

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

Department of Education Question No. ED0028_14

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question

Independent Public Schools and Greater Community Engagement election commitment

In relation to the Government's Independent Public Schools and Greater Community Engagement election commitment:

- How does this program differ from the previous government's Empowering Local Schools Program? And the requirements to encourage greater school autonomy in the NERA?
- What is the program of implementation for this election commitment?
- What are the key dates and milestones?
- What monitoring and reporting will be in place? And what is the latest date information about outcomes will be made publically available?
- And how funding will be distributed?
- Will all schools be able to apply for this funding?
- Who will make decisions about funding? What criteria will be used to guide these decisions?
- How exactly will an 'independent public school' be defined?
- Will schools that are already have a degree of 'independence' be able to apply for funding e.g. schools already participating in the empowering Local Schools Program?
- How will this program be implemented in systems that already have a higher degree of autonomy? Like the Victorian state system? Or the non-system catholic schools?
- How will States be encouraged to participate in this program?
- Will funding be tied to certain actions or outcomes? If so, what actions or outcomes?
- What will happen if schools choose not to apply to be part of this program?

Answer

The Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative aims to encourage 1500, or 25 per cent of public schools to adopt similar levels of autonomy to IPS in Western Australia by 2017.

Under the IPS initiative, participating state and territory governments will work with their government schools to move to greater autonomy where parents, principals and school communities have an increased say in determining how their local school operates to improve learning outcomes for their students.

Funding of \$70 million is available over four financial years for the IPS Fund. It is intended that the first round of payments from the Fund will be made by May 2014.

The Australian Government has invited states and territories to participate in the IPS initiative. Participation is voluntary. The Government acknowledges that schools are not operated by the Commonwealth, and will work collaboratively with the states and territories to ensure that the IPS is implemented in a way that takes into account their local circumstances and needs.

The Government will work with those states and territories who choose to participate in early 2014 to determine implementation details, including key dates, milestones and reporting elements.

Under the previous government's Empowering Local Schools National Partnership (ELS NP), 634 government schools participated out of a total of 926 government schools, which is less than 10 per cent of government schools. The ELS NP also included Catholic and Independent Schools.

The ELS NP focused primarily on three key areas—increasing empowerment in governance arrangements, funding and infrastructure, and workforce.

The IPS initiative will focus on five principles:

1. Increased local governance and parental involvement
2. Greater accountability to parents and the local community
3. Implementing streamlined or one-line budgets
4. Increased local management of school facilities and infrastructure
5. Increased delegation over staffing appointments for school principals to maximise student learning outcomes.