



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION  
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Mr Jonathan Davis MLA (Deputy  
Chair), Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

## Question Taken on Notice Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the ACT Auditor General's report No 6 of 2021:  
Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools

**Hearing date:** 29 March 2022

**Question Taken on Notice Number:** 01

**Date authorised for publication:** 19 July 2022

Asked by: Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

To witness: Mr Patrick Judge AEU

**From:** Bianca Hennessy [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2022 10:25 AM  
**To:** LA Committee - ECI  
**Cc:** Angela Burroughs; Patrick Judge  
**Subject:** RE: Question taken on notice: Education and Community Inclusion Committee - Public hearing into the Inquiry into the ACT Auditor General's report No 6 of 2021: Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools - Tuesday, 29 March 2022  
**Attachments:** Teaching Quality Inquiry - AEU Question on Notice .docx

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Hi,

Please find attached the AEU's answer to the question taken on notice from 29 March.

Kind regards,  
Bianca

**Bianca Hennessy**  
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The Australian Education Union acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders both past and present.

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**From:** LA Committee - ECI <[LACommitteeECI@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:LACommitteeECI@parliament.act.gov.au)>

**Sent:** Monday, 4 April 2022 1:55 PM

**To:** Patrick Judge <[patrick.judge@aeuact.org.au](mailto:patrick.judge@aeuact.org.au)>

**Cc:** LA Committee - ECI <[LACommitteeECI@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:LACommitteeECI@parliament.act.gov.au)>

**Subject:** Question taken on notice: Education and Community Inclusion Committee - Public hearing into the Inquiry into the ACT Auditor General's report No 6 of 2021: Teaching Quality in ACT Public Schools - Tuesday, 29 March 2022

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Mr Judge

Thanks again to yourself and your colleagues for appearing as witnesses at the hearing for the Education Committee's Inquiry into Teaching Quality on 29 March 2022 as your time and contributions were appreciated.

I am following up regarding a question you took on notice: that is, do schools need any co-located services that they do not currently have.

Appreciate your business and look forward to your reply at your earliest convenience.

Thanks

Christine

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Question to AEU, ACT Branch:

**Do schools need any co-located services that they do not currently have?**

There is enormous opportunity for targeted co-location of service provision at public schools in the ACT. As our written submission to the Inquiry stated, the biggest impacting factor on a student's learning outcomes is the student's socio-economic status and family background. This means that the most impactful thing that the ACT Government can do to raise student learning outcomes is address socio-economic inequality in the Territory.

2022 has seen some of the ACT's public schools reach crisis situations. Some schools have seen dangerous escalations of violence which has led to staff and student injuries, absences and even site closures. As the union in daily contact with workers at these schools, we know that these crises could have been averted had proactive approaches been taken to ensure that all students had their immediate needs met. Instead, schools are forced to take reactive measures to the detriment of all students.

This not only lowers confidence in the ACT public school system, but also compounds workload pressures on teachers, who are required by the circumstances to provide non-educational support to students in need or crisis. Teachers are not social workers, psychologists, or nurses, and yet they are called on daily to give the kind of expert support of these professions. This leaves vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the ACT at risk of not getting the expert help they need, and not having teachers who can dedicate their working time to education.

Because of this, we strongly recommend that the ACT Government investigate the feasibility of a wraparound co-location model to provide social services and allied health access at public schools. Our recommendation draws on conversations with experienced public school principals in the ACT, as well as research by the Gonski Institute and UNSW School of Education and academic evaluations of the Doveton Model in Victoria.

The key principles of a wraparound model are: young person and family voice and choice, team-based approach, natural (informal) supports, collaboration, community based-intent, cultural competence, individual design, a focus on strengths, unconditional commitment, and an outcomes-based approach (Cumming et al 2020, 5-6).

