



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022 Supplementary Questions**

**Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education**

**EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING**

Hearing: Friday 27 August 2021

**Answers due by: Monday 27 September 2021**

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## EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

### Questions from the Hon Mark Latham MLC

1. What plans does the Department have for the reallocation of duties for staff who are not Covid vaccinated by the deadline?
2. What consideration has the Department given to the use of Rapid Antigen Testing as an alternative to mandatory workplace vaccination? Why isn't this being implemented?
3. As per NSW Workplace Health and Safety laws, was each Departmental workplace (all offices and schools) been the subject of a one-by-one Covid risk assessment prior to the announcement of the mandatory workplace vaccination (MWV) policy? If not, what was the nature of the Department's risk assessment upon which the policy is based?
4. What advice did the Department receive from SafeWork NSW prior to the introduction the MWV policy?
5. Will workers delivering materials and supplies to schools be covered by the MWV policy?
6. Will outside workers and contractors completing jobs on school grounds be covered by the MWV policy?
7. Will external consultants visiting school grounds be covered by the MWV policy?
8. Under the MWV policy intent, how less likely is a vaccinated person on schools grounds to transmit Covid than an unvaccinated person?
9. What consultation was there with the:
  - (a) Catholic system and
  - (b) AIS on the MWV policy and have they agreed to implement it?
10. In each of the three sectors, how will the Department cover any financial or legal liability arising from adverse reactions to Covid vaccination?

11. In anticipation of unfair dismissal claims, is the Department following the advice of the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) such that in communities with no Covid MWV should not apply?
12. Has the Department followed the FWO advice on differentiated MWV assessment of workers in their workplace environment, such as office admin staff having much less student contact than teachers? What capacity is there for unvaccinated admin staff working from home online?
13. How will Departmental staff be expected to prove their vaccination status and will this comply with Commonwealth privacy laws for vaccination data?
14. Will staff vaccination information be stored by the Department in any way? What are the details?
15. Will staff vaccination information be shared with any other government agency? If so, what are the details?
16. Under the MWV policy, what consideration will be given to staff:
  - (a) waiting for a particular vaccine to be available,
  - (b) unable to be vaccinated for valid medical reasons
  - (c) conscientious objectors and
  - (d) referencing anti-discrimination laws as their reason for not being vaccinated?
17. Under the MWV policy, will any unvaccinated adults (other than students) be allowed on school grounds? What are the details?
18. If Covid is to be treated like the flu in November in NSW:
  - (a) why will students and teachers be expected to wear masks? and
  - (b) will Covid infected students be sent home and schools remain open?
19. Given the nature of the MWV policy, will the Department cover the costs imposed on non-government schools for
  - (a) unfair dismissal action,
  - (b) discrimination claims, and
  - (c) any other legal action?

20. From the employment data in the Department's 2020 Annual Report, over the period June 2017 to June 2020, why has the staffing of State and regional offices increased by 51% compared to 5.5% for teacher numbers and 16.4% for school support staff?
21. Does the Department accept finding of the NSW Productivity Commissioner that education reform is the most effective way of lifting productivity in our State?
22. What is being done to implement the recommendations of the Productivity Commissioner, especially in:
  - (a) "broadening the sources of quality teachers" and
  - (b) improved teacher performance evaluation through a stronger supervisory feedback loop?
23. What progress has been made in introducing a comprehensive, evidence-based accreditation scheme for all external consultants in contact with students? How has the wellbeing and instruction of our children been allowed to occur using scores of random, untested and often unqualified people coming into schools?
24. Why hasn't the Prequalification Scheme Agreement been applied to so-called wellbeing consultants like Resilience Doughnut, Tomorrow Man and Grow Your Mind in NSW Schools?
25. Why are the new SIP performance targets for government schools so variable and random in their domains, objectives and time periods for achievement? What is the point in having school targets if they are not standardised across the State?
26. In published school performance targets why is there no baseline data available, allowing parents and communities to accurately gauge performance levels/improvements?
27. Why do the school performance NAPLAN targets continue to focus only on the top two bands, neglecting the needs of poorly-performed students, that is, those who need the greatest improvement gains and effort?
28. What proportion of NSW non-government schools are using the Year 1 Phonics Check and what is the Department doing to lift this number?
29. Is every government primary school implementing the Year 1 Phonics Check and for those which are not, why is this happening?

