

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY****STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

Amanda Bresnan MLA (Chair), Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA (Deputy Chair), Mary Porter AM MLA

2009-2010 Annual Reports Inquiry – supplementary questionsDepartment of Education and Training

ETYA Question No.	AR page	Area	Question
01	18	Health and Well Being The Ministers Physical Activity Challenge	Last year when the challenge was in its first year and there was a participation rate of 35.7%, or 7935 students were involved. This represented half of the ACT Primary schools This year 10,000 students were involved and while a percentage is not shown this does seem to still be well below 50% of students and not much more than 50% of schools involved. 1. Why is the take up so slow when you have been working with the University of Canberra on it and have engaged three physical education consultants for three years to increase the capacity of primary school teachers to deliver Fundamental Movement Skills as part of the curriculum?
02	19	Earn or learn changes to the Education Act.	Changes to the Education Act were made in 2009 which required students to remain in school, learning or be employed until age 17. What has been the impact of this on ACT schools and colleges?
03			Do you have any indication of how many students are not complying with this requirement given that this was a major concern when the department briefed us on the changes last year?

04	22	A4 Outlook Strategic Plan. Students with a Disability	On page 22 of the Annual Report it says that <i>"the Strategic Plan will be supported through the development and implementation of a comprehensive disability strategy"</i> . Has the strategy been developed?
05			How is the strategy being implemented?
06			What parts of the Review of Special Education in the ACT undertaken in 2009 will it contain?
07			What consultation with parents/guardians/foster carers and teachers is taking place?
08	22/23	Achievement gap in the performance of indigenous and non indigenous students	Can you report on progress with the programs designed to halve the achievement gap by 2018?
09			It is reported on page 32 in relation to NAPLAN testing that indigenous students continue to perform, quote, <i>"less well"</i> than their non indigenous peers. How will the department be address this in the next year?
10	34	COAG "Smart School" partnerships	During the year the department implemented plans under the agreement with the Australian Government for the "Smart Schools" set of partnerships. Reward payments to undertake additional literacy and numeracy are available if targets are met. How is the ACT progressing and when will the first round of reporting against targets be available?
11	34	The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)	The AEDI is a COAG- supported national survey of all children in their first year of schooling. The results show that ACT children are lagging behind national results in respect of health and well being and slightly behind in social competence. You indicate the data from the survey was used to inform policy and programs. Have any plans been put in place as a result of the survey to target these underperforming areas in primary schools?

11	34	The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)	The AEDI is a COAG- supported national survey of all children in their first year of schooling. The results show that ACT children are lagging behind national results in respect of health and well being and slightly behind in social competence. You indicate the data from the survey was used to inform policy and programs. Have any plans been put in place as a result of the survey to target these underperforming areas in primary schools?
12			Did the surveys show that other States were approaching these areas differently to the ACT?
13	37	Vocational Education and Training	Under the Departments Priorities Support Program, (PSP), in 2009-10 1,526 clients were funded to a total of \$2.32million. How many of the 1526 clients graduated?
14			Can you give a breakdown of how many clients, from the categories listed in the Annual Report, graduated?
15	162	VET (ACT Accreditation and Registration Council)	Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). The Annual Report shows that at 11 June 2010 there were 133 RTOs approved by the Accreditation and Registration Council to deliver and assess nationally recognised training. We had representations through the year from the RTOs that payment arrangements for their services were delayed for extensive periods. What has been done to rectify this?
16			Have any RTOs gone out of business or been unable to deliver training because of delays in being paid for services?
17	39	VET Indigenous Apprentices and Workers	Can you expand on the agreements reached with various bodies to maximise employment opportunities for the employment of indigenous apprentices and workers, eg. What is involved from the employer/employee perspective?
18			How are the opportunities advertised or marketed?
19			How many apprentices and workers have been employed under these agreements in the past year?

20	44	Pursuing Industry, Community and Government Partnerships and the Discussion Paper on Transitions out of care	We understand that DET and CIT are finalising protocols to improve education and training pathways for young people transitioning out of care. What has been the nature of these discussions and the strategies within the protocols to improve pathways and supports?
21			When will these protocols be finalised?
22	61	External Audit - Student Support Services for Public High Schools	The Audit Office made a number of recommendations to improve student support services for public high school students. A list of responses is included in the Annual Report and you indicate the majority of the recommendations have been implemented. What recommendations are still to be addressed?
23			Has there been a noticeable impact as a result of the implementation of the Audit Office recommendations?
24	86/87/88	Human Resources Performance	On pages 86, 87 and 88 in relation to Human Resources issues a number of new and ongoing initiatives are outlined. There is no mention of the issue which came to our notice through the year and that was a shortage of relief teachers and reports of students having to spend class time in school halls because of the unavailability of teachers. Can you provide an update on the situation in relation to relief teachers including what happens to students when teachers are not available?
25			In regard to hiring practices more broadly, does DET have a target for the amount of time taken between first advertising a position and that position being filled, and if so, is it meeting that target?
26	91	Staffing Length of service	Table C7.6 shows the average length of teacher service as being 8.4 years. How does this compare with other States?
27			What are we doing to improve the length of teacher service considering the significant investment that is made in recruiting and training teachers?
28		Gender breakdown	The gender breakdown between males and females in the Department seems to be quite disproportionate (female 4,377 and male 1,231).

