



Inquiry into Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Fiona Carrick MLA

Addressed to: Mr David Matthews, Chief Operating Officer, Education Directorate

In relation to: Public school budgets – Formulas, reporting and oversight

Hearing: 19 May 2026

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Answer Due: 4 June 2026

MS CARRICK: There are 93 or so schools. Okay; there are student numbers, but what visibility do you have? With the budgets, do you give them a bucket of money that is per student? How far down can you into how a school spends the money or how they budget their bucket?

Mr Matthews: That is a really great question, and I will be as succinct as I can. There is a paper that we can give you on notice on the formula for our student resource allocation, which, effectively, is: how do we divide up a pie to schools; what are core loadings; what are additional loadings for additional needs; what is for infrastructure and the like? We can provide that to the committee, and there is a breakdown of how that is done and the cost of that. That could be of assistance.

MS CARRICK: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: That would be great.

Ms Callaghan: And we can provide on notice the reporting and the oversight that we have of their financials on a monthly basis as well.

THE CHAIR: That would be great.

Ms Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

ACT public schools receive their budgets for staffing and non-staffing expenditure through the Student Resource Allocation (SRA) Funding Model. Individual schools receive their budgets through Student Resource Allocation Statements, which contain the outputs of the Student Resource Allocation Funding Model.

Budgets are provided to schools based on a school year (calendar year) and not a financial year.

The *Student Resource Allocation in ACT Public Schools Guideline* ([Attachment A](#)) provides further information on the Student Resource Allocation methodology as it applies to ACT public schools. This guideline provides the high-level policy intent and the allocation methodology for budget allocations to schools.

The budgets provided to schools are primarily provided on a per capita base allocation, with some components of the funding being determined based on loadings considering student need. These loadings include items relating to student complexity including English as an additional language or dialect; students with disability; and schools with low socio-economic background students. There are some allocations which are for individual schools or apply to schooling sector only.

Schools receive a Student Resource Allocation (SRA) statement twice each year. During September, the **projected** allocation is provided to schools for the purposes of planning for the following year. In April, the **actual** allocation is provided, following confirmation of student enrolments by the February Census.

The Directorate and schools operate on different financial information management systems, which do not have a direct integration.

All ACT public schools have access to financial information management systems which provide relevant functionalities for budget planning and monitoring of expenditure.

The Schools Resourcing and Finance team, within the Strategic Finance and Procurement Branch of the Education Support Office prepares the monthly schools staff expenditure dashboard report via Schools Staff Expenditure Monitoring System (SSEMS). The monthly staff expenditure dashboard report provides schools with information regarding their staffing expenditure year to date in comparison to budget.

Schools can access the monthly dashboard report once completed for review. Schools will use this information to inform decisions regarding staffing expenditure at their schools. All schools are able to consult with the relevant finance team within the Education Support Office for assistance in the interpretation and understanding of their reports.

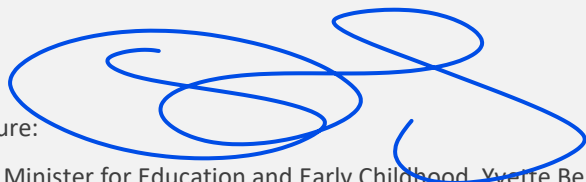
The monthly schools staff expenditure report is circulated to relevant Directorate Executive for their information and oversight.

Each ACT public school prepares their own operational monthly finance reports for all non-staffing related expenditure via XERO Finance. Direct support is available to all ACT public schools to assist in completing their monthly financial compliance requirements.

ACT public schools are required to table their operational finance reports with their relevant School Board.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Signature:



By the Minister for Education and Early Childhood, Yvette Berry

Date:



ACT
Government

STUDENT RESOURCE ALLOCATION IN ACT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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1. STUDENT RESOURCE ALLOCATION

The Student Resource Allocation (SRA) has been developed to reflect the ACT Government's commitment to implement a student needs based school funding model for ACT public schools. The Directorate commenced the implementation of the SRA in 2016 to bring improvement in learning outcomes for all students. This document outlines how the elements of the SRA model work together to provide the school's overall (global) budget.

1.1 Principles

There are seven guiding principles that guide the Canberra public schools reform direction and provide a summary of the key objectives of the SRA Program, including the SRA school funding model.

Educational Considerations

Educational considerations, based on the best evidence available, will drive the data sets, weightings, and parameters used in the design and implementation of new arrangements.

Fairness

Fairness will result when schools with a similar mix of learning needs receive similar funding.

Transparency

Transparency will ensure funding is visible and directed to support the needs of students and schools.

Accountability

Accountability for the resources schools receive, including articulation of the responsibilities of schools to support, and report on, student learning.

School level decision making

School level decision making will be enabled through clear understanding of what resources will be provided to schools and when it will be provided.

Transitional fairness

Transitional fairness will drive progressive implementation over several years so schools, where necessary, can adjust as the ACT moves from the old system to the new model.

Sustainable and flexible

Sustainable and flexible design allows for new policy priorities and changing school and student populations over time.



1.2 SRA Statements

Schools receive an SRA Statement twice each year.

