

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome 2

DEEWR Question No. EW710_10

Senator Fielding asked on 22 October 2009, EEW Hansard page 39 & 40

Question

Non Government schools -Teacher Training in Identification of Learning Difficulties

Senator FIELDING—Right. We also need to go back in a second to the government sector and what funding is provided there. But out of the \$814 million, can you tell me what is spent specifically in providing teachers with adequate training to be able to help them identify children with learning disabilities from a young age? I would like an answer to that question. How would you find that out if you do not know?

Ms Hanlon—We could take it on notice, but we will need to go out to each of the jurisdictions and ask them how much money they actually spend explicitly on that particular function.

Senator FIELDING—On notice—I am certainly not trying to direct the department; it is not my job, but I think it is a very key area—can you find out what specific dollars out of the \$814 million are being directed to providing teachers with adequate training to be able to help them identify children with learning disabilities at a young age.

Ms Hanlon—Certainly, we will take that on notice and see what we can do. But, just to make it clear, that \$814 million is for the non-government sector.

Answer

Australian Government funding for students with disability in government schools is provided to states and territories under the \$42.4 billion National Education Agreement.

The Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) program assists the most educationally disadvantaged students in non government schools. This includes students with disability or learning difficulty, students who are socio-economically disadvantaged, and students from a language background other than English.

The non government education authorities in each state/territory administer the funding and make decisions about resourcing distributions to individual schools. These arrangements enable each state/territory to use the funding flexibility to meet the needs of their specific jurisdiction.

The Australian Government has invested over \$2.2 billion for the *Smarter Schools* National Partnerships (NP) which comprise:

- \$550 million for ambitious, nationally significant and sustainable reforms to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and school leaders in classrooms and schools through the *Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality NP*
- \$1.5 billion over seven years for improving educational outcomes in low socio-economic status (SES) school communities through the *Smarter Schools – Low SES School Communities NP*
- \$540 million for improving literacy and numeracy through the *Smarter Schools – Literacy and Numeracy NP*

The three *Smarter Schools* National Partnerships aim to raise the quality of teaching, ensure all students are benefitting from schooling, especially in disadvantaged communities, and improve literacy and numeracy outcomes.

One way in which the Department is providing teachers and school leaders in government and non government schools with training to improve teaching of students with disability is via the Helping Children with Autism package. DEEWR is responsible for delivering two initiatives under the \$190 million cross-portfolio package which aim to foster positive partnerships between schools and families to improve the educational outcomes of children with an ASD.

The initiatives provide:

- Professional development for teachers, school leaders and other school staff to build their understanding, skills and expertise in working with children with an ASD.
- Workshops and information sessions for parents and carers to assist them to work with their child's teachers, school leaders and other staff.