

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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**Division 60: Education, \$2 014 622 000 -**

Mr Dean, Chairman.

Hon Alan Carpenter, Minister for Education; Sport and Recreation; Indigenous Affairs.

Mr R.V. Mance, Acting Director General, Department of Education.

Mr P. McCaffrey, Relieving Executive Director, Corporate Services, Department of Education.

Ms M. Banks, Acting Executive Director, Teaching and Learning, Department of Education.

Mr K.A. O'Keefe, Acting Executive Director, Teaching and Learning, Department of Education.

Mr S. Harvey, Acting Director, Facilities and Information Technology Services, Department of Education.

Mr B.A. Doyle, Acting Director, Information, Communication and Learning Technology, Department of Education.

Ms V.J. Burns, Acting District Director, Department of Education.

Mr P.B. Hamilton, Director, School and System Performance, Department of Education.

Mr J. Ryan, Acting Director, People and Organisational Development, Department of Education.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the wish of the members present to take each division through as the way to go, 60, 61, 62 and 63?

Ms SUE WALKER: We are happy to do that.

Mr CARPENTER: Mr Chair, I do not know what the practice has been this year but in the previous years we have generally had a few very brief introductory remarks. I am happy to go without them, but if you want to go straight into questions, I am happy to provide a general overview.

Ms WALKER: Straight to the questions.

Dr CONSTABLE: Minister, I refer to page 1058, dot point 5 which relates to the recruitment of teachers. I noted, Minister, in the Robson report that there was a claim that there were no teacher shortages. I would like the minister to comment on that in a moment, but I recently received an answer to a question on notice from the minister that only 13.5 per cent of all primary school teachers are males. I would regard that as a shortage of teachers and again I would like to ask you what you are doing about that. There are also reports that there are non-science teachers teaching science, particularly in some of our middle schools, and I would like to know the extent of that problem and how many untrained science teachers are teaching. It seems to me there are some shortages now. It is a very important issue for us to be mindful of and to be addressing and I am sure the minister is mindful of it and is addressing it, but I would like to know the extent of teacher shortages now and if the minister sees the problem getting worse in the next three or four years and what we intend to do about it.

Mr CARPENTER: Thank you, member for Churchlands. It is a very important issue obviously and it is one that has been on foot really for a year or two. I would read the remarks of the Robson inquiry in the context of the overall number of trained teachers who are in Western Australia, a bit like in the nursing situation. There are plenty of trained nurses. It is just that we do not have as many as we would like in our hospitals. In the State of Western Australia there are an abundance of trained teachers but there are occasions upon which and locations in which we do not have the people that we would like.

I think that a couple of years ago the situation was quite grave at the beginning of a school year. There were something like 100 people places short. That situation was addressed to some extent by some incentives that were provided by the previous minister, for rural and remote schools and so on. There is still though the issue of providing, as the member has pointed out, for example, science - and I do not know if necessarily that is an area in which there are shortages. I would have to get that specific information, but there are still areas of specific abilities or specific training in which we need more people. The one that most regularly springs to mind is languages other than English, LOTE teachers. It is very difficult often to find a sufficient number of LOTE teachers.

What we have tried to do since being elected is to move to a situation where we are going to be offering incentives, HECS payment incentives, as scholarships to attract at least another 200 people into teaching in Western Australia. Those scholarships would be offered to people who are prepared to teach specific subjects in specific locations. For example, if we do identify that there is a shortage of mathematics teachers who are available for remote schools, then HECS scholarship payments would be available to people who fit that category who are prepared and for as long as they are prepared up to the time that they have been trained, usually

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

---

four years, to teach in those locations. There is a budget allocation this year for the beginning of that process. For the specific details of what shortage areas there are I will refer to Mr Mance.

