



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022 Supplementary Questions**

**Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education**

**EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING**

Hearing: Friday 27 August 2021

**Answers due by: Monday 27 September 2021**

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## EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

### Questions from the Hon Mark Latham MLC

**1. What plans does the Department have for the reallocation of duties for staff who are not Covid vaccinated by the deadline?**

The Department of Education is encouraging and supporting all staff to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

From 8 November 2021, any staff members who attend a NSW public school or preschool will need to be fully vaccinated.

If staff are unable to secure or change their vaccination appointments to a time before 8 November 2021, they must:

- advise their manager or school principal they will not be able to attend their place of work because they will not be vaccinated in accordance with the Public Health Order;
- advise when they will meet the requirement to have both vaccinations;
- discuss whether their duties can be carried out from home or whether they can access leave pending full vaccination.

The Department is working on a process for staff who have a medical contraindication to vaccination.

**2. What consideration has the Department given to the use of Rapid Antigen Testing as an alternative to mandatory workplace vaccination? Why isn't this being implemented?**

The Department of Education will continue to follow the expert Health advice. Rapid Antigen Testing is not a requirement for the return to face-to-face schooling. If the Department needs to implement additional COVID safe measures, it will do so.

**3. As per NSW Workplace Health and Safety laws, was each Departmental workplace (all offices and schools) been the subject of a one-by-one Covid risk assessment prior to the announcement of the mandatory workplace vaccination (MwV) policy? If not, what was the nature of the Department's risk assessment upon which the policy is based?**

The NSW Government has mandated vaccine requirements for the school and Early Childhood Education workforce from 8 November 2021 through a public health order. The Minister for Health and Medical Research makes public health orders under section 7 of the *Public Health Act 2010*.

The Department of Education is legally obliged to comply with the Order and, in doing so and implementing other risk management strategies, it will discharge its primary duty of care under health and safety law to do what it practically can to ensure the health and safety of staff.

**4. What advice did the Department receive from SafeWork NSW prior to the introduction the MWV policy?**

The NSW Government has mandated vaccine requirements for the school and Early Childhood Education workforce from 8 November 2021 through a public health order. The Minister for Health and Medical Research makes public health orders under section 7 of the *Public Health Act 2010*.

**5. Will workers delivering materials and supplies to schools be covered by the MWV policy?**

The Minister for Health and Medical Research made the *Public Health Order (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021* on the 23 September 2021.

Details can be found on the NSW Government website at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx#education>.

**6. Will outside workers and contractors completing jobs on school grounds be covered by the MWV policy?**

Please see the answer to supplementary question 5.

**7. Will external consultants visiting school grounds be covered by the MWV policy?**

Please see the answer to supplementary question 5.

**8. Under the MWV policy intent, how less likely is a vaccinated person on schools grounds to transmit Covid than an unvaccinated person?**

Questions around vaccine efficacy should be referred to NSW Health.

**9. What consultation was there with the:**  
**(a) Catholic system and**  
**(b) AIS on the MWV policy and have they agreed to implement it?**

The Department of Education continues to meet regularly with Catholic Schools NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW and consulted with them on the scope of the public health order.

**10. In each of the three sectors, how will the Department cover any financial or legal liability arising from adverse reactions to Covid vaccination?**

The Department of Education's fund manager, Allianz, is responsible for assessing all workers compensation claims and determining liability in accordance with worker's compensation legislation. Each claim will be assessed on its own merits.

The Department has no liability for workers compensation claims that may be made in other education sectors.

**11. In anticipation of unfair dismissal claims, is the Department following the advice of the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) such that in communities with no Covid MWV should not apply?**

The Department of Education is legally obliged to comply with the Public Health Order mandating vaccination for its staff that was issued by the NSW Health Minister. The Department is also required under health and safety law to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of staff and students.

**12. Has the Department followed the FWO advice on differentiated MWV assessment of workers in their workplace environment, such as office admin staff having much less student contact than teachers? What capacity is there for unvaccinated admin staff working from home online?**

The Department of Education is legally obliged to comply with the Public Health Order mandating vaccination for its staff that was issued by the NSW Health Minister.

Further, in considering its obligations under health and safety law, the Department is required to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of staff and students.

School administrative staff undertake a range of duties in schools including providing first aid to students and administering prescribed medication. These duties cannot be performed remotely when students return to face-to-face learning.

From 8 November 2021, any staff members who attend a NSW public school or preschool will need to be fully vaccinated.

To ensure the Department is managing our health and safety obligations to school students and staff, we will need to assess on a case-by-case basis whether staff can continue to work in a school or preschool while being unvaccinated for COVID-19 due to a medical contraindication.

**13. How will Departmental staff be expected to prove their vaccination status and will this comply with Commonwealth privacy laws for vaccination data?**

The Department of Education is developing processes for confirming the vaccination status of its staff in compliance with relevant laws.

**14. Will staff vaccination information be stored by the Department in any way? What are the details?**

Please see the answer to supplementary question 13.

**15. Will staff vaccination information be shared with any other government agency? If so, what are the details?**

Please see the answer to supplementary question 13.

- 16. Under the MWW policy, what consideration will be given to staff:**
- (a) waiting for a particular vaccine to be available,**
  - (b) unable to be vaccinated for valid medical reasons**
  - (c) conscientious objectors and**
  - (d) referencing anti-discrimination laws as their reason for not being vaccinated?**

The Department of Education is encouraging and supporting all staff to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

From 8 November 2021, any staff members who attend a NSW public school or preschool will need to be fully vaccinated.

If staff are unable to secure or change their vaccination appointments to a time before 8 November 2021, they must:

- advise their manager or school principal they will not be able to attend their place of work because they will not be vaccinated in accordance with the Public Health Order
- advise when they will meet the requirement to have both vaccinations
- discuss whether their duties can be carried out from home or whether they can access leave pending full vaccination.

The Department is working on a process for staff who have a medical contraindication to vaccination. Exemptions are not available for religious reasons.

- 17. Under the MWW policy, will any unvaccinated adults (other than students) be allowed on school grounds? What are the details?**

The Minister for Health and Medical Research made the *Public Health Order (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021* on the 23 September 2021.

Details can be found on the NSW Government website at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx#education>.

- 18. If Covid is to be treated like the flu in November in NSW:**
- (a) why will students and teachers be expected to wear masks? and**
  - (b) will Covid infected students be sent home and schools remain open?**

The safety and wellbeing of students and staff is the Department of Education's top priority.

The Department will continue to follow NSW Health advice in relation to mask wearing requirements in schools.

Arrangements for students who contract COVID-19, and subsequent actions around the operational status of schools, will continue to be guided by NSW Health advice.

- 19. Given the nature of the MWV policy, will the Department cover the costs imposed on non-government schools for**
- (a) unfair dismissal action,**
  - (b) discrimination claims, and**
  - (c) any other legal action?**

The Department of Education is not liable for costs imposed on non-government schools for unfair dismissal action, discrimination claims and any other potential legal action.

- 20. From the employment data in the Department's 2020 Annual Report, over the period June 2017 to June 2020, why has the staffing of State and regional offices increased by 51% compared to 5.5% for teacher numbers and 16.4% for school support staff?**

Department of Education employees working within the Corporate Services category (also known as State and Regional Offices) perform an important role in managing the largest education system in Australia and one of the largest in the southern hemisphere.