30. What use of Year 1 Phonics Check data is the Department making in terms of
- (a) school interventions where the results are poor,
  - (b) retraining teachers trained in whole-word literacy and
  - (c) requiring retesting at poorly performed schools in Year 2?
31. How many DELs were employed in 2020 and under their performance-based contracts, how many:
- (a) received additional pay and
  - (b) were assessed as below acceptable performance standards?
32. How many government schools were the subject of Tailored Support interventions in each of:
- (a) 2018,
  - (b) 2019,
  - (c) 2020 and
  - (d) 2021?
- What evidence is there that these interventions have lifted student performance?
33. In which years and courses are the:
- (a) Respectful Relationships and
  - (b) NAPCAN Love Bites programs taught?
- What evidence base does the Department rely on for these programs and what evaluation reports provide this evidence?
34. To NESAs: In the \$196.6 million NSW Curriculum Reform Program for 2021/22 to 2024/25, how many:
- (a) full-time and
  - (b) part-time staff will be employed on curriculum redevelopment?
35. To NESAs: What progress has been made in certifying new teacher Professional Development courses under the revised system? Have all gender fluidity courses now been removed? How will NESAs check that the teaching of the courses actually matches the certified purpose?
36. How does the Department explain the disappointing Year 9 NAPLAN results this year? Is it further evidence of 13-15 year olds disengaging from learning and the system failing to overcome this problem?

37. What lessons can be drawn from Western Australia's improved NAPLAN performance having rigorously pursued explicit instruction methods in the classroom?
38. What has been the outcome of the Department's reform of student disciplinary rules aimed at suspending fewer Indigenous students? How are schools and bullied students better off from keeping the perpetrators in the classroom?
39. Given that many teachers complain of being unable to maintain discipline in the classroom, and this is contributing to weaker student results, what is being done to overcome this problem?
40. Which senior Department executives have read the Peter Sutton Keryn Walshe critique of Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu*? Do they agree with the Sutton/Walshe evidence that Pascoe has insulted Indigenous Australians and history by mounting a false argument that pre-1788 Aborigines were living as just another European equivalent, in fixed villages with agricultural cropping? Why is a fake history being taught in NSW schools?
41. For all the Department's attempts to be woke and sympathetic to the Indigenous cause, does it now feel ashamed that Pascoe's book has been allowed into NSW schools, given the demolition of its credibility by two widely-respected and highly-credentialed Left-wing academics in Sutton and Walshe?
42. What progress has been made with broadening the source and training of NSW teachers through:
  - (a) Teach For Australia and
  - (b) Alphacrucis?
43. Given the Department's ruling earlier this year that the actions of the Lindfield Learning Village BLM teacher did not constitute 'misconduct', how much hateful and barbaric politically motivated material would a teacher need to introduce into a primary school classroom to be guilty of misconduct?
44. For each of the past 5 years, how many NSW government school teachers have been found guilty of misconduct? What did the offences involve?
45. In the misconduct findings above, how many involved:
  - (a) inappropriate political activity in the classroom and
  - (b) the use of pornographic material such as the Wankerman at Kurri Kurri High School?

46. Has the Department:
- (a) examined or
  - (b) approved the use of any 'mental health screening tools' for students?
- What are the details?
47. To NESAs and the Department: In the consideration of the Masters recommendations about the future of the HSC/ATAR, what has been the process for arriving at a final decision? Will the HSC and ATAR continue in their current form? What are the details?
48. To NESAs: What progress has been made in improving the secondary school curriculum for:
- (a) English by eliminating gender studies and other identity political content and restoring the importance of high-quality works of English literature, and
  - (b) History by following a chronological subject order, enhancing deep knowledge of content and reducing tedious 'source verification' exercises?
49. Under the mandatory vaccination policy, what back up plan does the Department have for filling the teacher shortages that will occur once unvaccinated teachers are sacked?
50. Why hasn't the Health Order from Friday's announcement been created? What exemptions will be granted to non-government schools?