There was a document produced by the department, I think it was last year, Teacher Supply and Demand 1999 to 2005 - I believe it was. That was the general title of the document, which I drew upon in policy development to try and address the issues. There was a projected shortage there based upon the demographic of the teachers - that is, 50 per cent or thereabouts of our teachers are 45 years of age or older - and that there was a looming crisis potentially when that body of teachers moved into the retirement age bracket and there was a recognised need to recruit more people into teaching. As I said, there are some policy initiatives that we can put in place to address that. In relation to the male-female ratio, did you say 13 per cent?

Dr CONSTABLE: 13.5 per cent.

Mr CARPENTER: In primary schools?

Dr CONSTABLE: Yes.

[3.10 pm]

Mr CARPENTER: I am surprised that it is actually still that high, in fact. My understanding from, I think, that same document, Supply and Demand 1999 to 2005, is that the ratio of people going through the teacher training institutions at the moment in universities is in primary school seven to one female to male and approximately one to one in the male to female ratios for high schools. I actually put these questions about male and female ratios to the previous minister and, as he said, it is quite a complicated issue to actually attract more males into primary school teaching. We cannot pay differentials any more.

It has been a long-term process or long-term trend that a declining number of men have registered an interest in primary school teaching as opposed to female teaching, and what we need to do is basically promote the concept of professional teaching among males as it relates to primary school teaching and that is something we are going to have to take on as a Government. Anyway, for the specific areas of shortage, there were six unfilled positions when I last asked around Western Australia but I do not know how many positions in those schools that you might be talking about are filled by people who are trained outside of the area in which they are teaching but Mr Mance might have that detail.

Dr CONSTABLE: Mr Mance I think was going to fill in some information, then I have a supplementary.

Mr MANCE: The last teacher vacancy figures were six and that does change week by week. There is not a difficulty with science at a system level but you are right: in some specific schools you might have an issue or some time in attracting a science teacher. Sometimes we find in some locations the mix of the teaching load is often also somewhat problematic so if it is not a full-time load in one particular area, it makes it a bit more difficult.

Dr CONSTABLE: Are you saying then that in that situation a teacher, say a social studies teacher, might end up teaching science because you cannot give them a full-time load in social science?

Mr MANCE: Not normally. We would find science teachers but sometimes there can be a delay in getting the right mix.

Dr CONSTABLE: So it can happen.

Mr MANCE: It can happen, yes, but hopefully not for too long.

Dr CONSTABLE: Have you any idea of the extent of that happening, the extent at the moment?

Mr MANCE: Yes. I will ask John Ryan, the Acting Director, People and Organisational Development. He can provide that to you.

Mr RYAN: Thank you. As of yesterday there were no vacancies in the State of Western Australia.

Dr CONSTABLE: I am not asking about vacancies.

Mr RYAN: Except in the area of languages other than English, where we have a small number. The issue about whether there is a shortage in certain areas such as science - there is no shortage of teachers in the area of science. What we do have, to pick up on the director general's point, is that in certain locations, and it is not always rural, it is difficult to attract teachers of that specialisation to the area and that may happen not only in rural areas but sometimes in a metropolitan area. It is uncommon to have teachers teaching entirely outside of their subject areas. It is not a common occurrence.

Dr CONSTABLE: But part of their load can be outside their subject areas.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr RYAN: Yes, part of their load can be and that is trying to match the - in providing a broad curriculum for children to choose from. Especially in the physical science, as you mentioned, there are often a small number of students who would like to take that subject and hence finding a person to teach that in conjunction with other subject areas so that they are fully utilised across the working week can be a difficulty.

Dr CONSTABLE: Part of my first question to the minister was, what do you see happening in the next four or five years in some of the areas like physics and science and chemistry?

Mr RYAN: One of the issues that the minister touched on, one of the scholarships that has been put in place, is the payment of HECS for people in their final year of university that are targeted for those areas that we may have a shortage in, such as science. We will be recruiting people in their final year of university, paying their HECS to do teacher training for the last 12 months and then they will come out specialised in the area of science or mathematics or technology and enterprise depending on what the area of shortage is. We are having up to 40 of those.