Corporate Services staff are required to support continuing growth in student enrolments, growth in the number of school-based staff, and the need to provide upgraded facilities, new schools and improved systems that will better support schools to improve student learning.

For example, an increase in staff was required to support delivery of the largest investment in school infrastructure in the history of NSW – now at \$7.9 billion over the next four years with \$7 billion invested over the period of 2017/18-2020/21. The creation of School Infrastructure NSW directly correlates with the record investment in school infrastructure to ensure the Department is able to meet student enrolment growth and learning outcomes.

Growth in Corporate Services FTE has primarily been in temporary staff due to the nature of many initiatives being time-limited and therefore finitely funded. This means the nature of support provided to schools can change as the needs of schools and students evolves.

- 21. Does the Department accept finding of the NSW Productivity Commissioner that education reform is the most effective way of lifting productivity in our State?**

The Department of Education welcomes the NSW Productivity Commission White Paper 'Rebooting the Economy' and its recognition of the key role of the education and training sector in improving economic and social outcomes for the people of NSW.

The Commission's recommendations provide support for this Government's commitment to teacher excellence, increasing the supply of highly trained teachers and supporting industry by providing more flexible and innovative pathways to trade qualifications, which will continue to build our economy and support communities across NSW.

**22. What is being done to implement the recommendations of the Productivity Commissioner, especially in:**

- (a) "broadening the sources of quality teachers" and**
- (b) improved teacher performance evaluation through a stronger supervisory feedback loop?**

- a) The NSW Government has made a record investment of \$125 million to implement its new Teacher Supply Strategy. This funding will support programs and initiatives to continue to attract and grow the pipeline of teachers with the right subject qualifications and in the right locations to meet students' needs.

As part of the Teacher Supply Strategy, which will be released in 2021, the Department is working closely with university providers of teacher education to co-design new entry pathways for high achieving professionals to become teachers, while continuing to meet our entry and quality teaching standards.

- b) The Department remains committed to ensuring the Performance and Development process (PDP) supports the ongoing improvement of student outcomes, through continuous professional development of a skilled, effective and professional teaching workforce.

The Department supports teacher professional development and performance management through the Performance and Development Framework (PDF), and the Employee Performance Management and Improvement (EPMI) initiative is strengthening the capability of principals and Directors, Educational Leadership to manage teacher performance.

This commitment to improved teacher performance is supported by the Department's process of continuous consultation with stakeholders around a revised PDF and PDP template that strengthens key elements, including alignment to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). The definition of teaching quality is set out in the APST, adopted in NSW and agreed nationally.

The School Success Model also has a strong focus on providing clarity on school improvement, including the responsibilities and accountabilities of school leaders and senior managers to improve system-wide performance and support the work of schools.

**23. What progress has been made in introducing a comprehensive, evidence-based accreditation scheme for all external consultants in contact with students? How has the wellbeing and instruction of our children been allowed to occur using scores of random, untested and often unqualified people coming into schools?**

The Department of Education is developing a process to quality assure wellbeing services providers in schools. This will provide further support and clearer guidance to schools in selecting quality evidenced based student wellbeing and mental health programs and external services.

Progress to date includes:

- Established a dedicated Wellbeing Quality Assurance team.
- Developed an 'Engaging External Wellbeing Providers and Programs Decision Tool – checklist'. The checklist supports principals when considering what external wellbeing programs are best for students and their school, while maintaining the values of NSW public schools. This tool is published on the Department's website.
- Developing a Quality Assurance Framework that includes evidenced based criteria by which external wellbeing programs and providers will be assessed.

**24. Why hasn't the Prequalification Scheme Agreement been applied to so-called wellbeing consultants like Resilience Doughnut, Tomorrow Man and Grow Your Mind in NSW Schools?**

In line with the School Success Model, the Department of Education is establishing processes to improve guidance and support to schools around the use of high-quality, evidence-based resources and providers. This will include exploring opportunities to provide schools with pre-approved lists of external providers across a range of curriculum priorities.

**25. Why are the new SIP performance targets for government schools so variable and random in their domains, objectives and time periods for achievement? What is the point in having school targets if they are not standardised across the State?**

The School Success Model details a range of ambitious targets for schools and the system, which build on the NSW Premier's Priorities in education and reflect a shared commitment to continuous school improvement.

The targets in schools' Strategic Improvement Plans (SIPs) cover the important domains of academic achievement, wellbeing and attendance. They are connected to the targets in the Department of Education's business plan. These targets allow schools to track and report on student outcomes in a range of important areas.

Schools are diverse and complex places, and SIP performance targets reflect that complexity with individual school targets benchmarked against similar schools.

While the majority of the targets have a 2022 timeframe, due to the specific nature of the Premier's Aboriginal HSC retention target and schools not completing NAPLAN tests in 2020, both the HSC Attainment and Expected Growth targets will be reported on in 2023. The Department has worked to ensure the rigour and validity of system-negotiated targets with the setting of the most appropriate time periods depending on the specific domain.



Schools have also taken the opportunity to set school-determined targets which consider other priority improvement areas in their context.

**26. In published school performance targets why is there no baseline data available, allowing parents and communities to accurately gauge performance levels/improvements?**

Under Section 18A of the *Education Act 1990*, school results must not be publicly revealed in a way that ranks or otherwise compares the results of particular schools, except as authorised by or under a relevant national agreement.

Parents and communities are provided with information about the achievement results in each NSW public school in a number of sources. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) MySchool website provides information about each school, including reading and numeracy results, attendance and finances.

In 2021, every NSW public school published a new Strategic Improvement Plan which includes ambitious system-negotiated targets across a range of measures. Progress towards these targets is reported in an Annual Report on each school website, and is accessible for parents and communities.

**27. Why do the school performance NAPLAN targets continue to focus only on the top two bands, neglecting the needs of poorly-performed students, that is, those who need the greatest improvement gains and effort?**

Under the Premier's Priority of bumping up education results for children, the Department of Education is committed to lifting literacy and numeracy standards across NSW public schools to ensure students are given every opportunity to be their best.

A focus on literacy and numeracy skills helps to unlock children's academic potential at school, improving their overall academic outcomes and increasing the likelihood they will attain tertiary qualifications.

Achieving this Premier's Priority will mean at least an additional 18,700 students with improved literacy skills and 13,500 students with improved numeracy skills.

These targets are designed to move students from the middle and lower NAPLAN bands into the Top 2 Bands for reading and numeracy. Additionally, schools also have targets for increasing the proportion of students achieving expected growth. These targets are inclusive of all students who sit NAPLAN and account for the full range of student abilities. These targets are also published in school Strategic Improvement Plans.

**28. What proportion of NSW non-government schools are using the Year 1 Phonics Check and what is the Department doing to lift this number?**

There are 182 non-government schools using the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check in 2021. The Phonics Screening Check was offered to all non-government schools engaged in the COVID Intensive Learning Program.

**29. Is every government primary school implementing the Year 1 Phonics Check and for those which are not, why is this happening?**

Yes. The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check is mandatory from 2021 for all Year 1 NSW public school students.