<b>Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC</b>
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**Free period products trial**

51. Are there plans to extend the trial of sanitary products in schools given the number of weeks in which students have been learning from home in light of COVID-19?
- (a) If yes, when is the trial now expected to conclude? Will consideration be given to further extend this if the period of learning from home continues past current forecasts?
52. On what basis was it determined which schools would participate in the trial of free sanitary products in Western Sydney and Dubbo schools?
53. Which brands of period products have been provided to schools?

54. What factors will you be looking at in determining the success of the trial and whether to make this a permanent program in schools?

### **School banking**

55. During the 3 March 2021 Budget Estimates hearing, it was stated that the Minister was “expecting to receive advice and recommendations that may come from that [the December 2020 ASIC report into School Banking] in due course from the department”. Has this advice been received?
- (a) If no, when is it expected?
  - (b) If yes, please advise what the Department’s advice is, and provide a copy of the advice.
  - (c) If yes, what action have you taken in relation to this advice?

## **Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)**

### **School Cleaners**

56. How many NSW Public Schools have had their school cleaning hours cut pre COVID-19?
57. Are NSW Public Schools consulted about school cleaning hours?
- (a) If so, how often does his consultation occur?
58. What changes have been made to school cleaning guidelines since the COVID-19 outbreak?
59. How many additional cleaning staff have been employed in NSW Public Schools since the COVID-19 outbreak?
60. How many additional cleaning staff have been employed in NSW Public Schools since 26 June 2021?

### **Remote Learning**

61. How many guided learning packs have been distributed to NSW Public schools?
62. What learning support packages have been distributed to NSW High schools?
63. How many devices and internet dongles has the NSW Department of Education handed out to students?
- (a) How many devices went to students in LGAs of concern?



- (b) How many internet dongles went to students in LGAs of concern?

### **Antigen Testing**

64. How many Independent schools are conducting a rapid antigen testing pilot program?  
(a) Are any of these independent schools located in LGAs of concern?
65. Has any member of the Department met with any of the independent schools currently undertaking rapid antigen testing pilot programs?
66. Are any NSW Public schools currently undertaking a rapid antigen testing pilot program?
67. Have any NSW Public Schools contacted the Department to set up antigen testing when students return on the 25 October?  
(a) If so, please provide a list of schools broken down by LGA
68. Have any SSP schools been offered rapid antigen testing for their staff or students?

### **Ventilation**

69. What steps have you taken to improve ventilation at NSW Public Schools before students return on the 25 October?  
(a) Have you purchased any air-purifiers for NSW Public school classrooms?  
(b) If so, how many?
70. Will an inspection of all air-conditioning systems in NSW public schools occur before students return to school on 25 October 2021?

### **Return to School**

71. Will immunocompromised or high risk students be given the option to learn online until they have been fully vaccinated?
72. Will temperature checking be conducted at NSW Public schools for all students and staff?
73. How many masks will be distributed to NSW public schools ahead of students returning to school on 25 October 2021?
74. How many bottles of hand sanitiser will be distributed to NSW public Schools ahead of students returning on 25 October 2021?

75. How many packets of disinfectant wipes will be distributed to NSW public schools ahead of students returning on 25 October 2021?

### **COVID-19 Special Consideration Program**

76. Will HSC students who live in a lockdown LGA and are unable to complete their HSC exams in-person be eligible for the COVID-19 special consideration program?
77. What additional support will be provided to HSC students who test positive to COVID-19 during the HSC exam period to complete illness/misadventure application?
78. What additional provisions will be provided to HSC students who are immunocompromised or at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19 during the HSC exam period?

