

2019

Government Response to Assembly Resolution 3 April 2019

Physical Activity in Schools

Presented by Ms Yvette Berry MLA

Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development

November 2019

On 3 April 2019, the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution calling on the ACT Government to report back to the Assembly by the last sitting day in 2019 about progress on the work outlined in paragraph (2) of the resolution.

The ACT Government response to this resolution is outlined below.

2(a) The government is, as part of implementing the Future of Education Strategy, developing a workforce plan at both the industry level and for government schools, which will assist in the availability of appropriate staffing cohorts to ensure the necessary skill sets within schools to deliver on the physical education policy.

On 24 June 2019, the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA, released the Future of Education Strategy's First Phase Implementation Plan, which outlined clear actions and commitments towards attracting and retaining teachers for specialist programs, including Physical Education programs.

The Government has continued to invest in strengthening the skills and capabilities of the workforce throughout all stages of their career. This includes the provision of coordinated professional experience placements for pre-service teachers to enhance placements and ensure they are matched to their developmental needs. A comprehensive mentor training program for new government teachers ensures supports are in place the moment they arrive in the classroom. A strengthened partnership with the University of Canberra will see 30 Master of Education scholarship recipients over the coming years to teachers from early childhood, primary school, high school, college and specialist settings.

The ACT Government will continue its investment in school leadership, through reforms including the 'Empowered Learning Professionals Leadership Plan'; a multi-faceted approach to strengthening the leadership capabilities of all ACT public school leaders at the Principal, Deputy Principal and Executive Teacher level. Additionally, the ACT Government will increase the number of teachers certified at the Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher standard by 10 teachers by next year, as well as release a whole-of-jurisdiction workforce strategy to ensure the ACT attracts and retains the very best teachers across all schooling sectors.

To further support the objectives outlined within the Future of Education Strategy and the ACT Government commitment to investing in the skills and capabilities of our workforce, a three-year workforce plan will be delivered in early 2020. The workforce plan clearly outlines current and future workforce needs based on growth predictors, future enrolments and labour market requirements. The plan will identify critical roles and the workforce capability required to deliver on strategic priorities, driving a high performing organisation that supports attraction, development and retention strategies for employees.

By empowering our teachers, school leaders and other professionals, the ACT Government is supporting a workforce to thrive in a career of learning which meets the needs of all students, and our students of the future.

The ACT Government has developed and implemented a series of targeted Physical education and sport risk assessment and management professional learning opportunities for schools. These opportunities are further enhancing the legislative and policy responsibilities of schools and will ensure the necessary skill sets within schools to deliver on physical education and sport policy. These professionally development opportunities are provided to Principals, executives and teaching staff from primary schools right through to college settings and will continue to be provided into the future. The Education Directorate has also provided these capability building opportunities to pre-service teachers with the University of Canberra. Capability building for risk assessment has been delivered to a specialist high school/college to support risk assessment for activities for students with disabilities.

ACT Sport and Recreation within Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate provide the online resource, PE Pulse, that links teachers with sports and curriculum aligned information to support the continuing improvement of school-based Health and Physical Education.

As part of PE Pulse, and in partnership with the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, the ACT delivered the Contemporary Health and Physical Education Seminar in June 2019. The seminar was attended by 80 Primary and Secondary teachers and State/Territory sporting organisations representatives.

2(b) The Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, in her capacity as Minister for Sport and Recreation, is leading work to improve the teaching of physical education and physical literacy in the Australian Curriculum in partnership with Sport Australia, including review of the current Sporting Schools program.

The issue of improving teaching of physical education and physical literacy has been discussed at the National Meeting of Sport and Recreation Ministers (MSRM). The Minister for Sport and Recreation is a member of the MSRM, and all Ministers are working to seek agreement from the Council of Australian Governments Education Council to progress this issue. The Minister is engaged with National Ministers to seek agreement from the Council of Australian Governments Education Council to:

- i. Jointly develop a paper to identify opportunities to improve the teaching of physical education and physical literacy in the Australian Curriculum with its Schools Policy Group, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and MSRM (represented by Sport Australia);
- ii. Progress discussions about the value and appropriate scope of a National Early Childhood Activity Strategy through it's Early Childhood Policy Group and MSRM (represented by Sport Australia); and
- iii. Align any work to review the Australian Curriculum with a review of the most effective method of delivering sports in primary and secondary schools through an evaluation of the current Sporting Schools Program.