**30. What use of Year 1 Phonics Check data is the Department making in terms of**

- (a) school interventions where the results are poor,**
- (b) retraining teachers trained in whole-word literacy and**
- (c) requiring retesting at poorly performed schools in Year 2?**

- a) Professional learning and resources are available to all NSW public schools to increase capability and understanding of how to implement effective reading programs. Following analysis of student assessment data, teachers can access evidence-based resources for phonics on the Learning Resource Hub.
- b) All teachers have access to current evidence-based professional learning and resources that supports their knowledge and understanding of implementing systematic and explicit reading instruction and includes all of the components of reading. Two reading guides are available to all schools to support school leadership teams and teachers to have informed conversations about evidence-based reading instruction in all key learning areas across the school context.
- c) The on-demand Phonics diagnostic assessment is available for teachers to administer to any students in Kindergarten to Year 12, to check the impact of their teaching, and is recommended as a way to monitor learning following the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

**31. How many DELs were employed in 2020 and under their performance-based contracts, how many:**

- (a) received additional pay and**
- (b) were assessed as below acceptable performance standards?**

As at 30 June 2021, there were 109 FTE employees in Director Educational Leadership roles.

- (a) Consistent with the Government's Wages Policy, no discretionary Public Service Senior Executives (PSSE) remuneration increases for performance were approved for Department PSSE as part of the 2019/20 performance cycle.
- (b) None

**Additional notes:**

1. Data Source, PERS Corporate Establishment as at 30 June 2021 (Data is not reported on a calendar year basis but as at 30 June each year – 30 June 2021 is the reporting date for the 2020/21 financial year).
2. Short term temporary assignments <3 months are not included in this data.

3. Data includes occupancy only and does not include those employees on leave or who may temporarily assigned/seconded to another PSSE role which is not a DEL.

**32. How many government schools were the subject of Tailored Support interventions in each of:**

- (a) 2018,**
- (b) 2019,**
- (c) 2020 and**
- (d) 2021?**

**What evidence is there that these interventions have lifted student performance?**

- (a) In 2018 the Tailored Support Intervention strategy was piloted in 300 schools.
- (b) In 2019 the Tailored Support Intervention strategy was expanded to 480 schools.
- (c) In 2020 the Tailored Support Intervention strategy was further expanded to over 500 schools.
- (d) Announced in late 2020, the School Success Model (SSM) is the system's response to continuously improving student outcomes. The SSM builds on the strongest elements of the Tailored Support model. Data on the number of schools receiving guided and strategic support under the SSM will be available in late 2021.

The 2019 departmental rapid diagnostic evaluation process reported an increase in teacher confidence and capacity.

**33. In which years and courses are the:**

- (a) Respectful Relationships and**
- (b) NAPCAN Love Bites programs taught?**

**What evidence base does the Department rely on for these programs and what evaluation reports provide this evidence?**

Respectful relationships and consent are taught as mandatory learning through Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) for students in Kindergarten to Year 10, and in NSW Government schools through Life Ready for students in Years 11 and/or 12.

**34. To NESA: In the \$196.6 million NSW Curriculum Reform Program for 2021/22 to 2024/25, how many:**

- (a) full-time and**
- (b) part-time staff will be employed on curriculum redevelopment?**

The NSW Curriculum Reform Program is forecast to employ 215 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff between the current financial year and FY 2024-25. These will be a mix of full-time and part-time positions, in response to recruitment availability of appropriate expertise.

**35. To NESA: What progress has been made in certifying new teacher Professional Development courses under the revised system? Have all**

**gender fluidity courses now been removed? How will NESA check that the teaching of the courses actually matches the certified purpose?**

On 28 July 2021, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) published the new requirements for teacher professional development courses to be accredited. The new requirements require courses to be aligned to specific teaching standards and meet the principles of effective professional learning and specific content criteria in one of four priority areas.

At this time NESA also extended to early 2022 the current interim accreditation of courses in the approved areas of Curriculum/Early Years Learning Framework and students/children with disability. This provided a supply of courses to teachers in these two priority areas while providers took time to develop new courses against the new requirements.

NESA has commenced receiving and assessing applications for courses to be accredited. The database of all previously endorsed providers and courses was removed on 30 November 2020. The new database lists only those courses with interim accreditation and that have been assessed as meeting the newly published requirements.

NESA has a monitoring and auditing role in the new course accreditation system and is able to conduct desk and site-based audits of accredited courses to determine whether the requirements and provider responsibilities in relation to accreditation are being met. NESA can audit a course where concerns or complaints are raised by teachers, an early childhood service, school/sector leaders, teacher representative organisations or other relevant stakeholders.

**36. How does the Department explain the disappointing Year 9 NAPLAN results this year? Is it further evidence of 13-15 year olds disengaging from learning and the system failing to overcome this problem?**

Analysis of Year 9 NAPLAN results show that the declines observed are not statistically significant. Declines in Year 9 reading and numeracy mean scores were observed in all jurisdictions, with the exception of the Northern Territory Year 9 reading scores.

The Department of Education continues to set high expectations for educational outcomes for all students including those in Year 9. The Premier's Priority has set a bold ambition to lift the performance of public school students in the top two bands of NAPLAN for reading and numeracy by 15 per cent by 2023. The 2021 preliminary NAPLAN results show there is a slight improvement in the top two band results compared to 2019. This includes positive shifts in high school, with Year 7 students performing close to their 2022 target for the proportion of students achieving a top two band in numeracy.

**37. What lessons can be drawn from Western Australia's improved NAPLAN performance having rigorously pursued explicit instruction methods in the classroom?**

Research conducted by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) shows that teachers in schools with high learning growth were more likely to use explicit teaching practices compared with teachers in schools that did not show high learning growth over time.

CESE has developed resources for principals and teachers about the evidence-base for explicit teaching and guidance for implementation in schools. These resources include the What Works Best research synthesis paper and practice reflection guide; accredited professional learning about effective teaching practices; and case studies of applied examples of explicit teaching in schools.

Explicit teaching has also featured significantly in the latest school Strategic Improvement Plans which were published earlier this year. Additionally, explicit teaching is a key theme in the School Excellence Framework, which schools are required to self-assess against annually as part of their continuous improvement.

**38. What has been the outcome of the Department's reform of student disciplinary rules aimed at suspending fewer Indigenous students? How are schools and bullied students better off from keeping the perpetrators in the classroom?**

This Student Behaviour Strategy aims to increase student engagement through evidence-based positive behaviour support. Fostering connected, cohesive and safe learning environments requires a whole-school community approach, and this new Strategy aims to strengthen relationships between schools, families and communities.

The final Strategy was introduced in March 2021, with the policies and procedures to be released in Term 1, 2022.

**39. Given that many teachers complain of being unable to maintain discipline in the classroom, and this is contributing to weaker student results, what is being done to overcome this problem?**

The Department of Education is committed to lifting educational standards and improving educational outcomes across NSW public schools. The Student Behaviour Strategy sets out a new approach to behaviour support, to create supportive and inclusive learning environments for all students and staff.

The Department is committed to co-designing additional supports, resources and access to specialist services to provide the support schools need to address complex, challenging and unsafe behaviour.

Professional learning and direct support available to schools has already been expanded under the Strategy, to build the capability of teachers in classroom management and supports for students with behaviours of concern.

