

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000505

Senator O'Neill, Deborah provided in writing

Independent Public Schools

Question

1. In relation to the Independent Public Schools initiative, were baseline assessments of school results undertaken before schools joined this program? What accountability and reporting measures are in place for schools to track whether results improve as a result of the changes?

Referring to the Government's Independent Public Schools agreements with New South Wales and South Australia which state that they: Will not establish a model of independent public schools (NSW p1 of Schedule, Independent Public Schools Agreement; SA p1 of Schedule, Independent Public Schools Agreements)

2. Given that the NSW and SA agreements state they will not establish independent public schools, how will these states be monitored and evaluated?

3. Is there a formal independent evaluation planned at a national level and when will that take place? If there is not, why is there not one underway?

4. What is the current status of the agreement with Victoria over IPS funding? Are they honouring it?

5. Are there any consequences if a state does not comply with the IPS agreement?

6. Have all of the progress reports been returned from participating jurisdictions? If not, which ones? - Please provide copies.

7. How will feedback from the reports be used in relation to the Independent Public Schools initiative?

8. When will participating jurisdictions be required to report to the Department next?

Answer

Under the Independent Public Schools initiative, states and territories are responsible for evaluating the progress of their schools, which could include conducting baseline assessments. States and territories are required to provide annual progress reports to the Australian Government.

The Project Agreements for NSW and SA outline how these states will monitor and evaluate their progress in implementing the Independent Public Schools initiative.

A formal independent evaluation has not been planned at a national level. The Department of Education and Training is responsible for administering the initiative and monitoring progress at a national level.

Victoria has a Project Agreement in place for participation in the Independent Public Schools initiative.

The Project Agreements for the Independent Public Schools initiative specify the milestones that must be met before progress payments can be made to states and territories.

The first annual progress reports have been received from all states and territories where they were due by the end of April 2015. Two jurisdictions have delayed reporting dates: WA and Victoria, and thus delayed payments. The department is unable to provide copies of these reports, as under the terms of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations, authority for the release of these annual reports rests with the relevant state or territory.

The annual progress reports for the Independent Public Schools initiative will be used to monitor progress at a national level.

States and territories will provide their second annual progress reports to the Government by 30 April 2016.