

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000844

Senator Lines, Sue provided in writing

Also refer to previous hearing Question No. SQ15-000345

School Autonomy and Student Achievement Case Studies in Australia report

Question

In relation to the School Autonomy and Student Achievement Case Studies in Australia report funded by the Department:

- a. How many schools were involved in the study? What proportion of all schools in Australia does this represent?
- b. Was there any selection bias in the study? Were schools with a positive experience more likely to participate than those with a negative experience, or vice-versa?
- c. Did the report examine where autonomy might not be working? Or where capacity building was needed?
- d. How many of the schools involved were in receipt of targeted additional spending either through National Partnerships, Gonski funding or the Empowering local schools initiative?

Answer

- a. Phase 2 of the International Study of School Autonomy and Learning (ISSAL) involved case studies being conducted in each of the seven participating jurisdictions/countries. The Australian contribution to the international study involved four case studies.
- b. The case studies formed Phase 2 of the ISSAL. The specific research question being investigated through the case studies was: *'How have schools with a relatively high degree of autonomy used their increased authority and responsibility to make decisions that have led in explicit cause-and-effect fashion to higher levels of student achievement?'*

Selection of schools involved seeking permission from states and territories for case studies to be conducted in schools. Nominations of schools were then sought from senior leaders of the jurisdictions that agreed to participate. The criteria for nomination of schools were:

- the nominated schools had taken up a higher level of autonomy for at least two years
 - the nominated schools had achieved gains in measures of student achievement and there was confidence they could describe in direct cause-and-effect fashion how they used their autonomy to achieve their success.
- c. This component of the international study (Phase 2) did not examine where autonomy might not be working or where capacity building was needed.

- d. From 1 January 2014, Commonwealth recurrent funding for schools is calculated under the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding arrangements in accordance with the *Australian Education Act 2013*.

Funding previously delivered through General Recurrent Grants Programme, Targeted Programmes and relevant National Partnerships (including the Smarter Schools and Empowering Local Schools National Partnerships) was rolled into the new funding arrangements and are ongoing.

All Commonwealth funding is passed directly to the states and territories. State and territory governments then distribute total public funding to each government school in their jurisdiction according to their own needs-based allocation model.