### **COVID-19 Intensive Learning Program**

79. What is the evaluation of the COVID-19 intensive learning program?
- (a) Will the evaluation be conducted externally?
  - (b) Who will it report to?
  - (c) Will it be released publically?

### **Teachers**

80. How many teachers are permanently allocated to secondary and central schools?
81. What proportion of those teachers are approved to teach a STEM-related discipline?
82. What proportion of permanent science teachers in those schools are in each of the following age groups 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 61?
83. What proportion of permanent TAS teachers in those schools are in each of the following age groups 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 61?
84. What proportion of permanent Mathematics teachers in those schools are in each of the following age groups 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 61?
85. From the department's census of NSW universities what are the commencements of secondary initial teacher education degrees in 2018, 2019 and 2020 for:
- (a) science?
  - (b) Technology and applied studies?

- (c) Mathematics?
  - (d) Non STEM-related disciplines?
86. How many places for career changers were there in the teach.MathsNow scholarship program in:
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2021?
87. How many career changers who are recipients of teach.MathsNow scholarships commenced study in:
- (a) 2020
  - (b) 2021

### **Denham Court Public School and open plan classrooms**

88. Are the classrooms at Denham Court Public School shared open plan spaces, with two classes allocated per shared classroom space?
89. If so, why weren't formal doors included in the school's design to allow the two classes to be separated properly?
90. Is the ventilation of these classroom spaces separate for the two classes sharing the spaces?
- (a) If not, what work will be done to ensure the classrooms are separately ventilated to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID?
91. Will the Government commit to installing separating walls and doors at Denham Court Public School before students begin using the shared classroom spaces?
92. Can you please provide a list of schools which have open plan classrooms shared by two classes which are not able to be fully separated by doors or walls, broken down by school name and the number of these open plan shared classrooms in each school?
93. Denham Court Public School was supposed to open Day 1, Term 3 this year, but was delayed. On what date will Denham Court Public School be opened?
94. Are the teaching staff at Denham Court Public School currently working at other schools?
- (a) If not, why not?

### **Concord High School and new high school at Wentworth Point**

95. Can you confirm that the new high school at Wentworth Point will open day 1, term 1 2024?
96. Can you confirm that the new high school at Wentworth Point will open for all years, 7-12, on day 1, term 1 2024?
97. Has the Department of Education done preliminary work on how many students the Concord High School campus can accommodate through a future upgrade, yes or no?
98. How many fewer students does the Department of Education predict Concord High School will have in 2024 as a result of the opening of the new high school at Wentworth Point?
99. How many students are currently at Concord High as at 3 September 2021?
100. How many counsellors are allocated for this number of students as at 3 September 2021?

### **Staffing**

101. What is the Minister doing to address the unacceptable proportion of temporary contracts for school support staff, given the ongoing and vital nature of this work?
102. When will we see outcomes of the Staffing Methodology Review finalised and implemented for schools?

### **Students with disabilities**

103. In 2021 how many students with disability in total are enrolled in public schools?
104. In 2020 how many students with disability were in:
  - (a) mainstream classrooms supported by integration funding?
  - (b) in a support class in a mainstream school?
  - (c) in an SSP?
  - (d) in mainstream classrooms assisted by funding from the Low Level Adjustment for Disability?
105. How much was spent in 2020 on
  - (a) the Integration Funding Support program
  - (b) support classes in public schools
  - (c) SSPs

- (d) the Assisted School Travel Program?
106. How many support classes were there in NSW public schools in 2019, 2020 and currently 2021?
107. What was the average cost per capita of Integration Funding Support in 2018, 2019 and 2020?
108. What proportion of schools in 2021 did not receive low level adjustment for disability funding in 2021?
- (a) What proportion received less than \$75,000?
- (b) What was the median funding per school?
109. What proportion of learning and support teachers are permanent employees?
110. In 2018 the government supported a recommendation of the Legislative Council inquiry into the education of students with a disability that NCCD data be used instead of NAPLAN to calculate the low level adjustment for disability. Why has this not happened?
111. The Government also supported the inquiry's recommendation that the department's disability criteria should be updated and said the department would "*finalise and release an immediate update of the disability criteria*" and review it biannually. When were the updated criteria released?
- (a) What reviews have been completed?
112. How many FTE school counsellors are currently employed in NSW public schools?
113. In central schools, primary schools, secondary schools and SSPs in 2021 how many lead, psychology practice, senior psychologist education and school counsellors are employed (excluding counsellors-in-training)?

