

Inquiry into Diabetes
QUESTION ON NOTICE
Date of hearing: 01 March 2024

Outcome: Schools

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000018

MP Graham Perrett on 01 March 2024, Proof Hansard page 10

National data - schools where there is no physical education being taught

Question

Mr PERRETT: Before you go to the responses, does this mean that there are schools where there is no physical education being taught, effectively?

Genevieve Watson: I would have to refer that question to the state departments of education.

Mr PERRETT: But you have the oversight in terms of supply.

Genevieve Watson: We have the oversight—

Mr PERRETT: As a question on notice, could you let us know if there is any national data?

Genevieve Watson: Yes, certainly. What we don't do at the moment is collect data by teacher type. We don't know how many STEM teachers and PE teachers. We don't collect data in that way. We know a national aggregate at the Commonwealth level of how many teachers we have. The states are responsible for HPE, STEM, the old home economics, as you say, and those kinds of things. At the state level, they will have that kind of information. They will also know where teachers are located and where the shortages are most acute in schools.

Mr PERRETT: And if they are seeking exemptions to teach the national curriculum because of a shortage of teachers? They can't teach physical education because they don't have any physical education teachers or anyone willing to do that?

Genevieve Watson: I don't wish to speak on behalf of the states. My understanding, though, is that quite often, say, in the primary setting, the classroom teacher may also be capable of teaching PE or there may be a roving PE teacher around a regional group of schools.

Mr PERRETT: But primary training—

Genevieve Watson: Part of primary training—yes, that's right.

Mr PERRETT: that you're aware of in that respect?

Genevieve Watson: In the secondary setting, I'm not sure. I don't have that data, but we can seek to find that for you.

Answer

The number of teachers teaching in each specialty area is a matter for State and Territory governments.

There is no national data available on the specialist qualifications teachers hold in relation to teaching subjects, such as Science and Health and Physical Education (HPE). There is also no national data available in relation to schools that are currently operating without teachers with specialist qualifications.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport

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Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000019

MP Mike Freeland on 01 March 2024, Proof Hansard page 12

Formal federal interactions with the Department of Health in developing guidelines to manage diabetes in schools

Question

CHAIR:...Do you formally interact with the department of health in developing guidelines to manage diabetes in schools?

Genevieve Watson: Diabetes in schools is very well managed, as I understand it, by the states and territories. You will find that it—

CHAIR: Well, some of the answers we have been getting have been a bit contradictory to that.

Genevieve Watson: Right. That's interesting to know. They often have very extensive guidelines for their teachers about the management of diabetes. I suppose it is complex for teachers because it is a—

CHAIR: It is complex. I completely agree.

Genevieve Watson: We all know what is involved in the day-to-day management of diabetes. You are watching out for your students throughout the day. Often if they are very young in particular, that is more complex. They certainly have quite strong guidelines around how to manage diabetes. That's the role we play— that interaction at the guideline and national system setting, which Rachel referred to earlier, through that mechanism of leadership with the states and territories.

CHAIR: But that is within the education department. Is there an interaction federally with the department of health in supporting national guidelines for diabetes management in schools or not?

Ms O'Connor: There hasn't been recently because the guidelines have been in place for some time. But absolutely we can take on notice to provide further advice in terms of what the interactions were between the departments that led to particularly this program. As Gen has said, the department of health will be able to provide further insights into the sort of engagement that they have visibility of to education and health within the states and territories as well. Absolutely on a range of different health related measures we have very close relationships with the department of health through the development of different measures and guidelines et cetera.

Answer

The Department of Health and Aged Care has responsibility for the national guidelines for diabetes management in schools. While there has been no recent interaction with the Department of Health and Aged Care on the national guidelines for diabetes management in schools (see IQ24-000020), there is regular engagement on matters relating to the health and wellbeing of students and these forums provide mechanisms to interact at a national level.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport

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Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000020

MP Mike Freeland on 01 March 2024, Proof Hansard page 12

Recent federal interactions with the Department of Health in supporting national guidelines for diabetes management in schools

Question

CHAIR: Sure. One of the problems—and the reason we're having this inquiry—is that diabetes management has changed dramatically in the last 10 years. It is complex, but there are gaps in the management particularly of people with type 1 diabetes that we see. From a federal level, it would be nice to get our states to move in concert on some of this stuff, particularly as the Commonwealth is now extensively providing financial management for the technology et cetera. Certainly from what I see—I interact with our schools a lot—it makes it quite complex for teachers. If you are a teacher who trained even 10 years ago, you would have had no information about managing pumps and continuous glucose monitors et cetera. The information that is sent back to carers in real time has changed dramatically. I think there is a need for Commonwealth leadership in this. That is why I am asking whether there has been any recent interaction. But you are not aware of any?