**40. Which senior Department executives have read the Peter Sutton Keryn Walshe critique of Bruce Pascoe's Dark Emu? Do they agree with the Sutton/Walshe evidence that Pascoe has insulted Indigenous Australians**

**and history by mounting a false argument that pre-1788 Aborigines were living as just another European equivalent, in fixed villages with agricultural cropping? Why is a fake history being taught in NSW schools?**

This issue was considered on 23 June 2021 in the Legislative Council and the motion that Pascoe's works should not be used in classrooms was resolved in the negative. Please refer to the Minister's previous answer in relation to that debate.

**41. For all the Department's attempts to be woke and sympathetic to the Indigenous cause, does it now feel ashamed that Pascoe's book has been allowed into NSW schools, given the demolition of its credibility by two widely-respected and highly-credentialed Left-wing academics in Sutton and Walshe?**

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 40.

**42. What progress has been made with broadening the source and training of NSW teachers through:**  
**(a) Teach For Australia and**  
**(b) Alphacrucis?**

a) The Department of Education is continuing work with Teach for Australia on how a bespoke program may be able to meet the needs of NSW public schools. This includes how the program will be designed to help fill areas of workforce demand including in rural and remote schools and in subject shortage areas of Mathematics, Science and Technology, and Applied Studies.

b) The Department has held a number of meetings with Alphacrucis College to map the deliverables and timeframes. The program is on track to implement a new Catholic hub in 2022 and a Public School hub in 2023. The hubs will be based in regional areas and schools will partner with universities to provide initial teacher education to potential teachers.

**43. Given the Department's ruling earlier this year that the actions of the Lindfield Learning Village BLM teacher did not constitute 'misconduct', how much hateful and barbaric politically motivated material would a teacher need to introduce into a primary school classroom to be guilty of misconduct?**

The Professional and Ethical Standards (PES) Directorate investigates allegations of misconduct. Misconduct has a broad statutory definition under the employment acts. In simple terms, misconduct is unacceptable or improper behaviour.

Each allegation of misconduct is individually assessed and investigated on its merits. When responding to allegations about the teaching of controversial material, PES considers the principles in operation in relation to the teaching of such material and the requirements under the relevant policies, including the policy about curriculum which may be controversial, to ensure the material presented to students is presented in a way that is sensitive to their needs and relevant to their learning.

**44. For each of the past 5 years, how many NSW government school teachers have been found guilty of misconduct? What did the offences involve?**

There have been 1,097 cases of misconduct involving teaching staff since 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2021.

Misconduct has a broad definition under employment legislation and the types of conduct that may constitute misconduct are more clearly defined in the Department of Education's Code of Conduct.

**45. In the misconduct findings above, how many involved:  
(a) inappropriate political activity in the classroom and  
(b) the use of pornographic material such as the Wankerman at Kurri Kurri High School?**

Please refer to the response to Supplementary Question 43.

**46. Has the Department:  
(a) examined or  
(b) approved the use of any 'mental health screening tools' for students?  
What are the details?**

The school counselling service uses a range of mental health screening tools with individual students to support mental health assessment and intervention. Psychological tests are administered in accordance with the Department of Education's Student Counselling Records and Psychological Tests Policy.

**47. To NESA and the Department: In the consideration of the Masters recommendations about the future of the HSC/ATAR, what has been the process for arriving at a final decision? Will the HSC and ATAR continue in their current form? What are the details?**

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) acknowledges the role of the HSC as a valued senior secondary credential.

The NSW Government will carefully consider the impact of any reform activities in the senior years on the HSC credential to ensure it maintains its value and relevance as an exit credential.

Changes to the ATAR were not within the scope of the terms of reference of the NSW Curriculum Review. This recommendation was noted, with the NSW Government to seek further advice from NESA.

Both consultation periods conducted during the NSW Curriculum Review acknowledged that while imperfect, the ATAR is a respected ranking mechanism for post-school pathways. NESA is continuing its discussions with the university sector, and developing advice for Government.

- 48. To NESA: What progress has been made in improving the secondary school curriculum for:**
- (a) English by eliminating gender studies and other identity political content and restoring the importance of high-quality works of English literature, and**
  - (b) History by following a chronological subject order, enhancing deep knowledge of content and reducing tedious 'source verification' exercises?**

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) is in the early stages of development of the secondary school curriculum.

New syllabuses will identify the core knowledge, skills and understandings essential to further learning in each learning area, based on evidence.

The study of a range of perspectives is an important part of student learning. Presentation of issues as contestable and open for discussion is within the parameters of the evidentiary procedures intrinsic to subject areas.

Content related to the acquisition and ongoing development of students' literacy skills is a key guiding principle for the development of the English curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Opportunities for the study of English literature are integral to the study of English, noting that NESA prescribes texts for study in Year 12 only and no single text is compulsory.

NESA is mindful of chronology as a central concept of the study of History, both as an organising principle of content and also as an essential skill, as well as the ability to appreciate, understand, and sequence events.

In the development of the history curriculum, there will be an appropriate balance of content knowledge and skills of investigating history, in keeping with the core academic practices of the discipline.

- 49. Under the mandatory vaccination policy, what back up plan does the Department have for filling the teacher shortages that will occur once unvaccinated teachers are sacked?**

The Department of Education remains focused on supporting vaccine uptake across the school workforce and on broader measures to ensure teacher supply.

Staff have been given reasonable notice to secure their vaccine in time for the 8 November 2021 deadline.

Being fully vaccinated for COVID-19 will be an ongoing requirement for employment in NSW public schools, unless the staff member has a medical exemption. If a school staff member refuses to be vaccinated and has no grounds for exemption, their manager or school principal must advise the Department that the staff member refuses to be vaccinated. The Department will then take appropriate action, which



can include termination of employment. In this instance, the Department has both permanent and casual staffing resources that can be utilised to backfill these roles.

**50. Why hasn't the Health Order from Friday's announcement been created? What exemptions will be granted to non-government schools?**

The Minister for Health and Medical Research made the *Public Health Order (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021* on the 23 September 2021. The Order applies to government and non-government school employees.

Details can be found on the NSW Government website at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx#education>.

<b>Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC</b>
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**Free period products trial**

- 51. Are there plans to extend the trial of sanitary products in schools given the number of weeks in which students have been learning from home in light of COVID-19?**
- (a) If yes, when is the trial now expected to conclude? Will consideration be given to further extend this if the period of learning from home continues past current forecasts?**

Early feedback from schools participating in the pilot has been positive and the Department of Education is considering an appropriate way forward. More information will be provided to the relevant school communities in due course.

- 52. On what basis was it determined which schools would participate in the trial of free sanitary products in Western Sydney and Dubbo schools?**

Schools in the South Western Sydney metropolitan area include a diverse range of schools including; a girls-only high school and schools which service culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Dubbo region in regional NSW contains a mix of school types and is reasonably accessible to the contractors supplying and installing dispensers.

- 53. Which brands of period products have been provided to schools?**

Libra products have been used for the pilot. All procurement activities were conducted in compliance with the Department of Education's procurement policies.

- 54. What factors will you be looking at in determining the success of the trial and whether to make this a permanent program in schools?**

Principals, staff and students will be providing feedback as to whether the trial has been successful, what could be improved (e.g. location of sanitary items, dispenser

style etc.). Early feedback has been positive and the Department is considering next steps.