### **Teacher Vaccinations**

114. Given the Department is now required to ensure teachers and school staff are vaccinated, can you please provide a breakdown of what percentage of NSW teachers and school staff are vaccinated, broken down by LGA?

## Links to Learning

115. Why did the NSW Government cut the Links-to-Learning grant program which provided funding to NSW based approved, not-for-profit, non-government community based organisations and local government authorities to deliver targeted projects to compulsory aged (Year 6 - Year 11) students at risk of disengaging from learning and/or at risk of leaving school early?
116. The Department of Education undertook a program evaluation- and the Government has claimed that it “did not provide strong evidence of outcomes from the program.”
- (a) Why was the program ended?
  - (b) Please provide a copy of the evaluation report?
117. The Department of Education has stated that the program evaluation was only with a small sample size of 11 schools (7% of 144 participating schools), 8 providers out of 35 in NSW (which is only 22%), and only 3 student groups out of 144 (which is only 2% of students). Why was the program ended after such a small sample size of participants in the evaluation?

## Perfect Presence pilot program

118. When launched, the Department stated that the Perfect Presence pilot program **does not** replace Links to Learning, however, weeks after the tender process was completed, NGOs were informed that it does actually replace it, and that it was developed to reflect the evaluation review findings. The pilot program is targeted to specific schools, regions and student year groups, and it does not cover many Sydney metro areas of need. There are 25% less schools supported in this program than in Links to Learning, and there is no support for year 6 and year 7 students as part of their transition to high school. Some areas of unemployment, lower incomes & lower levels of educational attainment are now being left without additional essential support.
- (a) What will the NSW Government do to address these gaps you have created?
  - (b) In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic what will the NSW Government do to support disengaged students who are at increasing risk of becoming even more disengaged?
119. Were NGO partners /providers to the Department consulted about the model and establishment of the Perfect Presence pilot program?
- (a) If not, why not?

120. Is the funding from Perfect Presence pilot program actually coming from the budget for Links to Learning program?
- (a) If so, why was there no transparency about this, and about the total funding pool available for Perfect Presence?

### **Spending**

121. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster in FY 20/21 what was the total amount spent on each of the following categories?
- (a) Indoor plants
  - (b) coffee and tea
  - (c) crockery
  - (d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters
  - (e) alcohol
  - (f) cakes, muffins and pastries
  - (g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs
  - (h) office renovations and fit-outs
  - (i) taxi and rideshare expenses
  - (j) office equipment
  - (k) office renovations or upgrades
  - (l) hospitality
  - (m) conferences
  - (n) travel
  - (o) accommodation
  - (p) employee development and training activities
  - (q) study assistance
  - (r) travelling and meal expenses
  - (s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private
  - (t) removal and storage expenses
  - (u) education of children
  - (v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)
  - (w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)
  - (x) additional benefits

122. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster, from FY 20/21 what are details (specific item, and total cost) of the top five most expensive occurrences of spending on each of the following categories?
- (a) indoor plants
  - (b) coffee and tea
  - (c) crockery
  - (d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters
  - (e) alcohol
  - (f) cakes, muffins and pastries
  - (g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs
  - (h) office renovations and fit-outs
  - (i) taxi and rideshare expenses
  - (j) office equipment
  - (k) office renovations or upgrades
  - (l) hospitality
  - (m) conferences
  - (n) travel
  - (o) accommodation
  - (p) employee development and training activities
  - (q) study assistance
  - (r) travelling and meal expenses
  - (s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private
  - (t) removal and storage expenses
  - (u) education of children
  - (v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)
  - (w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)
  - (x) additional benefits