

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1.1 – Funding for schools

DEST Question No. E421_04

Senator Carr asked on 6 November 2003.

Refers to DEST Question No E015_04

Question:

The answer to E015_04 also provides summary information on funding for Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes (SAISO) in NSW Catholic and independent school sectors.

- (a) Does this confirm that the Department does not have information on which schools were funded in the NSW Catholic system, and for what purpose?
- (b) Is the Department satisfied with the 'activities' approach (e.g. no. of students; no. of professional development 'activities') to the reporting by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) in Attachment C? Please explain reasons.
 - Does the Department have, or has it sought, information on the extent of improvement in student learning in these schools?
 - Has the Department aggregated the total number of 'professional development activities' funded through the AIS?
 - If so, is this an appropriate number?
 - Was it satisfied with the quality of the programs?

Answer:

Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes (SAISO) funding

(a) The NSW Catholic Education Commission is responsible for the detailed administration of this programme within their system and they hold detailed information about allocations to individual schools. Programme guidelines specify that both government and non-government school education authorities are required to provide the Australian Government with information concerning the way in which the funds are managed, including the principles applied in their decision-making about the allocation of funding amounts to individual schools. School authorities, government and non-government are not required to report on SAISO funding to individual schools.

(b) Educational accountability for both the government and non-government education authorities is through the agreed national framework for the National Report on Schooling (ANR) and public reporting of student outcomes through agreed national performance information reporting processes. Both government and non-government education authorities provide this information through processes established by the MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce and the Australian Government.

Following a review of arrangements for targeted programmes in the independent sector, from 2003 the sector will report annually to their schools and to the Australian Government in

relation to their targeted programme funding allocations, including SAISO and this is reflected in their Agreements with the Australian Government. The details provided as part of E015-04 was based on information provided to the Australian Government by the NSW Association for Independent Schools for 2001 and 2002 sector initiatives and projects funded by SAISO allocations. As such, the information provided to the Australian Government was not part of formal educational accountability arrangements for SAISO funding. However, the reported activity by the NSW AIS and use of funds on professional development activities is consistent with the purposes of SAISO funding.