

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

**Outcome 2 - Schools**

**DEEWR Question No.EW0492\_11**

**Senator Fifield provided in writing.**

**Question**

**DIGITAL EDUCATION REVOLUTION - LAPTOPS AND STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES**

*I understand that the laptops that are available to schools under the Digital Education Revolution program are not accessible for students with a disability. Are you aware of this issue?*

**Answer**

The National Secondary School Computer Fund, a major program under the Digital Education Revolution, is increasing the ratio of computers to students in Years 9 to 12 in all schools, to a national target of one computer for each student. Funding is based on a purchase price of \$1000 per computer with additional funding up to \$1500 per computer provided for installation and maintenance costs.

As education authorities have primary responsibility for decisions concerning design, purchasing and use of educational hardware and software that will best meet the specific needs of their schools, purchasing of ICT equipment through the Fund is taking place at a state, sector or school level.

The majority of students with disability in Years 9-12 attend mainstream schools and for many, standard computer equipment suits their needs. In these cases, Australian Government funding can be used for the purchase of a computer, either a laptop or desktop. For some students with disability other types of equipment are more appropriate, and specific guidelines have been established which allow schools to use their funding allocation for computers more flexibly to meet the ICT needs of their students with disability.

Under the three application Rounds of the Fund \$947,000 has been provided to education authorities for students with disability. Students with disability are continuing to benefit from the Fund through the DER National Partnership and Funding Agreements.

Funds available under the DER are additional to funding already provided from federal or state initiatives for students with disability. These funds are not to replace existing programs or sources of funds.