### **School banking**

- 55. During the 3 March 2021 Budget Estimates hearing, it was stated that the Minister was “expecting to receive advice and recommendations that may come from that [the December 2020 ASIC report into School Banking] in due course from the department”. Has this advice been received?**
- (a) If no, when is it expected?**
  - (b) If yes, please advise what the Department’s advice is, and provide a copy of the advice.**
  - (c) If yes, what action have you taken in relation to this advice?**

The Department of Education has provided updates to the Minister regarding the progress of the review, and consultation has commenced with key stakeholders. Further advice will be provided to schools during Term 4, 2021.

The Department is developing the Treasurer’s Financial Literacy Challenge, in collaboration with ASIC, which will be piloted in NSW schools in Term 4, 2021. The challenge aims to engage students in practical activities focused on how to save money, spending money wisely and budgeting. This will encourage students to develop positive money habits and increase their financial literacy.

<b>Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)</b>
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### **School Cleaners**

- 56. How many NSW Public Schools have had their school cleaning hours cut pre COVID-19?**

In March 2019, a new cleaning contract was implemented by Public Works Advisory. The cleaning standards adopted in the new contracts are identical to those in the previous contracts. The cleaning contracts are designed to be more equitable for all schools and include a reduction in cleaning hours at some schools in line with a benchmark applied across all schools.

In order to ensure a smooth transition, the reductions were suspended until 31 December 2019. A small number of the identified schools experienced the changes to cleaning hours prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes have now been implemented at the balance of schools.

It is important to note that additional cleaning measures were introduced in Term 2 2020 in response to the pandemic. These measures are in addition to the standard cleaning hours for each school.

- 57. Are NSW Public Schools consulted about school cleaning hours?**
- (a) If so, how often does his consultation occur?**

The Department of Education undertook extensive stakeholder consultation in relation to the cleaning contracts implemented from 1 March 2019, after a tender process.

If principals have issues regarding the standard of cleaning at their schools, they can raise these directly with the cleaning contractors.

The cleaning contracts are designed to be more equitable for all schools through applying a standard benchmark across all schools.

School principals schedule quarterly meetings with their cleaning contractors.

**58. What changes have been made to school cleaning guidelines since the COVID-19 outbreak?**

Additional cleaning is in place during the COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on supplementary cleaning of high touch surfaces for example, handrails, light switches and door handles and high use areas for example, toilet facilities and bubblers.

Any changes to these additional cleaning measures will be determined in consultation with NSW Health, based on current health advice, and will be clearly communicated to schools.

Additional cleaning measures introduced during Term 2, 2020 are continuing in Term 3 and Term 4 2021.

**59. How many additional cleaning staff have been employed in NSW Public Schools since the COVID-19 outbreak?**

Cleaning staff are not employed directly by the Department of Education.

Cleaning contractors are engaged through the Whole of Government Cleaning Contract managed by Public Works Advisory. Cleaning contractors are responsible for staffing numbers to meet the cleaning requirements at their contracted schools.

**60. How many additional cleaning staff have been employed in NSW Public Schools since 26 June 2021?**

Please refer to the response to Supplementary Question 59.

## **Remote Learning**

**61. How many guided learning packs have been distributed to NSW Public schools?**

As of 8 September 2021, the Department of Education has published;

- 24 guided learning packages, i.e. six weeks of learning, for Kindergarten, Years 1-2, Years 3-4 and Years 5-6, and
- three guided learning packages, i.e. three weeks of learning, for early childhood learners.

As of 8 September 2021, the online guided learning packages have received 2.05 million page views across 856,000 sessions. The printable version of the packages have been viewed or downloaded 3,900 times, noting that one teacher downloading a copy to print out for their whole class would count as one download.

The primary and early childhood guided learning packages are accessible in both online and printable formats.

**62. What learning support packages have been distributed to NSW High schools?**

Learning sequences for Years 7-10 were developed for Stages 4 and 5 for English, mathematics, science, history, geography and PDHPE. These included weekly sequences of student-facing learning activities, aligned to syllabus outcomes.

The HSC hub was reviewed earlier in 2021 and provides support for Stage 6 HSC subjects.

In addition, there are resources and sample programs across all key learning areas for Years 7-10 (Stage 4 and 5) in the learning from home hub available for NSW high school teachers.

**63. How many devices and internet dongles has the NSW Department of Education handed out to students?**

**(a) How many devices went to students in LGAs of concern?**

**(b) How many internet dongles went to students in LGAs of concern?**

The Department of Education has delivered over 22,600 devices and over 18,100 dongles to schools as part of our COVID response plan, between the start of the pandemic and 31 August 2021. This equipment is provided in addition to devices distributed under ongoing departmental programs including the Computer Equipment Rollout and Rural Access Gap programs.

The table below lists the equipment delivered to schools located in Local Government Areas of concern, as part of the pandemic response as at end of August 2021:

<b>LGA Name</b>	<b>Dongles</b>	<b>Devices</b>
Bayside	62	173
Blacktown	1550	1881
Burwood	43	23
Campbelltown	1700	1495
Canterbury-Bankstown	1398	1718
Cumberland	779	903
Fairfield	1708	1542
Georges River	225	315
Liverpool	1073	1324
Parramatta	289	495

Penrith	800	724
Strathfield	108	114

### Antigen Testing

- 64. How many Independent schools are conducting a rapid antigen testing pilot program?**  
**(a) Are any of these independent schools located in LGAs of concern?**

The Department of Education is aware of a small number of pilot programs of Rapid Antigen Testing currently underway in non-government schools.

The Department does not hold any further data on this pilot the data at this time.

- 65. Has any member of the Department met with any of the independent schools currently undertaking rapid antigen testing pilot programs?**

The Department of Education continues to work with the Association of Independent Schools of NSW, Catholic Schools NSW and NSW Health on COVID safe practices.

- 66. Are any NSW Public schools currently undertaking a rapid antigen testing pilot program?**

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 2.

- 67. Have any NSW Public Schools contacted the Department to set up antigen testing when students return on the 25 October?**  
**(a) If so, please provide a list of schools broken down by LGA**

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 2.

- 68. Have any SSP schools ben offered rapid antigen testing for their staff or students?**

Please refer to the answer to supplementary question 2.

### Ventilation

- 69. What steps have you taken to improve ventilation at NSW Public Schools before students return on the 25 October?**  
**(a) Have you purchased any air-purifiers for NSW Public school classrooms?**  
**(b) If so, how many?**

The Department of Education has been led by the expertise of NSW Health in terms of the most appropriate response to operating our schools in a safe manner including how best to ventilate classrooms.

Current advice from NSW Health is to maximise natural ventilation.

The NSW Government's advice and resources provided by the World Health Organisation and Safe Work Australia are available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/getting-back-to-work-a-covid-safe-way/ventilation-guidance>.

**70. Will an inspection of all air-conditioning systems in NSW public schools occur before students return to school on 25 October 2021?**

In preparation for all students and staff returning to school, the Department of Education is completing a systematic review of the suitability of all learning spaces including libraries and halls to ensure all schools continue to operate in the safest ways possible in the COVID-19 environment.