- In September, the **projected** allocation is provided to schools for the purposes of planning for the following year.
- In April, the **actual** allocation is provided following confirmation of student enrolments by the February Census.

In addition, schools are provided additional cash payments for professional development, international private students, support for students with disability in January, April, July and October.

2. COMPONENTS OF THE SRA

The following key components are reflected in each school's SRA Statement:

Core Allocation

- per student funding
- stages of schooling
- base funding

Loading Allocations

- students with a low socio-economic status background
- students with English as an additional language or dialect
- students with disability

Other Allocations

- Continuum of Educational Support
- Cultural Integrity Allocation
- Transition and career support
- Other (e.g. new school allowance)

Preschool Allocation

- Sessions based staffing allocation

School Operational Allocation

- Education and administration
- Physical infrastructure & other
- Pre-school/Early childhood

In addition to the above, some school programs are centrally administered by Education Support Office.

2.1 Core Allocation

The core allocation provides funding for students where minimal levels of disadvantage exist.

The core allocation includes the following funding elements:

- Per Student Funding
- Stages of Schooling weighting
- Base Funding

Schools use this allocation to configure the most effective staffing arrangements to deliver high quality educational services to all students.

2.2 Loading Allocations

In addition to Core Funding, resources are provided to support the identified educational needs of particular students.

2.2.1 Low Socio Economic Status

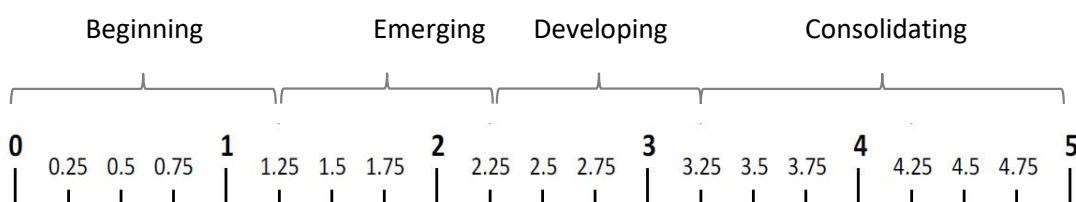
The low Socio-Economic Status (SES) needs based loading is determined by a Student Family Education and Occupation Index (SFI) specific to individual ACT public schools. The SFI uses parental education and occupation levels to determine school-level need. The low SES loading does not assign funds directly to individual students.

2.2.2 English as an Additional Language or Dialect

The English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) loading reflects the diversity of student need in English language proficiency.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) EAL/D Learning Progression Continuum, describing phases of English language acquisition by EAL/D learners, is used to identify student need within the beginning, emerging and developing phases.

ACARA EAL/D Learning Progression Phases



2.2.3 Cultural Integrity Allocation

The Cultural Integrity Allocation is allocated to all schools with the expectation that the needs and aspirations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be met across the system. Developing Cultural Integrity across the Directorate is a key priority in achieving this intent.

The Directorate has developed a suite of resources to define Cultural Integrity and strengthen cultural practice within each school.

The allocation supports all schools to develop a culturally welcoming, safe and supportive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and the broader school community. Developing Cultural Integrity also involves integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and perspectives into learning for all students.

In addition, the Education Support Office will provide advice, guidance and support to schools and students through a range of programs that include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers (IEOs);
- Scholarships;
- Vocational Learning Options; and

- Professional Learning.

2.2.4 Students with Disability

The policy framework and funding allocation for Students with Disability Support is currently under review. Resources allocated to schools will continue under the current process and methodology:

- Disability Education Programs
- Schools resourcing based on settings and individual student need as identified by the Student Centered Appraisal of Need (the Appraisal or SCAN).

Information on the Appraisal process is available on the Disability Education webpage (<https://www.education.act.gov.au/support-for-our-students/students-with-disability>)

2.3.1 Continuum of Educational Support

An allocation is provided to each high school to develop and implement the Continuum of Educational Supports model in the school.

The continuum of support identifies engagement strategies within five key areas:

- transitions
- five core elements
- early interventions
- flexible learning provisions
- outreach and alternative education provision.

2.3.2 Transition and Careers Support

This program provides a career and transition service to meets the need of senior secondary students. The funding is allocated to Colleges to provide high quality, professional transitions and careers support for all students.

This resource provides transitions and careers support to high schools and primary schools through Transition Network Groups.

2.3.3 Other

Further allocations relate to:

- New school allowance - supports the principal to establish a base administration and leadership team in the first three years of a new school's development. The intent of the new school allowance is to support effective planning to welcome new enrolments and develop the school's vision, values and essential policies and procedures.
- Student Support and School Equity programs: funding is provided to schools to support disadvantaged students and those that experience complex social issues.

2.4 Preschools

Funding is provided to preschools to deliver 15 hours of educational services to four year old students in ACT public schools. The 15 hours include three hours of funding from the Australian Government.

Preschools are funded by session rather than enrolment numbers or other measures. School Improvement Branch assists schools in planning optimal numbers of sessions for each school.

2.5 School Operational Allocation

The Schools Operational Allocation (SOA) provides cash funding for school operations – other than staffing. The funding is for educational and school administration costs, including energy, water and sewerage, and minor maintenance.

Contact:

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