

# COGSO AGM - 18 NOVEMBER 2017

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CHIEF EXECUTIVE Q&A RESPONSES

Action area	Question	Departmental position/response (dot points)
SSS – School Education	1. How is the Department of Education ensuring that very high needs Special Needs students in remote settings are receiving equitable funding in line with their urban peers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for special schools and special centres are based on indexed historical costs and are adjusted for movement in student enrolments and attendance each Semester. The funding is identified as a targeted program in the school's global budget.</li> <li>The department has a systemic process throughout the NT to consider applications for Special Education Support Program funding that provides additional support for all students requiring educational adjustments.</li> <li>The Special Education and Support Program (SESP) is provided equitably across eligible urban and remote schools.</li> <li>Regional, remote and very remote schools have access to education advisors (ASD, Hearing, Speech, and OT) to provide additional advice and support with education adjustment planning and program advice for students with disabilities.</li> <li>The Department of Health have Paediatricians that also visit remote settings in support of students.</li> <li>It is anticipated that a weighting for students with additional needs, including disability will be introduced into the student needs based funding model in 2019, in line with the maturing NCCD data set and the SwAN service delivery framework, due to be completed during 2018. This will ensure the equitable distribution of available funds, on the needs of students with additional needs, including disability.</li> </ul>



P&I - Corporate Services	2. Does the Department of Education have an expectation on Principals to cease live-in maintenance/caretakers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At this time, the department is not asking Principals to cease live-in maintenance/caretakers.</li> <li>• Caretakers could be considered to be providing a security service, without training and without holding the appropriate licence, which is potentially in breach of the Private Security Act. In addition, department employees are being paid overtime to carry out after hours security checks at an estimated cost of \$137K p.a.;</li> <li>• caretakers receive accommodation and utilities as in-kind benefits which varies widely, e.g. there are seven three bedroom houses, 19 caravan/mobile homes, four buses, four demountables, one bungalow and one room in a school with only 3 of the 36 caretakers contributing to rent; 34 receive full power, water and sewerage subsidies; five receive full and four receive partial telephone subsidy; one caretaker has a vehicle for private use.</li> </ul> <p>Att A – Caretakers info sheet Att B – CE speaking notes</p>
P&I - Corporate Services	3. Do you think that the roll out of the fire hydrant loop water supply infrastructure and out of ground hydrants are a suitable design for school grounds? The fire hydrants are staggered throughout playgrounds and pose a high-risk obstacle for primary and middle school age children, was this considered in the system design?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire hydrant coverage is a requirement under the National Construction Code for most school sites. The fire systems are designed by engineers and approved by the NT Fire and Rescue Service in compliance with current standards.</li> <li>• In summary, hydrants need to be located a minimum of 10m from buildings and spaced with overlapping hose coverage. The areas around hydrants need to be kept clear of obstructions so that fire fighters can easily locate and access these in an emergency. Hence they cannot be located in garden beds or obscured by shrubbery.</li> <li>• The Department of Education has a rolling program to upgrade existing fire services in schools. As part of these upgrades, start-up meetings are held with the school principal and business manager where plans of the proposed locations are shown to the school. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed layout and where possible, adjustments to the locations of hydrants are accommodated.</li> </ul>



Finance - Corporate Services	4. Would the Department of Education establish a process whereby School Council budgets must be ratified by Council and signed by the Chair before being submitted to the department?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Education Act, Part 6, Section 107 (1e), states that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “within the scope allowed by the functions conferred on the body, determine the purposes for which money allocated by the Agency to the school is to be expended and expend money paid by the Agency to the school”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Further, the School Council Guidelines document available here provides the following detail on the role of School Council in the budget process;</li> <li>• ensure strategic oversight in the development of the school’s budget</li> <li>• approve the distribution of the budget consistent with the school’s direction and objectives</li> <li>• monitor performance against the budget</li> </ul>
SSS – School Education	5. Last year we asked that COGSO request the Department of Education to support all schools across the Northern Territory to implement a mental health and emotional wellbeing program for the whole of school community. The NT Social and Emotional Learning (NT SEL) Curriculum was rolled out in 2017. We are concerned that key staff who were driving the program have left the department. Would the CE please advise of positions responsible for supporting schools with this curriculum and whether these positions are currently filled?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of 2 x redesigned ST2 Behaviour &amp; Wellbeing Co-ordinator roles has just been finalised.</li> <li>• An EOI for the ST4 Manager position is being released next week (Incumbent resignation effective 17/11), along with a ST1 Wellbeing, Engagement &amp; Behaviour project officer (consequential vacancy)</li> <li>• 6 x ST1 Regional Wellbeing, Engagement and Behaviour Implementation Advisory positions are commencing recruitment. These positions will be located in each region of the NT, to directly support schools (IES funding confirmed late)</li> <li>• In 2016/17 NT SEL was trialled across 59 urban, remote and very remote schools</li> <li>• A Behaviour for Learning Framework is in its final stages of development to complement NT SEL and is under consultation with schools and Regional Directors.</li> <li>• To date, 99 government schools have engaged in a whole school approach to positive behaviour and wellbeing.</li> <li>• 79 of those schools are remote and very remote.</li> <li>• Under the NTRAI funding agreement, the department has exceeded its target of 70% of remote/very remote schools having a positive behaviour or wellbeing approach by December 2017.</li> <li>• The curriculum and supporting resources are currently being quality assured in preparation for publishing in term 1, 2018.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The positive behaviour and wellbeing policy and guidelines are currently being reviewed to ensure consistency at a whole school approach to positive behaviour and wellbeing</li> </ul>
IT Services – Corporate Services	6. Can the Department of Education expand/develop online tools to improve engagement with parents and school community, such as online forms for enrolment/re-enrolment, absent student, excursion permission forms, payment of voluntary fees etc?	<p>The department continues to progress digital solutions and online tools to improve engagement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Enrolment - The online student enrolment form (<a href="http://enrol.nts.schools.net/">http://enrol.nts.schools.net/</a>) was introduced in 2013, it can be used by all schools, however only a few schools actively promote it. A review is currently being undertaken of the enrolment form with implementation expected Semester 2 2018.</li> <li>Absent students – Student absences are currently managed at the school level, with different process in places at different schools. Some schools utilise 3rd party products (i.e. Compass) which allow parent/guardian to notify the school of absences.</li> <li>Excursion permission forms - we are currently working on an online solution that will allow parents and guardians to provide consent for events and excursions electronically.</li> <li>Payment of voluntary fees - Student fee payments are currently managed at the school level, with different process in places at different schools. Some schools utilise 3rd party products (i.e. Compass) which allow parent/guardian to pay fees through an online portal.</li> </ul>
Finance - Corporate Services	7. What is the rationale for the Territory remaining the only state or territory which does not fund schools based on enrolment numbers?	<p>Effective enrolment is considered the most appropriate measure to distribute funds in the context of the Northern Territory. Effective enrolment is used in the global school budgets to ensure that funding for schools is distributed fairly and equitably, and funds are directed to where students are enrolled and attending. It takes into account season patterns of enrolment and attendance.</p>



