



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QON No. AR - 12

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION

MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA (CHAIR), JOHNATHAN DAVIS MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), PETER CAIN MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Elizabeth Kikkert MLA:

In relation to:

The decision to stop teaching French and Indonesian at Belconnen High School (Annual Report, Public School Education, output class 1)

1. I have been told that the decision to discontinue teaching French and Indonesian at Belconnen High School occurred during the 2017 school year 'after significant effort to maintain and sustain the languages program were unsuccessful'. Can the minister please explain specifically what caused the languages program to be unsuccessful?
2. What were the significant efforts to make the program successful that preceded the decision to discontinue teaching French and Indonesian?
3. In the case of staff vacancies (for French and/or Indonesian teachers), what steps were taken to fill these vacancies, including efforts to recruit from other jurisdictions? How many applicants applied to fill such staff vacancies?

Minister Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

1. ACT public schools provide a wide range of language education options and language support programs. The selection of languages programs is made by the School Principal, in consultation with the School Board. Prior to 2017, Belconnen High School delivered French and Indonesian language programs but, due to staff attrition and the unavailability of replacement language teachers these programs were unable to continue.
2. Across Australia there is a shortage of specialist language teachers. Where shortages of teaching staff occur, the ACT Education Directorate connects Principals with language network leaders to assist with identifying suitable staff



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to fulfil language education roles. The ACT Education Directorate continues to target specialist language teachers as part of their recruitment strategy as well as providing scholarships to existing teaching staff who wish to upskill and become specialist language teachers.

3. The Directorate ran four specialist whole of system language campaigns during 2019 and 2020 from which 18 appointments have been made. The Directorate will continue to run specialist campaigns to support need.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Community Inclusion

Signature:

Date: 21/03/21

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Yvette Berry MLA