

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

Department of Education Question No. ED0551_15

Senator O'Neill provided in writing.

Question

School funding loading for low socio economic status students

In relation to the Government's review of the school funding loading for low socio economic status students, can the Department please provide answers to the following: a. Which bodies were invited to make submissions? b. Why aren't these submissions publicly available? Will they be made public? When? c. When will the review be finalised and how will the review findings be reported? d. How is the review being conducted? e. What is its reporting date? f. Who has been consulted? g. What are the terms of reference? h. Please provide any correspondence from the Minister to stakeholders in relation to the review.

Answer

- a. Organisations representing stakeholders that are involved in the provision of data for the Low SES loading and/or may be impacted by a change to the loading were invited to participate in the face to face consultation process and the associated written submission process. These organisations included state and territory education departments and national peak bodies such as principals' associations, parent bodies and teacher unions. A list of invited organisations is at **Attachment A**.
- b. The Low SES loading consultation and submission processes honour the Government's commitment to engage the signatories of the National Education Reform Agreement (NERA) in a review of this loading. The signatories of the NERA are NSW, SA, Victoria, ACT, Tasmania and the Australian Government and on this basis, the review is not a public review and submissions will not be made public. To ensure a more genuinely national approach to funding, the Government broadened the consultation process to include other key stakeholders.
- c. The review will be finalised by the end of 2014. The NERA states that the review findings, as agreed by the relevant ministerial council (now the Education Council), will be available for consideration by the Parties (First Ministers) from January 2015.
- d. The review was conducted through face to face consultations with stakeholders on 13 August 2014 followed up by a written submission process which closed on 30 September 2014.
- e. From January 2015.
- f. Organisations representing stakeholders that are involved in the provision of data for the loading and/or may be impacted by a change to the loading were consulted. They include state and territory education departments and national peak bodies such as principals' associations, parent bodies and teacher unions. The list of organisations is at **Attachment A**.
- g. Terms of Reference for the review are at **Attachment B**.
- h. Due to the large number of stakeholders involved in the reviews, samples of the letters to stakeholders from the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, Minister for Education, in relation to the review are at **Attachment C**.

Attachment A

Organisations invited to participate in loading review consultations

State and territory governments
State and territory education departments (<i>all states and territories invited</i>)
National and state and territory non-government bodies
Independent Schools Council of Australia
National Catholic Education Commission
State and Territory Catholic Education Commissions/Offices (<i>all states and territories invited</i>)
State and Territory Associations of Independent Schools (<i>all states and territories invited</i>)
Christian Schools Australia
Australian Association of Christian Schools
Lutheran Education Australia Limited
Australian Council of Jewish Schools
National Independent Special Schools Association
Anglican Schools Australia
Adventist Schools Australia
Montessori Australia Foundation
Steiner Education Australia
Parent groups
Australian Council of State School Organisations
Australian Parents Council
Catholic School parents of Australia
Education unions and other representative associations
Australian Education Union
Independent Education Union
Australian Association of Special Education
Children with Disability Australia
Australian Federation of Disabilities Organisations
Australasian Association of Distance Education Schools
Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA)
Australian Professional Teachers Association (APTA)
AITSL - Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
Teach For Australia (TFA)
Australian College of Educators
Australian Council for Educational Leaders (ACEL)
Principal groups
Australian Primary Principals Association
Australian Secondary Principals Association
Principals Australia Institute
Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia
Independent Primary School Heads of Australia
Catholic Secondary Principals Association
Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association
Australian Special Education Principals' Association
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association

Other stakeholders
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
Education Services Australia (ESA)
Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA)
The Refugee Council of Australia
Association for Language Assessment of Australia and New Zealand
Australian Refugee Advisory Association
Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
Network of Immigration and Refugee Women of Australia Inc

Terms of Reference – review of the loading for Low Socio-economic Status

Scope of the Review

- The Review of Funding for Schooling recommended a low socio-economic status (SES) loading be applied to give schools with students from low socio-economic backgrounds the same opportunity to achieve nationally agreed educational outcomes as schools that would not attract the loading.
- The Review Report recommended the Low SES loading apply to students in the lowest SES quartile and suggested considering the expansion of this to apply to the lowest 50 per cent of students (the lowest two quartiles). The Review Report noted that the Socio Educational Advantage (SEA) calculation used by ACARA for the My School website was the only available data across all sectors and schools on this category, at the time of writing. Based on evidence about student outcomes, the loading was developed by the Government to include the lowest two quartiles, based on the ACARA SEA calculation.
- The Review report noted that to address educational under-achievement across Australia, additional support should be provided to the second quartile of Socio Educational Advantage (SEA) students.
- The review of the Low SES loading is an opportunity to consider the best measure of student disadvantage and how to improve data capture to ensure that students who need additional resources, due to their low socio-economic background, are appropriately targeted.

The review will consider:

- the current structure and operation of the Low SES loading as it related to evidence of educational disadvantage
- the intent of the Low SES loading
- current and other potential data sources to measure student disadvantage, taking into account the need for nationally consistent, robust and verifiable data
- the quality, timeliness and usage of data.

Consultations

- Consultations with key stakeholders will be undertaken from July 2014. It is anticipated that advice from the consultations will be provided to:
 - Schools Policy Group/Data Strategy Group (standing item for each meeting)
 - AEEYSOC in November 2014
 - Education Council in December 2014.

Endorsed by AEEYSOC: 1 August 2014

Letter of 18 July 2014

Dear XX

I wrote to you in January of this year to provide you with an outline of how this Government was planning to support you to help all Australian schools and students to improve educational outcomes.

I am pleased to confirm that, as announced in the 2014–15 Budget, the Australian Government will be investing a record high of \$64.5 billion in recurrent funding to schools over the forward estimates. In doing so, the Government has delivered on its commitment to match school funding dollar for dollar over the quadrennium (2014–2017) of the previous government. In addition we have also increased funding by \$1.2 billion over and above the funding committed by the previous government.

Measures announced in the Budget reflect the Government's commitment to needs-based funding for schools, while also supporting the transition to a stable and sustainable funding model over the long-term.

You may also be aware that submissions were sought in April 2014 on the removal of the command and control features of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and Australian Education Regulation 2013 (the Regulation). I was pleased with the number of responses received and note that, generally, stakeholders are supportive of the Government's acknowledgement that the Act and Regulation intrude on the efficient operation of schools.

My department is analysing these submissions with a view to discussing possible options for amendments to remove the command and control features of the Act and Regulations. A range of issues papers will be prepared and circulated to inform more detailed discussions at consultation sessions with peak stakeholders in August 2014. Initial drafting of possible legislative amendments will occur towards the end of 2014 and will be tested with the peak stakeholders as part of a third and final phase of consultations.

I also remain committed to completing the review into the Low Socio-economic Status loading and the finalisation of the Students with Disability and Low English Proficiency loadings and look forward to working with relevant stakeholders on that work.

As outlined in my letter to you in January, work on these loadings will commence in the next few months. Engagement with states and territories for the reviews will use existing forums where appropriate, especially the Schools Policy Group, Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Senior Officials Committee and the Standing Council for School Education and Early Childhood.

Consultations with broader stakeholder groups will occur through face-to-face meetings facilitated by my department and anticipated to be scheduled in August 2014. For the Low SES loading review, a submission process will begin shortly.

Further advice as to how you can be involved in each of the review points will be provided by my department shortly. I look forward to working closely with you to ensure that, together, we can work to make sure that every child in Australia has access to the best quality schooling possible.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Pyne MP