			Is the Government doing anything to address this issue? If yes, what will it be doing to address this issue? If no, why?
29		Staff retention	There seems to be a significant drop in staff retention after 10 years of service— what is the reason for this? Is the government doing anything to address this issue?
30			What are the initiatives currently being undertaken?
31			What evidence is available to support the effectiveness of these initiatives?
32		ICT support	The Government seems to be heavily focussed on introducing ICT into schools, are the 19 IT Officers sufficient? What is the waiting time for schools needing IT support?
33			How much is spent on IT management and support in last financial year?
34			How much has been allocated for this financial year?
35		Professional development	The annual report mentions three principals who were enrolled in Harvard University's Improving Schools: The Art of Leadership course. Why Harvard?
36			Were other options and programs considered? If yes, what other alternatives were identified? Why were these other options not chosen?
37			What was the duration of this program?
38			What was the total cost to send each principal on this course, eg, program cost, airfare class and cost, hotel, ground transportation costs etc.

39	139	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) reporting	As part of closing the learning and achievement gaps for ATSI students the Department is developing an Education Strategy and a Reconciliation Action Plan. (see page 139) 1. Can you outline what is involved in these, if they have been released and how they will assist to narrow the gaps.
40		English as a Second Language	Reductions proposed in the original efficiency dividend which would see one of the two current SLC English positions abolished have been revised but it has been suggested that the positions will continue until the end of 2011. What will happen after 2011?
41			Itinerant teacher positions have been reduced by two positions. These positions provided itinerant ESL support to pre-schools. What is the current demand for ESL support for preschools?
42			How will the new arrangements whereby these positions will be directly allocated for schools cater for preschools?
43			What is the Government's definition of 'minimal language skills' in relation to ESL students?
44			Is there a minimum specified threshold? If yes, how is this decided? How does this compare with other jurisdictions?
45			Does this mean that students above the government's 'minimum language skills' threshold cannot access ESL support programs?
46			What is the rate of growth of ESL students in the education system?
47		NAPLAN	The recent NAPLAN results identified that approximately 470 Year 9 students did not have the most basic writing skills and that 2 out of every class of 20 students failed to meet minimum standards. How will the government better support these students? Will they be given individual learning plans, and their progress more closely monitored? If yes, how will this be implemented?

48			What efforts will be made to examine the ACT's NAPLAN results with comparable socio-economic areas in Sydney and Melbourne?
49			The Annual Report states that 6 Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Officers were appointed to support approximately 141 students from kindergarten to Year 4. Are these the same support officer positions to be discontinued in the recent efficiency dividend cuts?
50		School Safety Cyber-bullying	It was noted in the annual report that a number of proposals have been considered by the ACT Safe Schools Taskforce to support awareness of cyber-bullying and internet safety – what are the proposals that have been submitted?
51		CCTV	Please provide a list of all schools currently having CCTV systems, date of CCTV implementation, and associated costs of maintaining such systems
52			How many applications for CCTV has the Government received from schools in FY2007-08, FY2008-09, and FY2009-10?
53			Which schools have submitted an application for CCTV? Where applications have been denied, please state year(s) of application, case for CCTV application and grounds for application denial.
54		Cleaning contract	What are the elements of the new contractual arrangements for clustered cleaning services at schools?
55			Will services be contracted at the market rate, and if not, what is the alternative costing model?
56			What savings have been identified with the new contractual agreements?
57		National Curriculum	The NSW Board of studies has criticised the National Curriculum as being inferior to the existing NSW curriculum, and is said to have too much content/ What reviews have the ACT Government conducted prior to supporting the latest stage of the National Curriculum? ?

58			How were the Governments consultation findings different from the other jurisdictions, eg, NSW
59			What provisions have been made to allow teachers to properly learn and understand the new curriculum? Is there financial support for teachers?
60		Class sizes	70 teachers were appointed in 2009-10 in primary schools, 50 in high schools and 10 in colleges. Which schools and colleges were these new teachers assigned to?