

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000934

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked on 20 October 2016, Proof Hansard page 43

Schools funding

Question

Senator O'NEILL: As I do recall, Chair, Mr Piccoli is indeed a regional representative of New South Wales and currently the Minister for Education. But I go to Mr Baird's comments yesterday when he said

There is absolutely no doubt that needs-based funding, made possible by Gonski, has been of enormous benefit to students right across NSW. That is why NSW signed the six-year agreement and why we continue to press the commonwealth government to honour its commitments.

Mr Piccoli spoke of Hurstville South Public School, and there are schools right across this country that are writing to senators and members all over the country saying they want the Gonski funding because they absolutely understand what it means for the learning of children. They are concerned about the learning of children, not some arbitrary, 'Let's give all the states the same and pretend it is fair for the learning of children.' Yesterday, he said that in 2016 in Hurstville South Public School, 58 per cent of the year 5 students were achieving results that put them in the top two bands of NAPLAN for reading and numeracy combined—up from 39 per cent in 2012—and that is attributed solely to the additional needs based funding that was used in that school to employ additional staff providing targeted teaching for students who needed extra support and literacy.

Mr Piccoli said it was naive to expect to turn around student performance in the way that government is citing some evidence of, given that they have only had nine per cent of the planned Gonski funding so far. My question is: what is the government's response to Mr Baird's comments and Mr Piccoli's articulation of the fact that they only have nine per cent of the funding that they signed up for?

Senator Birmingham: I have no idea where that figure comes from but I am happy to take on notice and assess whether that is anything remotely like an accurate representation.

Answer

The timing of additional Commonwealth funding to NSW across 2014 and 2015 was agreed by the then Prime Minister Gillard and the then Premier O'Farrell in April 2013 as set out in the bilateral agreement between NSW and the Australian Government under the National Education Reform Agreement (NERA).

Consistent with the NERA, \$8.9 billion in recurrent Commonwealth funding was provided to NSW schools over 2014 and 2015 which represents 29 per cent of the \$30.6 billion of total recurrent Commonwealth funding to be provided for NSW schools over the six years from 2014 to 2019 under the NERA.