachers undertook these courses and which organisation provided the in-service training and please provide a copy of the material used in those in-service training courses?
35. Is the Minister aware of any families which have left the state of NSW specifically because of the lack of choice in schooling of students with disabilities and/or due to general dissatisfaction with the education in NSW of students with disabilities?
36. Can the Minister advise whether her Department will recognise the legitimate need for student aides in classrooms to assist students with physical disabilities with their learning as distinct from teachers aides who presumably are there to assist the teacher?

Students with disabilities (SWD) in regional, rural and remote NSW

37. How many SWDs are there in regional, rural and remote NSW?
38. How many SWDs are home-schooled?
39. If they are home-schooled how many are given regular access to mainstream schools in order for them to have access to socialisation with peers?
40. How many SWDs are in government schools?
41. How many SWDs are in non-government schools?
42. How many SWDs are able to access funding assistance to be accommodated so as to have easier access to schools?
43. How many SWDs are able to access funding assistance to be accommodated closer to a school in comparison with their non-disabled peers?
44. Are there any programs in any government or non-government mainstream schools that encourage inclusion of students with disability by engaging with the parents of students with disability in consultation with the entire school community in order to appreciate and own the true meaning of inclusion?
45. To the Minister's knowledge is there any follow-up of students with disability who have been educated in a mainstream setting after they have left school in order to gauge the success or otherwise of their educational experience and what was done and what could have been done better?

Special Education Classes

46. What is the average class size for Special Education classes in NSW?
47. What is the student to teacher ratio in Special Education classes in NSW?
48. Does the Department have plans to introduce Composite classes of up to in Special Ed schools?
 - a. If so, how many students will be in each class?
 - b. What will the ratio of Teacher/Teachers Aide to students be?
 - c. Will there be a composite class at William Rose School in Seven Hills? If so, when?
49. Do all Special Ed Schools have therapists such as Physio, OT's and Speech Therapists on staff funded by the Dept of Ed?
50. Why does William Rose in Seven Hills not have access to therapists given the variety of complex disabilities of the students there?

DET International

51. What is the total annual operating budget of DET international?

52. Of this, how much is allocated to:
 - a. International projects
 - b. International relations
 - c. International students?
53. How many delegations and/or visitors (excluding international students) have DET International hosted for the financial year 2007/08?
54. Can you please list the cost and give a brief description of each of these delegations and visits.
55. How many international trips did the Department of Education and Training sponsor (in full or in part) in the financial year 2007/08?
56. What was the total cost of all international trips sponsored (in full or in-part) by the Department of Education and Training for the financial year 2007/08?
57. What were the length, destination, purpose, costs and names of people involved in each of these trips?

Community Language Schools

58. Could you provide the of the level of separate contribution in dollar terms from the Commonwealth and from NSW Government to the NSW Community Languages Schools Program
59. Could provide the break up of how this funding allocated in terms of
 - a. Per capita grants
 - b. Training and Professional Development
 - c. Administration
 - d. Community Use of Govt. Schools Facilities from which area of funding does DET use to reimburse the mainstream schools for hosting a community language school
60. Cost of the recent Community Languages Schools Program review – who funded the review and where were the fund allocated from?
61. Could you provide the last year in which the NSW CLS program received an increase in the per capita grant funding, was the funding state or commonwealth and what was the level of this increase?
62. Can you provide the rational for have the CLS program officers sitting outside the Languages Unit education area in DET in NSW and what any moves are being made to return the program into the languages area?
63. How much the NSW govt. receives from the Commonwealth Govt. to operate the community languages schools program?

Bullying

64. What has the Govt done to stop incidents of stranger danger on school grounds and how much funding has been committed?

