

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1

**Output Group:** 1.2 – Assistance to individuals including those with special needs

#### **DEST Question No. E140\_05**

Senator Crossin provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

Schools are being forced to send information home to parents of children in years 3, 5 and 7 regarding test results.

Will the Department be sending information home to parents about precisely what funding each school got to achieve these results?

Will comparisons on funding government and non-government schools also be given?

Are there any plans to reduce funding to schools performing “poorly” in these tests?

Might such schools actually be given more funding assistance to better resource programs?

Are there any proposals to reduce funds to schools not reporting results to parents?

#### **Answer:**

##### *Schools reporting to parents*

The Australian Government does not send any information directly to parents.

All education authorities and testing agents routinely provide the results of literacy and numeracy testing to parents each year. In July 2003, all Education Ministers agreed to also report to parents their child's achievement against Year 3 and Year 5 national literacy and numeracy benchmarks from 2004 onwards. In 2003, Victoria, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory reported to parents their child's achievement against the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks as part of their reporting of test results.

From 2005 it will be a requirement that schools receiving Australian Government funding report to parents their child's achievement against the Year 3, 5 and 7 national literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

The legislation also includes a requirement that schools publish specified performance information. The precise details of what information should be made public will be informed by the results of public consultation and by discussions with State and Territory school authorities and may include a school's performance in literacy and numeracy testing where appropriate. The information will be required to be reported in the manner specified as a condition of receiving Australian Government funding. The results of tests will not reduce the funding that schools receive.

Targeted funding to assist schools to meet the needs of the most educationally disadvantaged students in schools, provided under the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme, is increasing. Over 2005-2008 the Australian Government will provide \$2 billion through this programme which includes additional funding of \$25.6 million over the previous quadrennium. In terms of the funding provided to individual schools under

the Schools Grants element of the programme, education authorities are responsible for determining where the greatest needs for assistance are in their sector and are responsible for determining appropriate funding amounts.

The requirements to report to parents and publish school performance information from 2005 are educational accountability provisions under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together—Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Bill 2004* (the Bill). If an educational accountability provision is not met by an authority, the Minister may direct the authority to repay the amount stated in the determination. If the authority does not do so, the Minister may reduce other amounts of financial assistance covered by the Bill. If an authority fails to comply with the direction, the Minister may also delay the making of further payment until the condition is fulfilled.