

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome:

Output Group:

DEST Question No. E855_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Special Assistance Schools

1. Can you provide a report on the provision, introduced in an amendment to the Schools Assistance Act last year, that creates a new category of non-government school, the "Special Assistance School"?
2. I understand that you were going to negotiate with the states and territories about identifying the non-government schools that should be reclassified on the SES scale. Have you completed that process? How many schools were identified and reclassified? Can you provide a listing of them, by state/territory and enrolment?
3. You estimated the cost of this as \$2.3m p.a. Do you have a more accurate estimate now, if you know how many schools, and which schools, we're talking about?
4. Can you tell us, in the case of each school so classified, how much additional funding per student is now available to that school?
5. Are there any plans to introduce a similar scheme to lift Commonwealth per capita funding to government schools where students are at risk of dropping out?

Answer:

Special Assistance Schools

1. The amendment, to include a definition of "Special Assistance School" in the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004*, provides an automatic entitlement to maximum general recurrent funding without regard to the socioeconomic status of the school community for non-government schools in a State that have been, or are likely to be, recognised by the State Minister as schools that primarily cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties who are at risk of leaving mainstream schooling.
2. State and Territory Ministers have provided the names of non-government schools in their jurisdictions which they consider meet the definition of a Special Assistance School. This process is not complete as the New South Wales Minister for Education and Training has not provided the requested information.

Based on the information received, 29 schools are classified as Special Assistance Schools with effect from 1 January 2006. Of these:

- 14 were previously classified as Special Schools and funded at the maximum rate
- 10 were previously funded on their SES score, under which 3 were already entitled to maximum funding
- 5 are new schools which commenced in 2006 as Special Assistance Schools.

3. The estimated cost of \$2.3 million, referred to in the question, relates to the four-year funding period, 2005-2008. The revised estimated cost of the "Special Assistance School" provision is approximately \$919,000 over the period 2006 to 2008.
4. Additional funding per student ranges from \$94 to \$2,176 (2006).
5. No.