The review includes, but is not limited to, checking windows operate as they should, and ensuring ceiling fans and air conditioning systems installed specifically for ventilation are operating correctly and are being regularly serviced.

In the 40 sealed schools that are fully air conditioned and cannot open windows, new filters have been installed in all air conditioning systems and the frequency of filter servicing and cleaning has been increased to occur on a monthly basis. The NSW Government is covering the cost of all audits and any repair work.

### **Return to School**

**71. Will immunocompromised or high risk students be given the option to learn online until they have been fully vaccinated?**

The Department of Education is led by the advice of NSW Health and have put in place COVID safe measures for the return to face-to-face learning.

Consideration will be given to the return of face-to-face learning for immunocompromised or high risk students on a case by case basis.

**72. Will temperature checking be conducted at NSW Public schools for all students and staff?**

The Department of Education will continue to follow the expert Health advice. Temperature checking is not a requirement for the return to face-to-face schooling. If the Department needs to implement additional COVID safe measures, it will do so.

**73. How many masks will be distributed to NSW public schools ahead of students returning to school on 25 October 2021?**

All NSW public schools received a package of key hygiene items in Week 1, Term 3, 2021. This first dispatch included 2,191 boxes of single use masks and 971 boxes of reusable clear masks for hearing impaired settings. Additional dispatches of masks, including primary age child masks and clear masks, have also been delivered in Term 3.

Since Day 1 Term 3 2021, NSW public schools have ordered an additional 9,271 boxes of masks via business as usual channels. Further dispatches will continue as

required, including when schools return to face to face learning.

Schools are not required to pay for these hygiene supplies; they are funded and distributed centrally by the Department of Education.

**74. How many bottles of hand sanitiser will be distributed to NSW public Schools ahead of students returning on 25 October 2021?**

All NSW public schools received a package of key hygiene items in Week 1, Term 3, 2021, including 17,382 boxes of hand sanitiser.

Since Day 1, Term 3, 2021, NSW public schools have ordered an additional 3,803 boxes of hand sanitiser via business as usual channels.

Further dispatches will continue as required, including when schools return to face to face learning. All key hygiene items are free of charge.

**75. How many packets of disinfectant wipes will be distributed to NSW public schools ahead of students returning on 25 October 2021?**

All NSW public schools received a package of key hygiene items in Week 1, Term 3, 2021, including 3,178 boxes of disinfectant wipes.

Since Day 1 Term 3, 2021, NSW schools have ordered an additional 2,874 boxes of disinfectant wipes via business as usual channels.

Further dispatches will continue as required, including when schools return to face to face learning. All key hygiene items are free of charge.

**COVID-19 Special Consideration Program**

**76. Will HSC students who live in a lockdown LGA and are unable to complete their HSC exams in-person be eligible for the COVID-19 special consideration program?**

The usual illness/misadventure program continues to be available to students who suffer illness or misadventure at the time of an exam, including requirements to self-isolate due to COVID-19. This includes students who, due to NSW Health requirements, are not permitted to attend an HSC exam.

The COVID-19 Special Consideration Program is available for HSC students whose preparation or completion of a performance exam, oral language exam or their major project is significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. It is also available to Year 12 students who have not met the HSC Minimum Standard yet.

**77. What additional support will be provided to HSC students who test positive to COVID-19 during the HSC exam period to complete illness/misadventure application?**

The illness and misadventure process is available to support students who are unwell or have an accident or other misadventure at the time of a HSC exam. Schools are responsible for submitting the application to NESA through Schools Online and are best placed to support the students to obtain the appropriate evidence to include with the application. This is the case for all student applications where students fall ill at the time of the HSC exams.

**78. What additional provisions will be provided to HSC students who are immunocompromised or at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19 during the HSC exam period?**

The NSW Education Standards Authority is providing schools with COVID safe protocols for running HSC exams in schools. These protocols have been endorsed by NSW Health and school sectors. Students should consult their doctor with any specific concerns.

### **COVID-19 Intensive Learning Program**

**79. What is the evaluation of the COVID-19 intensive learning program?**

- (a) Will the evaluation be conducted externally?**
- (b) Who will it report to?**
- (c) Will it be released publically?**

The Department of Education is evaluating how the COVID Intensive Learning Support Program has been implemented, its impact on academic achievement, perceived benefits (e.g. impact on engagement), challenges, and the helpfulness of resources that schools utilise in delivery of the program.

- (a) The evaluation will be conducted by the Department's Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE).
- (b) The evaluation will report findings to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning.
- (c) Yes.

### **Teachers**

**80. How many teachers are permanently allocated to secondary and central schools?**

Secondary Schools:	22,509
Central Schools:	1,568

**81. What proportion of those teachers are approved to teach a STEM-related discipline?**

Secondary Schools:	22,509
Central Schools:	1,568



**82. What proportion of permanent science teachers in those schools are in each of the following age groups 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 61?**

20 to 30: 15.4 per cent  
31 to 40: 27.1 per cent  
41 to 50: 26.1 per cent  
51 to 60: 21.8 per cent  
Over 61: 9.5 per cent

**83. What proportion of permanent TAS teachers in those schools are in each of the following age groups 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 61?**

20 to 30: 9.2 per cent  
31 to 40: 22.8 per cent  
41 to 50: 23.1 per cent  
51 to 60: 32.5 per cent  
Over 61: 12.4 per cent

**84. What proportion of permanent Mathematics teachers in those schools are in each of the following age groups 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 61?**

20 to 30: 15.0 per cent  
31 to 40: 21.9 per cent  
41 to 50: 24.7 per cent  
51 to 60: 28.2 per cent  
Over 61: 10.2 per cent

**85. From the department's census of NSW universities what are the commencements of secondary initial teacher education degrees in 2018, 2019 and 2020 for:**

- (a) science?**
- (b) Technology and applied studies?**
- (c) Mathematics?**
- (d) Non STEM-related disciplines?**

(a) Science  
2018: 511  
2019: 425  
2020: 411

(b) Technology and applied studies  
2018: 395  
2019: 257  
2020: 272

(c) Mathematics  
2018: 341  
2019: 324  
2020: 348

- (d) Non-STEM related disciplines  
2018: 2,590  
2019: 2,314  
2020: 2,279

- 86. How many places for career changers were there in the teach.MathsNow scholarship program in:**  
**(a) 2020?**  
**(b) 2021?**

Up to 80 scholarships are available each year for both industry professionals and university students.

- 87. How many career changers who are recipients of teach.MathsNow scholarships commenced study in:**  
**(a) 2020**  
**(b) 2021**

- (a) Of the 20 scholars who commenced on program in 2020, six were industry professionals.  
(b) Of the 41 scholars who commenced on program in 2021, 17 were industry professionals.

#### **Denham Court Public School and open plan classrooms**

- 88. Are the classrooms at Denham Court Public School shared open plan spaces, with two classes allocated per shared classroom space?**

A typical homebase cluster at Denham Court Public School includes three open plan classrooms, an enclosed practical activities area classroom and an enclosed presentation classroom.

- 89. If so, why weren't formal doors included in the school's design to allow the two classes to be separated properly?**

The classroom design is in keeping with the Department of Education's approach to fully flexible open plan teaching and learning environments.

