

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1.1

DEST Question No. E843_04

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

The Minister has been reported in the media as threatening to require increased reporting to parents as a condition of Federal funding.

Can the Department advise the kind of reporting intended?

- Literacy and numeracy benchmarks?
- Other measures for the national goals of schooling?
- Will it include full financial information, including all sources of income?
- Will this information be available to the general public, as well as the school's parents?

Is a 'league table' intended?

Will the reporting try to use a 'value added' approach, to take account of the different ability levels at different schools? If so, has the Department undertaken an analysis of 'value added' approaches in other states (e.g. NSW) or countries (e.g. UK)? And what are the general conclusions from that research?

What will the Federal Government do if it finds out that some children have 'failed' to meet the education standards for their stage of learning? Does the Government support compulsory repeating of a grade? What kind of remedial action will the Federal Government take?

Answer:

Increased reporting to parents

An element of 2005-2008 schools funding is enhanced performance framework and reporting arrangements.

The performance framework will include a commitment from grantees that schools report to parents on their child's performance against the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks for Years 3, 5 and 7. This was endorsed in principle by MCEETYA in July 2003, and is already being carried out in WA, Victoria, ACT and NT. The commitment would be made by education authorities and non-government systems on behalf of their schools, and by non-systemic schools on their own account.

The Minister proposed in *Taking Schools to the Next Level* (published in November 2003) and in an announcement on 30 April 2004 that schools should publish and make readily accessible, to parents and the public, their academic outcomes (for example, average Year 12 results, percentage of students achieving national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy, improvements on previous years), the vocational, education and training options offered, destinations of school leavers and the professional standing of teachers (eg qualifications

and professional development undertaken), staff and student retention and absentee rates. There will also be a requirement that the level of public funding per student for each school be published.

The information will be available to the general public, as well as the school's parents.

It is not the intention of the enhanced performance framework and reporting arrangements to create so-called 'league tables'. Year on year comparisons can provide a value-added approach. Detailed descriptions of the indicators to be published by schools, including any value-added approaches, are not yet finalised and are being informed by consultations with education authorities, overseas practice as well as feedback from parents and the community.

The requirement to publish a range of performance information at the school level is a commitment grantees must make in order to receive federal schools funding. Education authorities will continue to have responsibility for determining action for individual children who do not meet the benchmarks.

The 2005-2008 quadrennium schools package, including the reporting and educational accountability framework, will be subject to a consultation process with States/Territories and non-government education authorities and other stakeholders, including parents, before implementation.