

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000101

Senator Lines, Sue provided in writing

Students First funding

Question

The WA Education Minister's response to a question in Parliament in November last year that said the Students First funding is:

"...pooled with State appropriations to provide public school services or as a funding source for school building works"

- a. Is this a permitted use of federal school funding in WA?
- b. Is the Government satisfied that the WA Government is not simply diverting federal funding to prop up their budget and undertake works for which they should be responsible?
- c. What mechanisms are in place for WA to make sure they do not cut state school funding and prop up their budget with federal education funding?
- d. In its 2014 Budget, Western Australia cut more than \$200 million from school funding. Is the Minister or the Department aware of this? Has, or will, any action be taken to ensure WA reverses this cut as a condition of federal Students First funding?
- e. Is the Minister/Department aware of any reports from schools in WA that they have not received in their budgets the additional federal Students First funding?
- f. Where has the Gonski/additional federal Students First money gone in WA?

Answer

- a. Each jurisdiction has the budget flexibility to allocate funds to implement agreed national policy initiatives. As has been the case since 2009 (funding provided under the National Education Agreement) state and territory governments have been able to use Commonwealth schools funding for both recurrent and capital expenditure.
- b. Western Australia, like all other states and territories, must certify that funds provided by the Commonwealth have been used for the purpose of providing school education and implementing national policy initiatives for school education in accordance with the *Australian Education Act 2013* and *Australian Education Regulation 2013*.
- c. State and territory funding is a matter for those jurisdictions.
- d. State and territory funding is a matter for those jurisdictions.
- e. No.
- f. Each jurisdiction has the budget flexibility to allocate funds to implement agreed national policy initiatives.