

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

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

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0005_14

Senator Back provided in writing.

Question

Students with disability

1. What arrangements will cover students with disability (SWD) in 2014 and beyond?
2. What quantum of funding by sector and jurisdiction will be available to support the needs of SWD?
3. What are their projections for SWD in future years and how will this be supported to ensure no deterioration in eligible per student funding for each jurisdiction across Australia?
4. Will the \$100 million extension of the More Support for Students with Disability apply to all schools only in 2014 or only apply to those trial schools participating in the program?
5. Will all eligible SWD students receive additional funding in 2014, as the first year of transition?

Answer

1. What arrangements will cover students with disability (SWD) in 2014 and beyond?

Arrangements for students with disability are outlined in the National Educational Reform Agreement and the *Australian Education Act 2013*. From 2014, Commonwealth funding for schools will be calculated according to a new School Resourcing Standard (SRS) entitlement comprising:

- a base amount for every primary and secondary school student, based on the costs of schools already getting excellent results; and
- extra money through 'loadings' for schools and students that need more support, such as students with disability, where it is known that additional funding is required to support student outcomes.

The interim students with disability loading, which equates to a loading of 186% of the SRS, provides for a continuation of overall current levels of disability funding from the Australian and state and territory governments. It has been calculated by dividing the current estimate of students with disability expenditure by the total number of reported students with a disability for each government and non-government jurisdiction.

The interim loading for school students with disability for 2014 is also supported by an extension of the current More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative. The Australian Government is providing an additional \$100 million in 2014 for education authorities to build on and consolidate the valuable reforms already underway through this initiative. This is on top of the \$200 million already provided to government and non-government education authorities over the 2012 and 2013 school years to support their work with students with disability and learning difficulties.

Also, there will be a \$76 million boost in funding over six years which equates to a funding loading of 223% for students with disability in special schools. This will ensure that special schools with high proportions of students with disability with complex needs benefit through the transition period of the new funding arrangements. In addition, the new schools funding model provides for special schools to be covered by a safety net guarantee. These schools will be funded to at least their current level of public funding, even if this is greater than they would have attracted through the SRS. Special schools are also exempt from the capacity to contribute requirements, meaning that there will be no expectation of parental contributions.

The Australian Government is working collaboratively with government and non-government education authorities through the Standing Council Joint Working Group to Provide Advice on Reform for Students with Disability to progress both the development of a funding loading for students with disability and the phasing in of the nationally consistent collection of data on school students with disability. Work is continuing over the remainder of 2013 and 2014 to provide the basis for reformed funding arrangements for students with disability from 2015.

2. What quantum of funding by sector and jurisdiction will be available to support the needs of SWD?

The formula for calculating a school’s Student with Disability loading is specified in the *Australian Education Act 2013*:

$$\text{School's student with disability loading} = \frac{\text{The disability loading percentage}}{\text{The SRS at the school}}$$

The Australian Education Regulations 2013 will prescribe the students with disability loading percentage at 186% or 223% for students with disability in special schools. The base SRS per student amounts are to be \$9721 for primary school students and \$12 193 for secondary school students.

3. What are their projections for SWD in future years and how will this be supported to ensure no deterioration in eligible per student funding for each jurisdiction across Australia?

The current model for calculating future funding for students with disability includes provisions for future enrolment growth.

For 2015 and beyond, the Australian Government is working collaboratively with states and territories to implement the nationally consistent collection of data on

school students with disability. This data source has the potential to provide the evidence base that will inform the allocation of future funding for students with disability.

The nationally consistent collection of data on school students with disability will be implemented in a phased way in 2013 and 2014, prior to full implementation in 2015. It will provide information on the number of school students with disability, where they are located and the level of adjustment provided for them to participate in schooling on the same basis as other students.

4. Will the \$100 million extension of the More Support for Students with Disability apply to all schools only in 2014 or only apply to those trial schools participating in the program?

Under the More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative, funding is allocated to jurisdictions based on the total number of full time equivalent school students in each state and territory, and then to each sector within a state or territory based on the proportion of the state's total students with disability educated within each sector.

Education authorities then determine which activities they are undertaking and which schools are to be involved in these activities.

It is possible that schools involved in 2012 and 2013 may continue to be involved in 2014. It is also possible that schools as yet not involved may have the opportunity to become involved in 2014.

5. Will all eligible SWD students receive additional funding in 2014, as the first year of transition?

An interim loading for students with disability will be in place for 2014, while work continues to inform the development of the loading for students with disability in 2015. The interim loading provides for at least the current funding arrangements for students with disability to continue until an evidence based funding loading for students with disability is introduced.