Ms O'Connor: I'm not aware of recent interaction, but absolutely we'll take that on notice and come back to you with further advice.

CHAIR: If you could find some information on that, it would be very helpful to the committee. Thank you. I don't have any further questions

Answer

The Department of Health and Aged Care has responsibility for the national guidelines for diabetes management in schools. The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Aged Care engage regularly on matters relating to the health and wellbeing of students, however, there has been no recent interaction on specific matters relating to the national guidelines for diabetes management in schools.

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Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000021

MP Mike Freeland on 01 March 2024, Proof Hansard page 13

Program providing healthy meals for children in schools in remote and rural communities

Question

CHAIR: I have one question that is a bit out of left field. One of the issues we are concerned about is type 2 diabetes in Indigenous communities. I have visited Indigenous communities. Next week we're going to the Northern Territory to hear from some people with lived experience, as well as the health providers in remote communities. An issue that has come up is access to healthy foods, particularly in rural and remote areas. We have canvassed the thought of providing healthy meals for children in schools in remote and even some rural communities. Has that been on your radar at all?

Ms O'Connor: I will speak with my experience in education and my experience in Indigenous affairs and in Aboriginal health in the Northern Territory.

CHAIR: Wow. That's very impressive.

Ms O'Connor: I am aware of a school nutrition program that was delivered through the National Indigenous Australians Agency, as it's now known, in the Northern Territory. That is a program that has provided meals to children in schools in the Northern Territory. We can take on notice to provide some further information on that program, which doesn't sit in our department, but we can get that information and provide it.

CHAIR: It be great if you could.

Answer

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) has provided the following response.

- In 2024, NIAA committed \$9.07 million to deliver School Nutrition Projects in the Northern Territory (SNP).
- Funding is distributed to 48 providers to deliver SNP in 73 schools across 63 communities in the Northern Territory.
- SNP supports the operational expenses associated with providing meals to approximately 7,500 children enrolled in school from Transition (year prior to Year 1) to Year 12. It also provides employment opportunities for First Nations people.
- SNP Providers can deliver any combination of breakfast, morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea – as determined by the community and provider.

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Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000022

MP Mike Freeland on 01 March 2024, Proof Hansard page 14

Schools in Central Australia - new program

Question

Ms O'Connor: I would also say through my experience with that program and understanding in the Northern Territory that there are different ways in which that has been delivered, some of which has been through partnerships with the community stores or where there are, for example, aged care facilities in the community. It is how to maximise what is available in the community to deliver that program. There is also work currently underway in the Northern Territory through our department, in partnership with the Northern Territory education department, with a particular emphasis on schools in Central Australia. We are working in partnership with the Aboriginal leadership group that has been formed in Central Australia. We've supported schools to work with communities around developing school action plans and providing flexibility to those schools to support the learning needs of the students in those schools by working with the community. So that's new. It's very much at the infancy stage. That program will also boost the allied health support that's provided through the NT Department of Education to all of those schools.

CHAIR: Any information you can provide would be very useful to us. Who provides the funding for that? Do you get separate funding for that?

Ms O'Connor: The funding for that measure is through our department. That was part of the Prime Minister's response to concerns in Central Australia. Last year, there was a \$250 million package. There is \$40 million allocated through us to schools in Central Australia through that package.

CHAIR: Over what period of time?

Ms O'Connor: It is essentially 12 months, but we envisage that it will continue into at least next year as well. That is also informing part of the negotiations for the next National School Reform Agreement.

CHAIR: Any information or data you can provide about that would be most welcome.

Answer

As part of the *Better, Safer Future for Central Australia* plan, the On-Country Learning measure (the measure) is providing \$40 million to support all operating schools in Central Australia to work with their local communities to develop tailored solutions to better engage children and young people in school and provide them with the wrap-around support they need to succeed.

The measure recognises that quality education is a central enabler to improving whole-of-community outcomes.

The funding is being distributed through the [Bilateral Schedule: On-Country Learning](#) to the *Federation Funding Agreement – Education and Skills* between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments. The breakdown of funding is as follows:

- \$34.7 million to schools per the bilateral schedule
- \$4.9 million to central supports
- \$0.4 to NT Government for administration

School Action Plans (Plans) have been developed and agreed between schools and communities, in line with the commitment to take a new approach by listening to communities first. Plans include identified activities to support improved educational outcomes. Government school plans have been published by the Northern Territory Government and are available at <https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/on-country-learning-measure-central-australian-schools-action-plans>.