The work of the MSRM is supported by Senior Officials, and Sport and Recreation is active in national conversations working to further improve and support the delivery of physical education in schools. Officials from the ACT Government are currently involved in the evaluation of the Sporting Schools program being undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

2(c) The ACT Government currently provides more than \$1.6 million in operational funding per year to the major peak sporting bodies.

The ACT Government continues to support the operations of peak sporting bodies, investing \$1.519 million in 2019 to support the work of these groups, including the engagement of participation development officers that work in ACT schools.

2(d) The ACT Government also provides further funding of approximately \$860,000 per year to sport and recreation organisations for capital works/infrastructure, community sport and recreation development projects, the sports loan subsidy scheme, inclusive program funding and the Minister's emergency and supplementary program.

The \$860,000 figure is current for 2019 and supports the ACT Government's commitment to sport and physical activity in the ACT.

2(e) ACT schools from all sectors share in a total of \$1.7 million in government funding to access content from sport activity providers through the Sporting Schools program.

Since the commencement of Sporting Schools in 2015, 118 ACT schools (74 Government, 25 Catholic, 19 independent) have received funding to participate in the program, receiving a total of \$1.96 million (to 30 June 2019). Most recently in Term 3, 46 ACT schools were funded to deliver a primary school program and nine to deliver a secondary school program. Thus far in 2019, 20,645 children have attended a Sporting Schools program (49% Male and 51% Female), the most selected programs being touch football, tennis, basketball and hockey.

2(f) The ACT Government currently provides up to \$400,000 a year towards the Aqua Safe Program, delivered in partnership with Royal Life Saving ACT, to provide all year two students in public schools with a holistic mix of water awareness, survival and rescue skills, and water safety knowledge.

The ACT Government is continuing its commitment to fund and deliver the Aqua Safe Program to Year 2 students in all ACT public schools. In 2018, nearly 2,800 or approximately 71%, of all Year 2 students accessed the Aqua Safe Program.

2(g) The ACT Government has also invested in programs to support children and young people at school to make healthy choices and live active lives, through programs including Fresh Tastes, It's your Move and the Ride or Walk to School program, and funds programs such as Food&ME and It's Your Move Safe Cycle to support nutrition education and cycling skills.

Fresh Tastes supports ACT primary schools to improve their food and drink environments. Currently 94 ACT primary schools, public, Catholic and independent, are participating in the program reaching approximately 39,000 students. As at 5 June 2019, 49 of 52 primary schools who have reached a three-year milestone of their involvement have reported making improvements to their school food and drink culture.

It's Your Move focuses on student-led health promotion innovation in ACT high schools. 22 high schools have participated in It's Your Move to date, reaching more than 12,000 students. Girls: It's Your Move focuses on improving physical activity levels in adolescent girls through student-led projects. ACT Health is supporting six ACT high schools in 2019 to implement Girls: It's Your Move.

Ride or Walk to School (RWTS) and It's Your Move Safe Cycle programs encourage students to travel actively to school. Currently, 84 schools are participating in RWTS reaching more than 38,000 children.

The ACT Government is committed to and continues to support representative pathways for the ACT emerging athletes across through funding of the School Sport ACT. In 2018, School Sport ACT provided a service to over 53,000 students, including 18,168 students attending 74 regional and ACT sporting events.

The Kids at Play Active Play Program (KAPAP) builds the capacity of early childhood educators to promote active play and teach fundamental movement skills to children in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) setting, as well as Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. As at 7 June 2019, 51 ECEC services and 13 schools have participated in 2018/19 with 157 educators engaging in the KAPAP professional learning workshops.