65. What is the Govt doing to address the problem of bullying, both cyber and physical, in public schools? How much funding has been committed specifically to this?
66. What has been done to help schools such as Kadina High at Lismore where students have been traumatised by two suicides?
67. How much funding and resources in the DET have been committed to anti-homophobia programs in the last financial year? How many complaints of homophobic behaviour have been recorded in the last 12 months in public schools against students and teachers?
68. DET data shows students as young as five are being suspended at a rate of 1682 a week for a range of misconduct including bullying, disobedience and bad behaviour in public primary and secondary schools. Schools handed out 67,282 long and short suspensions last year – an increase of more than 8000 since 2005. Is the policy working or just giving miscreants a holiday?

TAFE

69. What is the amounts gained from increase in TAFE fees this year?
70. Where has this money gone?
71. Has there been a decrease in student numbers in particular course areas where TAFE fee increases have been highest?
72. How much has been saved by new teachers this semester not undertaking university level teacher education qualifications?
73. What support services have been put in place to ensure these teachers are supported to learn to be good teachers? Where is the quality assurance?
74. How many jobs are expected to be lost in TAFE Curriculum Centres, Units and State Office through the TAFE restructure - Doing Business in the 21st Century?
 - a. Will redundancy payouts be provided to these people?
 - b. How has this been budgeted for?
 - c. Will retraining be offered to these people?
 - d. Where is the budget for this?
75. TAFE has stated that there will be jobs in Institutes for these TAFE educational staff. Can you provide details of where these new positions have been created in Institutes?
76. What has been the cost of the restructure to-date including taking Senior TAFE Managers away from their other positions on a fulltime basis both this year and last year?

Questions from Dr Kaye

77. Please provide the enrolment figures for each of the campuses of the Meadowbank Education Trust for each of the last five years for which data are available.
78. What is the Department of Education and Training doing to ensure that they are participating fully in implementing the Actions in the NSW Interagency Plan To Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities: 2006 – 2011, including the Actions which require them to fund joint initiatives and work effectively with other agencies in and beyond the portfolio?
79. What plans does the Department of Education and Training have to adopt a transparent, publicly accessible reporting regime for the funding and implementation of the Actions in the NSW Interagency Plan To Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities: 2006 – 2011, beyond what is reported under the State Plan?
80. Would the Minister please identify:
 - a. the specific service measures in the 2008 budget papers which relate to the Actions in the NSW Interagency Plan To Tackle Child Sexual Assault in Aboriginal Communities: 2006 – 2011;
 - b. the specific Interagency Plan Actions that these service measures are intended to address;
 - c. whether these service measures involve new funding for these Actions, or the reworking of existing funding to respond to the Interagency Plan's Actions, or the continued rollout of funding already announced for other government initiatives which are consistent with the Interagency Plan's Actions; and
 - d. which Interagency Plan Actions cannot be funded from the current budget allocations.
81. When did the taskforce considering options for the future of the National Art School deliver its report to the Minister?
82. Has the Minister made a decision regarding the future of the National Art School?
 - a. If not, when does the Minister expect to make a decision?
83. How many TAFE teachers have retired or resigned in the last 12 months?
 - a. How many of these positions have been replaced by new permanent teachers?
84. How many temporary teacher positions have been created over the last year?
 - a. How many of these temporary positions have continued for 12 months or longer?
 - b. How many of these temporary positions have been made permanent?
85. What is the ratio of permanent TAFE teachers to temporary and part time casual?
 - a. How much has this ratio changed over the last year?
86. What is TAFE's budget allocation for teaching and educational staff?
 - a. Has this increased since last year?
87. In what areas has TAFE recruited for new permanent teachers?
88. In what areas has TAFE found it hard to employ new teachers?

89. How many students have been expelled from NSW public schools in each of the last 5 years?
 - a. Are these figures shared nationally (eg. with MCEETYA or DEEWR)?

90. How many students have been suspended from NSW public schools in each of the last 5 years?
 - a. Are these figures shared nationally (eg. with MCEETYA or DEEWR)?

91. What steps does the Department take to ensure that expelled students have alternate educational options available to them?