



**FEDERATION OF PARENTS AND CITIZENS' ASSOCIATIONS
OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

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5 April 2012

General Purpose Standing Committee No.2
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Members,

In response to a question taken on notice during an appearance before the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 on 12 March 2012, please find the relevant details requested.

A survey was undertaken in 2006 by The Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales, 280 responses were captured. See the attached results for details regarding the survey, in particular question 7 - How important to you is the option for your child to attend an alternative program that is non-religious in nature but focused on ethics? Ethics is defined as "generally agreed rules and/or standards for right (moral) conduct or practice" with the results showing a majority of respondents, 41% found it important and 18% found it extremely important that an ethics option be available for their child to attend.

Please also find enclosed the transcript amendments as noted by Sharon Johnson, Pat Clarke and Kelly MacDonald all in attendance at the sitting.

If there are any further questions arising from this please don't hesitate in contacting me.

Yours Sincerely

Kelly MacDonald
Research and Policy Officer

1. Does your child follow any of the faiths offered at your public school for Special Religious Education (scripture)? If yes, what faith.			
Yes			49%
No			51%
Total			100%
2. Are there other faiths that you would like to see introduced? Please list them?			
Yes			23%
No			77%
Total			100%
3. Would you support the exposure of different faiths to students regardless of their own faith?			
Yes			79%
No			21%
Total			100%
4. Is your child presently attending Special Religious Education (scripture) at your public school as no alternative is offered?			
Yes			41%
No			59%
Total			100%
5. If your child does not attend Special Religious Education (scripture), what activities does the school offer him/her when not attending scripture?			

6. What percentage of students do you estimate do not attend scripture at your school?						
85 -100% of students						14%
50 - 85% of students						11%
Less than 50% of students						47%
I have no idea						26%
7. How important to you is the option for your child to attend an alternative program that is non-religious in nature but focused on ethics? Ethics is defined as “generally agreed rules and/or standards for right (moral) conduct or practice”						
Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of total respondents selecting the option.	Extremely Important	Important	Neither Important / Unimportant	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant	Not sure
Alternative program	18%	41%	20%	10%	8%	3%
8. Are you interested in knowing the outcomes of this surveys results and any resulting action?						
Yes						76%
No						24%
Total						100%

1. Does your child follow any of the faiths offered at your public school for Special Religious Education (scripture)? If yes, what faith.

Most Common answers to the "if so" question (in no particular order):

Church of England

Anglican,

Uniting,

Christian,

Non denominational Christian. Bhahi is offered but the people who provide the scripture lessons try very hard to stop them.

Lutheran

Catholic

Protestant because our preferred choice (Catholic) can not provide a teacher.

2. Are there other faiths that you would like to see introduced? Please list them?

Answers to the open-ended question – no particular order;

Many - provided the lessons are given objectively and not as sermons as currently happens during scripture 'lessons'

Judaism

Muslim

There should be no religious instruction at public schools - of any faith. There should be a general explanation of all religions to everyone.

Currently only Catholic scripture is offered. We would like another Christian scripture offered.

I think all faiths available in an area should be covered - from Buddhism, Hindu, etc.

I would like to see children exposed to all religions so they can make informed choices.

Salvation Army

Buddhism, Kabbalah, Greek Coptic

I would like a general introduction to all world religions, in a non-judgmental way, to encourage tolerance and support diversity.

Anglican, Hindu Buddhist

5. If your child does not attend Special Religious Education (scripture), what activities does the school offer him/her when not attending scripture?

They watch videos or read books. Would prefer to see them doing their homework.

Supervised activities like colouring in etc.

Early release from school.

What I would call "play" activities: reading, building lego, other games, etc.

private study

supervised class reading or doing home work

I can provide supervision for them in the library

colouring in and keeping quiet **

Normal classes

Play games and watch television

Unsure – a lot of these responses **