

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 2

DEEWR Question No. EW665_09

Senator Abetz asked on 4 June 2008, EEWHR Hansard page 25

Question

Compliance Certification – Regulation 2.6 of the Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Regulations 2005

In relation to the year 2006, every state and territory has signed off? How have they responded? Have they said that they have fully complied or have they responded by saying, 'That is interesting. We will get back in touch'? Would those letters be able to be tabled? Is there anything that is of a confidential nature about them? Can you table those for eight separate jurisdictions? Depending on whatever rules and restrictions you have, I would appreciate the full correspondence in relation to all eight.

Answer

All States and Territories have provided advice on compliance by their schools in 2006 with the requirement to make public their school performance information. Certification on this item is provided in the year following the programme year, as schools have six months after year's end in which to publish their school performance information.

Each jurisdiction was asked to advise whether or not the school performance information specified in the Regulations in respect of 2006 for each government school in the State or Territory was made publicly available, by 30 June 2007, in the manner specified in the Regulations. Where an authority answered "no" it was required to explain why, outlining the steps being taken to meet this requirement in respect of the following school year.

Attached is a table outlining the advice received from government school systems on publication of school performance information for 2006. Advice from Victoria was received in the form of a letter; other jurisdictions submitted their response online.

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION 2006
GOVERNMENT SYSTEM RESPONSES**

NSW	Compliant
Victoria	<p>Partially compliant</p> <p>The Department has taken all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that Victorian government schools meet the requirement to make school performance information publicly available. Every Victorian government school has provided the Department with a copy of its annual report for 2006. The annual report guidelines that are provided to schools include the compliance requirement to make school performance information publicly available.</p> <p>Eighty-nine per cent of schools have used the School Compliance Checklist to assess their compliance with this requirement. The Department is pleased with the response to date given that this significant initiative was only introduced at the beginning of 2007. The School Compliance Checklist asks schools to confirm that for each school year they have an annual report that has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsed by the principal and school council • Submitted to the regional office (by 31 March of the following year) • Distributed to parents in hard copy (by 30 June of the following year), and • Available online (by 30 June of the following year). <p>Of the 89 per cent of schools that assessed their compliance with this requirement, 92 per cent were fully compliant.</p> <p>The Department, through regional offices, is continuing to work with schools to improve compliance. The development and implementation of the School Compliance Checklist provides a clear indication that the Department is working to ensure that all schools are compliant with the requirements. This innovative work also highlights the Department's commitment to reducing the regulatory burden on schools and the Department.</p>
Queensland	Compliant
WA	<p>Partially compliant</p> <p>Reasons: The Department has actively undertaken to advise schools of the legislated reporting requirements, assist in their reporting and monitor compliance. While more than half of the public schools are considered to be fully compliant a small percentage have failed to provide a required School Report and around 40% have been assessed as partially compliant. Many of these schools were found to have missed Item 13 – satisfaction data and will ensure this item is reported in 2007. Despite extensive efforts a full appreciation of the requirements may not have been achieved in some schools for the 2006 reporting cycle. A change of principal has been found to be a factor contributing to only partial compliance.</p> <p>Steps to be taken to meet requirements for next programme year: Directors, Schools as line managers of principals have been advised of the compliance issues for their schools and are following up to ensure the requirements are fully understood and will be addressed in the 2007 reports. The Department will continue to provide advice and specific</p>

	<p>systemic data to assist all schools. Examples of compliant reporting by different school types will also be made available. The detailed check of school reporting will be undertaken again in 2007 with continued support from the Directors, Schools to ensure the compliance requirements are being met.</p>
SA	<p>Partially compliant</p> <p>Reasons: 40.21% (240 schools in total) of DECS schools in South Australia were not compliant for 2006 Compliance Certificate 2. Reasons were inexperienced leadership at schools or changing leadership at schools.</p> <p>Steps to be taken to meet requirements for next programme year: District Directors will follow up with non-compliant sites during Term 4 2007 to reinforce Annual Report requirements for the 2007 school year.</p> <p>District Directors have been asked to follow up with the principals of all non-compliant sites in their district and provide them with the necessary ongoing support to ensure that all Australian Government School Performance Information requirements are in future met through the Site Annual Reporting process.</p>
Tasmania	Compliant
NT	<p>Partially compliant</p> <p>Reasons: 45 per cent of Northern Territory Government (NTG) schools were completely compliant with this requirement, and an additional 22 per cent of NTG schools were non compliant in relation to only one item of performance information that was required to be made publicly available. Only nine NTG schools complied with less than 73 per cent of the items of performance information that were required to be made publicly available. Schools cited a range of reasons for non compliance; however a majority of responses indicated a lack of understanding in relation to this requirement, and the timeframe in which the information needed to be reported. Analysis in relation to specific elements of school performance information suggests that non-compliance is highest in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reporting of summary data on the number of teachers holding particular qualifications. • The reporting of summary data on the results of 2006 structured surveys or feedback mechanisms, or, if no survey was conducted during the year, how results from previous surveys have informed school planning or operations. • The reporting of summary data on the number of teachers involved in professional learning initiatives, including initiatives funded by the Australian Quality Teacher Program and the average expenditure per teacher on professional learning <p>One observation is that non-compliance appears to be in areas where the department is still in the initial stages of developing system level supports that would enable ease of reporting in these areas by schools.</p> <p>Steps to be taken to meet requirements for next programme year: The information and tools the department provides to assist schools in complying with this requirement are being reviewed, and will be relaunched for the 2008 school year, with particular focus on system level support for the reporting areas where non-compliance is highest. The department is also contributing to the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee Review of Schools Compliance Reporting, with a view to streamlining the</p>

	regulatory reporting requirements and is in the process of developing and implementing a new Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework (APIF) for NTG schools. School performance information reporting requirements under the APIF will be consistent with the Australian Government compliance requirements under the Act, making compliance easier for NTG schools.
ACT	Compliant