- 90. Is the ventilation of these classroom spaces separate for the two classes sharing the spaces?**  
**(a) If not, what work will be done to ensure the classrooms are separately ventilated to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID?**

The mechanical air conditioning for the three open plan classrooms at the school is configured to enable different areas to be controlled separately.

The practical activities area (PAA) and the presentation classroom have separate mechanical air conditioning systems.

The PAA, presentation room and open plan classrooms could be used as three enclosed classrooms.

**91. Will the Government commit to installing separating walls and doors at Denham Court Public School before students begin using the shared classroom spaces?**

The classroom design is in keeping with the Department of Education's approach to fully flexible open plan teaching and learning environments.

**92. Can you please provide a list of schools which have open plan classrooms shared by two classes which are not able to be fully separated by doors or walls, broken down by school name and the number of these open plan shared classrooms in each school?**

The sharing of an open plan classroom is a decision made by schools on a case-by-case basis. The Department of Education aims to deliver the very best school infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population, and support modern, flexible teaching and learning.

**93. Denham Court Public School was supposed to open Day 1, Term 3 this year, but was delayed. On what date will Denham Court Public School be opened?**

Construction of the new school was ready for Day 1, Term 3, 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the decision was taken to keep students enrolled at their current school rather than commence at the new school for the start of Term 3.

The school will commence operations when COVID-19 restrictions allow enrolment and orientation process to be finalised.

The school community is being kept up to date with developments and the Department is monitoring the situation.

**94. Are the teaching staff at Denham Court Public School currently working at other schools?  
(a) If not, why not?**

During Term 3, 2021 teaching staff at Denham Court Public School have engaged in the establishment of new school structures, procedures and teaching programs in preparation for students' return to school.

Staff have attended daily online staff meetings and professional learning sessions to ensure they are fully prepared to meet individual students' learning needs, address any learning gaps and engage families as partners to support learning.

Staff have also provided assistance to their previous schools through the preparation of learning from home packs and online learning materials.

## **Concord High School and new high school at Wentworth Point**

### **95. Can you confirm that the new high school at Wentworth Point will open day 1, term 1 2024?**

Construction of the Sydney Olympic Park new high school project located in Wentworth Point is currently forecast for completion in late 2023. This is an indicative date only and will be revised once a construction contractor has been engaged and a delivery schedule confirmed.

### **96. Can you confirm that the new high school at Wentworth Point will open for all years, 7-12, on day 1, term 1 2024?**

The student year groups in place at school opening are to be determined.

As the project progresses, information will be shared with the community to prepare for the opening and operations of the new school. This will typically be confirmed around 6-12 months before the new school opens to ensure the community is well informed in advance of enrolment periods and so the school can prepare for anticipated student numbers.

### **97. Has the Department of Education done preliminary work on how many students the Concord High School campus can accommodate through a future upgrade, yes or no?**

Yes.

### **98. How many fewer students does the Department of Education predict Concord High School will have in 2024 as a result of the opening of the new high school at Wentworth Point?**

No student already enrolled at Concord High School will be made to transfer to the new high school at Sydney Olympic Park.

The new high school will cater to future secondary students as a result of the increasing population and forecast residential growth at Wentworth Point and within the Sydney Olympic Park area.

### **99. How many students are currently at Concord High as at 3 September 2021?**

1,267 students are enrolled at Concord High School as at 3 September 2021.

### **100. How many counsellors are allocated for this number of students as at 3 September 2021?**

Concord High School has a school counselling allocation of 1.0 FTE as at 3 September 2021.

## Staffing

### **101. What is the Minister doing to address the unacceptable proportion of temporary contracts for school support staff, given the ongoing and vital nature of this work?**

The premise of this question is misleading and incorrect.

Schools are allocated permanent School Administrative and Support Staff (SASS) entitlement based on student enrolment. Where there are additional school needs, or specific students requiring support, schools also have the ability to create additional permanent or temporary SASS roles.

Where they meet certain eligibility requirements, long term temporary SASS may be considered for appointment to permanent vacancies as they arise.

### **102. When will we see outcomes of the Staffing Methodology Review finalised and implemented for schools?**

The Staffing Methodology Review (SMR) is a staged reform process - the first phase is complete and has delivered tangible benefits to schools.

SMR has made significant progress to date, including:

- development of an entitlement analytical model,
- secured Schools for Specific Purpose (SSP) Supplementary funding (\$37 million per annum to be shared across the 117 SSPs, from 2020 – 2024), leading to the employment of additional School Learning Support Officers and other SASS in many cases,
- development of the casual supplementation program, and
- commencement of the Rural and Remote Incentives Review.

SMR has also made improvements to recruitment processes and systems, including more streamlined Casual Teaching Approval processes; Working With Children Check Refresh; and Taleo Redesign.

Given the size of NSW's school system, any change to the entitlement has a significant cost. Any further changes would need to be considered in the context of the Department of Education's school improvement priorities, impact on outcomes and funding availability.

## Students with disabilities

### **103. In 2021 how many students with disability in total are enrolled in public schools?**

Data regarding the number of students with disability is collected in August each year through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability. Final data is not yet available for 2021.

- 104. In 2020 how many students with disability were in:**
- (a) mainstream classrooms supported by integration funding?**
  - (b) in a support class in a mainstream school?**
  - (c) in an SSP?**
  - (d) in mainstream classrooms assisted by funding from the Low Level Adjustment for Disability?**

- (a) Please refer to LC QON 6747 where this was previously answered.
- (b) Please refer to LC QON 6747 where this was previously answered.
- (c) Please refer to LC QON 6747 where this was previously answered.
- (d) More than 95,000 students in mainstream classrooms were assisted by funding from the Low Level Adjustment for Disability equity loading.

- 105. How much was spent in 2020 on**
- (a) the Integration Funding Support program**
  - (b) support classes in public schools**
  - (c) SSPs**
  - (d) the Assisted School Travel Program?**

- (a) In 2020, more than \$240 million was provided through Integration Funding Support for students in mainstream classes.
- (b) Support classes are not identified as a distinct allocation in school budgets so it is not possible to provide a total figure at this time.
- (c) Total funding for SSPs provided through school budgets in 2020 was \$363,214,008.
- (d) \$193,376,091.

- 106. How many support classes were there in NSW public schools in 2019, 2020 and currently 2021?**

Support classes in mainstream schools and SSPs:

- 2019 - 3,406.8 full time equivalent (FTE)
- 2020 - 3,625.8 FTE
- 2021 - 3,873.8 FTE as at 8 September

- 107. What was the average cost per capita of Integration Funding Support in 2018, 2019 and 2020?**

The average cost per capita of Integration Funding Support was:

2018: \$19,582  
2019: \$19,910  
2020: \$21,009

- 108. What proportion of schools in 2021 did not receive low level adjustment for disability funding in 2021?**
- (a) What proportion received less than \$75,000?**
  - (b) What was the median funding per school?**

100% of 2,076 mainstream schools received low level adjustment funding for disability in 2021.

- (a) 27.4% (568) schools received less than \$75,000.
- (b) The median funding per school is \$123,411.

**109. What proportion of learning and support teachers are permanent employees?**

Learning and support teachers are program funded through a school's low-level adjustment for disability allocation. Funding changes are made in accordance with student need, and teachers are engaged by schools in a variety of manners to meet these diverse needs. As of 20 September 2021, 52.1% of learning and support teachers are permanent employees.

