



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
MICHAEL PETTERSSON MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KICKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), ANDREW WALL MLA

Inquiry into referred 2017–18 Annual and Financial Reports
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Miss Lee MLA:

In relation to: Learning Support Units

1. For each primary and secondary school and college that has a learning support unit:
 - a. What assessment is done at the beginning of each school year to determine the staffing requirements and any other special equipment or security needs?
 - b. Who makes those assessments?
 - c. What expertise is utilised to make such assessments?
2. Can a parent request an out of area placement for their special needs child?
 - a. Can the Directorate or the school deny such a request?
 - i. How many times has such a request been granted?
 - ii. How many times has such a request been denied?
 - iii. What were the reasons for denying these requests?
3. Can a school deny enrolment to a special needs students at their local school if there is not a learning support unit appropriate for that child's needs?
 - a. If no, how does the school accommodate that child's educational, psychological and physical needs?

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

1. Individual student, class and school needs are continually monitored and reviewed with the supports and resources provided, amended appropriately to meet changing needs. Assessment of need is completed by appropriate professionals including school psychologist, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, in collaboration with parents and teaching teams.
2. Yes, parents of students with disability can apply for an out of area placement on the same basis as their peers. The enrolment process for ACT public schools is the same for all students when applying for a mainstream placement. Data is not held centrally on appeals for out of area enrolments.

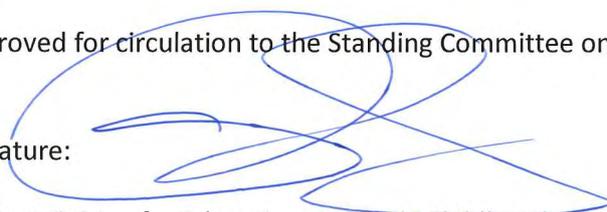
Placement in learning support units is managed centrally by Student Engagement. Offer of placement is dependent on capacity in the program, location of program in relations to the child's home and the educational needs of the child. Student Engagement works with parents and schools to ensure students can access an appropriate small group program.

3. All students in the ACT can enrol in and attend their in-area school. The Disability Standards for Education (DSE) establishes all education providers and schools to make the necessary adjustments to enable students with disability to enrol, access, engage and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.

When a school does not have a learning support unit or when parents request their child is supported in the mainstream with their peers the school makes the necessary adjustments, as required under the DSE. The school together with parents and other involved professional develop a personalised learning plan that identifies the student's strengths, areas of interest and learning goals and the necessary supports and interventions. In-school supports including the school psychologist and student wellbeing team can work with the family. If required the school can seek additional support from the Network Student Engagement Team (NSET) to develop and implement required plans including, environmental assessment, manual handling, personal care, behaviour support plan.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs

Signature:



Date: 27/11/17

By the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA