

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000421

Senator Wright, Penny asked on 04 June 2015, Proof Hansard page 141

Range of P-TECH schools across the United States

Question

Senator WRIGHT: I am just going to come back to this, because I was just about to ask Ms Hanlon something. She was just giving some general information about employment and so on. I am really interested in interrogating what actual evidence there is. Can you take on notice what you are aware of in terms of those? I am aware that there are concerns that when you compare like with like and you interrogate the data, perhaps a bit surprisingly it actually suggests that the school in New York is still one of the lowest performing schools in the city. That goes against the rhetoric that we are hearing, and I am really interested in understanding what the situation is. If it is wonderful and successful, that would be great, and we need to know that, but, by the same token, if it is something that is being funded, what is the basis on which that decision is being made? Can I ask you to take on notice that question.

....

Mr Cook: We can take on notice the range of P-TECH schools across America. As Ms Hanlon said, there are many P-TECH schools and many models. We are happy to take that on notice and provide that information

Answer

The first cohort of P-TECH students is not scheduled to graduate until 2017. A small number of students have graduated early and been offered employment by IBM.

P-TECH schools in the United States (US) have reported higher levels of student engagement and improved academic achievement. For example:

- At the Brooklyn P-TECH, 71 per cent (84 students) from the second cohort of students have met at least one college-ready benchmark, and in the autumn of 2014, P-TECH students earned a grade of C or better in 70 per cent of all courses taken.
- At the Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy, the year-to-date attendance rate is 95 per cent (5 per cent higher than the high school district average).
- A total of 14 per cent of Norwalk Early College Academy's students have made the honour roll and the attendance rate average is 98 per cent.
- Excelsior Academy has a 98 per cent attendance rate (five per cent above the district high school average) and 66 per cent of all students made the honour roll during the first quarter of the first marking period.

In addition, the P-TECH model and its growth in the US have been widely reported, including:

- The Reinvention of the American High School: National Journal - Aug 28, 2014
<http://www.nationaljournal.com/political-connections/p-tech-schools-have-potential-to-be-transformative-20140828>

- The School That Is Changing American Education: Time Magazine - Feb 13, 2014
<http://time.com/10038/the-school-that-is-changing-american-education/>
- Why Six Years for High-School is Catching On: PBS News Hour - Apr 9, 2014
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/six-years-high-school-two-extra-years-catching/>
- Innovative Early College Model Promises to Transform US Education: WNBC - Aug 17, 2014
<http://beta.criticalmention.com/app/#clip/view?11147646/token/34aed3af-d6cc-4444-b2bc-5ab8168c1444>

The P-TECH pilot will provide an opportunity to evaluate how key elements of this innovative US approach to education-industry collaboration can benefit students in the Australian context.