(with Strategic Services)		
Strategic Services	8. Can the Department of Education facilitate easier access to more detailed enrolment data (non-identified) for School Representative Bodies including comparative information i.e. other schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolment and attendance data for each school is currently published on the department's website.</li> <li>• Enrolment data is available on the school profile on My School, including total enrolments, enrolment by gender, and percentage of Indigenous and Language background other than English.</li> <li>• There would be the opportunity to publish more detailed enrolment data for schools. However, in consideration of providing more detailed information it is important to note that enrolment less than 12 is not published which may limit the data that could be published for some schools. For example, in publishing enrolment data at year level, data for year level cohorts less than 12 would not be published.</li> <li>• School Representative Bodies can make requests for through the department's Performance and Data Management team by emailing <a href="mailto:stats.det@nt.gov.au">stats.det@nt.gov.au</a>. As enrolment data is available publicly, there would be the opportunity to identify schools even if de-identified data was provided. Therefore, data provided would be subject to the same business rules in relation to publishing data i.e. not publishing for cohorts less than 12.</li> </ul>
School Education (Dep CE to allocate)	9. Can the Department of Education provide administration support for School Representative Bodies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request that CE ask COGSO to clarify the nature of the administrative support they are seeking.</li> <li>• Recommendation that this be further explored at CE/COGSO monthly meetings.</li> </ul>
Finance - Corporate Services	10. Can the Department of Education provide School Representative Bodies with a checklist, in chronological order, of the complete financial and budgetary process? Could this checklist include all other known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department will develop a draft checklist and associated communications for principals, for consultation with NT COGSO by the CE/NT COGSO catch-up in June 2018.</li> <li>• The aim is to publish and communicate the final checklist during Semester 2, 2018.</li> </ul>



	obligations and requirements of a School Representative Body?							
School Education	11. Is School of the Air available for children who do not live remote. If yes, what are the circumstances where children in an urban or regional area can enrol?	<p>As per departmental guidelines, there are three categories for enrolment to distance education:</p> <p><b>Table 1. Enrolment categories for NT residents</b></p> <table> <tr> <th>Home based</th><th>Dual enrolment (School based)</th><th>Special circumstances</th></tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical isolation</li> <li>• Parent employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Interstate NT student</li> <li>◦ Overseas NT student</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Traveling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Interstate NT student</li> <li>◦ Overseas NT student</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Elite performance</li> <li>• Home education</li> <li>• Mature age</li> </ul> </td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ NT government school</li> <li>◦ NT non-government school</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Indirect</li> <li>• Flexible Learning Arrangements</li> </ul> </td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical grounds</li> <li>• Significant support needs (Flexible Learning Arrangements) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Short term</li> <li>◦ Ongoing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exclusion</li> <li>• Expulsion</li> <li>• Unforeseen extraordinary circumstances</li> </ul> </td></tr> </table> <p>Att C – Enrolment in distance education guidelines</p>	Home based	Dual enrolment (School based)	Special circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical isolation</li> <li>• Parent employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Interstate NT student</li> <li>◦ Overseas NT student</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Traveling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Interstate NT student</li> <li>◦ Overseas NT student</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Elite performance</li> <li>• Home education</li> <li>• Mature age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ NT government school</li> <li>◦ NT non-government school</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Indirect</li> <li>• Flexible Learning Arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical grounds</li> <li>• Significant support needs (Flexible Learning Arrangements) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Short term</li> <li>◦ Ongoing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exclusion</li> <li>• Expulsion</li> <li>• Unforeseen extraordinary circumstances</li> </ul>
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Finance - Corporate Services	12. Our school board does a lot of fundraising in our community. When will the Department of Education provide a cash handling policy and procedures to ensure that cash handling practices are consistent and transparent across the school?	<p>The department is working on a suite of policies and guidelines that will clarify accountabilities of schools and the department with regard to budget management for release in 2018 and will include cash handling procedures. The Department would be happy to work with COGSO to develop a process for cash handling as related to School Representative Bodies.</p>						