**110. In 2018 the government supported a recommendation of the Legislative Council inquiry into the education of students with a disability that NCCD data be used instead of NAPLAN to calculate the low level adjustment for disability. Why has this not happened?**

Low Level Adjustment for Disability is currently calculated on the school's total enrolment and a student learning need index derived from three years of NAPLAN data.

The Department of Education is working towards a new allocation methodology for 2023.

**111. The Government also supported the inquiry's recommendation that the department's disability criteria should be updated and said the department would "*finalise and release an immediate update of the disability criteria*" and review it biannually. When were the updated criteria released?**

**(a) What reviews have been completed?**

Recommendation 7 of the 2017 Upper House inquiry into the Education of students with a disability or special needs in New South Wales (Upper House Inquiry) was to undertake a review of the criteria to "ensure that they are in keeping with contemporary understanding of disability".

The Department of Education's disability criteria were reviewed in 2020. The review preferred a system that is based on an assessment of student need and a move away from specifying types of disability diagnosis.

Work is underway to model new ways of accessing and allocating additional targeted support so there is greater focus on understanding and responding to students' functional needs rather than specific diagnosed conditions.

**112. How many FTE school counsellors are currently employed in NSW public schools?**

There are currently 1,154 FTE school counselling positions in NSW public schools.

**113. In central schools, primary schools, secondary schools and SSPs in 2021 how many lead, psychology practice, senior psychologist education and school counsellors are employed (excluding counsellors-in-training)?**

All NSW public schools, including central schools, primary schools, secondary schools and Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) receive a school counselling allocation. Data providing a detailed breakdown by school level is not yet available for 2021.

### **Teacher Vaccinations**

**114. Given the Department is now required to ensure teachers and school staff are vaccinated, can you please provide a breakdown of what percentage of NSW teachers and school staff are vaccinated, broken down by LGA?**

The Department of Education is developing processes for confirming the vaccination status of its staff in compliance with relevant laws.

### **Links to Learning**

**115. Why did the NSW Government cut the Links-to-Learning grant program which provided funding to NSW based approved, not-for-profit, non-government community based organisations and local government authorities to deliver targeted projects to compulsory aged (Year 6 - Year 11) students at risk of disengaging from learning and/or at risk of leaving school early?**

Please refer to the answer to LA QON 5748.

**116. The Department of Education undertook a program evaluation- and the Government has claimed that it “did not provide strong evidence of outcomes from the program.”**  
**(a) Why was the program ended?**  
**(b) Please provide a copy of the evaluation report?**

Please refer to the answer to LA QON 5748.

The Student Reengagement Interim Report can be found on the NSW Department of Education website at [https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/student-wellbeing/behaviour-and-engagement/Student\\_re-engagement\\_programs\\_interim\\_recommendations\\_report.pdf](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/student-wellbeing/behaviour-and-engagement/Student_re-engagement_programs_interim_recommendations_report.pdf).

**117. The Department of Education has stated that the program evaluation was only with a small sample size of 11 schools (7% of 144 participating schools), 8 providers out of 35 in NSW (which is only 22%), and only 3 student groups out of 144 (which is only 2% of students). Why was the program ended after such a small sample size of participants in the evaluation?**



All providers, schools and Directors, Educational Leadership were provided the opportunity to complete a survey. Survey responses were received from 56 school staff members, 35 providers and 10 Directors, Educational Leadership.

11 schools, 8 providers and 3 student groups were interviewed.

### **Perfect Presence pilot program**

**118. When launched, the Department stated that the Perfect Presence pilot program does not replace Links to Learning, however, weeks after the tender process was completed, NGOs were informed that it does actually replace it, and that it was developed to reflect the evaluation review findings. The pilot program is targeted to specific schools, regions and student year groups, and it does not cover many Sydney metro areas of need. There are 25% less schools supported in this program than in Links to Learning, and there is no support for year 6 and year 7 students as part of their transition to high school. Some areas of unemployment, lower incomes & lower levels of educational attainment are now being left without additional essential support.**

- (a) What will the NSW Government do to address these gaps you have created?**
- (b) In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic what will the NSW Government do to support disengaged students who are at increasing risk of becoming even more disengaged?**

(a) Please refer to the answer to LA QON 5748.

99 schools across 25 Principal Networks are part of the new pilot program.

Schools which are not part of the pilot can continue to work with, and fund, the organisations that were funded by the Links to Learning Community Grants program.

(b) Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, students have had ongoing access to the school counselling service. In addition to this, Student Support Officers, School Chaplains, and Wellbeing Nurses provide an additional layer of support for students at risk of disengaging from school by connecting students and their families to support programs and services.

**119. Were NGO partners /providers to the Department consulted about the model and establishment of the Perfect Presence pilot program?**

**(a) If not, why not?**

The Links to Learning Community Grants program review included interviews and surveys with schools and providers. This helped shape the Perfect Presence Pilot Program. To ensure there was no conflict of interest for the service providers with probity, providers could not be a part of the final development and outcome of the new program.

**120. Is the funding from Perfect Presence pilot program actually coming from the budget for Links to Learning program?**

**(a) If so, why was there no transparency about this, and about the total funding pool available for Perfect Presence?**

No. Budgets are set on an annual basis, and are subject to change. The Perfect Presence Pilot Program is a new program, which commenced in week 3, Term 3, 2021.

### **Spending**

**121. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster in FY 20/21 what was the total amount spent on each of the following categories?**

- (a) Indoor plants**
- (b) coffee and tea**
- (c) crockery**
- (d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters**
- (e) alcohol**
- (f) cakes, muffins and pastries**
- (g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs**
- (h) office renovations and fit-outs**
- (i) taxi and rideshare expenses**
- (j) office equipment**
- (k) office renovations or upgrades**
- (l) hospitality**
- (m) conferences**
- (n) travel**
- (o) accommodation**
- (p) employee development and training activities**
- (q) study assistance**
- (r) travelling and meal expenses**
- (s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private**
- (t) removal and storage expenses**
- (u) education of children**
- (v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)**
- (w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)**
- (x) additional benefits**

Each agency in the Education cluster complies with financial reporting requirements, with expenditure detail outlined in the notes accompanying each agency's annual financial statements.

**122. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster, from FY 20/21 what are details (specific item, and total cost) of the top five most expensive occurrences of spending on each of the following categories?**

- (a) indoor plants**
- (b) coffee and tea**
- (c) crockery**
- (d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters**
- (e) alcohol**
- (f) cakes, muffins and pastries**
- (g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs**
- (h) office renovations and fit-outs**
- (i) taxi and rideshare expenses**
- (j) office equipment**
- (k) office renovations or upgrades**
- (l) hospitality**
- (m) conferences**
- (n) travel**
- (o) accommodation**
- (p) employee development and training activities**
- (q) study assistance**
- (r) travelling and meal expenses**
- (s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private**
- (t) removal and storage expenses**
- (u) education of children**
- (v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)**
- (w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)**
- (x) additional benefits**

Each agency in the Education cluster complies with financial reporting requirements, with expenditure detail outlined in the notes accompanying each agency's annual financial statements.