As noted by Cumming, Strnadová and Gilanyi, teachers *already* use a wraparound approach even when the service provision resourcing is not there. They observed teachers in NSW,

utilising the resources available within the Schools, for example Learning Support units and specialists and school counsellors and liaising with a range of external collaborators such as government and non-government agencies and health practitioners, to coordinate support for families (Cumming, Strnadová and Gilanyi 2020, 6)

We see this approach in ACT public schools too. This demonstrates that an intuitive understanding of a wraparound approach is already operating in schools. Programs like free breakfast and the provision of school psychologists reflects a nod to this approach by the Education Directorate too. Therefore, we can assume there is existing appreciation of this model and that it will be well-received and utilised if there is more funding and thoughtful service design applied.

The Education Directorate might gain useful insights from the structure, philosophy and operational approach of Gagan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal

Health and Community Services. Both employ multidisciplinary teams who collaborate internally and partner externally to meet the varied needs of Aboriginal and Torres Islander Canberrans.

We note positive feedback from AEU members in early childhood settings, where a Community Coordinator position is often funded. This person can connect families to local specialist support services and design targeted programs in parenting and childhood development to families who use the preschool.

A local approach is key. Evidence from the Doveton Model, called “Our Place”, demonstrates this. Doveton College is a school in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, in an area which experiences some of the most disadvantage in Victoria. Doveton provides education from early childhood to year 9. The ‘Doveton Model’,

incorporates wrap-around services intended to integrate high-quality early learning, alongside supporting families through on-site maternal and child health services for children from birth to age five ... [and] Support is provided for parents and community members to engage in volunteering, educational and employment opportunities (Newman et al 2022, 826)

Doveton has demonstrated excellent outcomes from this approach (Newman et al 2022, McMahon 2017) which could be thoughtfully replicated in the ACT.

In terms of what specific services could be made available at schools, we recommend the following:

- Priority given to interventions that could be made in early childhood settings by allied health professionals, especially:
  - Nurses
  - Speech pathologists
  - Physiotherapists
  - Referrals to paediatricians and child psychologists
  - NDIS partners

A weekly (or otherwise regular) on-site, drop-in model, supported by an on-site Community Coordinator, would be best.

- For older cohorts of students, more complex socio-economic needs may be met by wraparound service provision at school sites. In addition to the allied health professionals listed above, older students would be assisted by being able to access help from social workers who might help with mental health, housing, financial hardship, legal aid, and so on.

A best practice model would see a full-time Community Coordinator employed at each school (or more than one at large schools), who can coordinate a wraparound approach to the differentiated needs of each student and their family. This Community Coordinator would have strong connections to other ACT Government service providers, principally in the Community Services Directorate. They would coordinate a team of social workers and allied health professionals, whose specialisations would suit the specific needs of the school community. Schools would also have at least one DECO (Disability Education Coordination Officer) funded full time to assist the school to meet inclusion needs.

The goal would be for students and families to have their complex needs met at the school (or as close to the school as possible), making those students more able to engage in learning, and allowing teachers to teach.

## References:

Cumming, T. M., Strnadová, I., & Gilanyi, L. (2020). *Education-Centred Formal Wraparound Services in Support of School-Aged Students with Complex Needs. Report on interviews with stakeholders in rural and remote schools*. Project Report. UNSW Sydney.

Cumming, T. M., Strnadová, I., & Lonergan, R., & Lee, H. M. (2020). *A Wraparound approach to 'whole of student' issues: Implementation framework*. UNSW Sydney.

McMahon, G. (2017). *The Doveton Model and implications for other sites: The development of the 'Our Place' model of support for communities of disadvantage*. International Specialised Skills Institute and the Colman Foundation.

Newman, S., McLoughlin, J., Skouteris, H., Blewitt, C., Edward Melhuish, E., & Bailey, C. (2022). Does an integrated, wrap-around school and community service model in an early learning setting improve academic outcomes for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds?, *Early Child Development and Care*, 192:5, 816-830.