Dr CONSTABLE: My supplementary question following on from that - I support the notion of encouraging young graduates into the teaching profession but it seems to me in the world of work these days we might have to look in other places as well, at people entering their second or third career. They may just be the very people that would make excellent teachers. I just wonder what effort you are making towards that because I know a lot of non-government schools around Australia are certainly looking at people in their second and third careers as excellent, mature people to be involved in the teaching profession.

Mr RYAN: During this year we ran a program where we have done exactly that. We have looked at people who are entering a second career, people who have been engineers or accountants or whatever. We pay them a training wage to complete their teacher training, so these are people who are mature people looking for a second career and we have approximately 15 people coming out this year like that.

Dr CONSTABLE: Do you see expanding that program?

Mr RYAN: Certainly we do and it may -

The CHAIRMAN: Member of Churchlands, can you please address your comments through the minister?

Dr CONSTABLE: Minister, do you see expanding that program in the future so that you can attract more people into second and third careers in teaching?

Mr CARPENTER: I am glad you asked me that. I have heard you speak about this or ask questions about this before, I think. The brief answer to your question is yes, very much. You will be pleased to know, and you do know, that we are embarking on this whole concept of trying to raise the status of the teaching profession underpinned by, obviously, teacher registration, which you were the first person I heard introduce that element into the debate in Parliament, but overlaid by the college of teaching concept.

As you know, the idea is to have a professional organisation of peers who establish minimum standards, who are engaged in peer review, who promote the profession, the concept being to elevate the occupation of teaching to a profession, to professional status. Part of the successful negotiations we have had in this has involved the unions and every representative group in teaching, in the education community, in Western Australia and there would be capacity in that to allow for limited forms of registration. Perhaps we can get on to that later with the Department of Education Services, but obviously to try and attract people who have experience in other areas into teaching is something that we would pursue.

I think you would probably also know, and certainly it is related in that document that I named, that the average age now of a graduate is 28 years of age. So you are more often than not dealing with people who have had experience in other occupations from professions, who do bring a fair bit of worldly experience to the classroom when they get in there. It is just a matter of continuing to speak positively about teaching as a profession, as a desirable profession, putting in place all the different - and I have a list here - incentives that we could use to attract people into teaching, and so on, and to allow for ease of movement from one profession over into another. That does in itself require some negotiation with groups like the Teachers Union and so on for registration purposes.

Dr CONSTABLE: One thing, Minister: you mentioned a document -

The CHAIRMAN: Fourth supplementary question.

Dr CONSTABLE: - to do with supply and demand of teachers. Could that be provided as supplementary information, please?

Mr CARPENTER: Certainly, yes.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Dr CONSTABLE: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us make it perfectly clear; what are you going to provide as supplementary information?

Mr CARPENTER: Member, it is a document which was released last year. I think it is probably available -

Dr CONSTABLE: If you provide it, Minister, it is so much easier for us.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes. The document is called Teacher Supply and Demand 1999-2005.

Dr CONSTABLE: Thank you.

Mr CARPENTER: You will see from the recommendations in that, basically which we adopted for policy, the range of incentives that are suggested in there to try and attract people from all walks of life into teaching. I know other people want to ask questions but I think the scholarship idea has a lot of merit and we are pursuing it and specifically one area that I would like to be able to try and work on as the minister is to attract more Aboriginal people into teaching. We are going to try to provide 50 places for Aboriginal people to become schoolteachers. It is not as easy as it sounds.

The previous Government had some incentive packages and found it difficult to actually fill the number of positions that they were offering but I think with a few other programs that we are running and the expansion of the university course providers into regional areas - Notre Dame is providing training courses in Broome, for example, and one of the universities is interested in providing them in Geraldton - then recruitment of Aboriginal people, training them, especially locally in their areas and then having them employed as fully qualified teachers, is an objective that will become much more realisable than it has been in the past.

Dr CONSTABLE: That is good.

[3.20 pm]

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you. Can I refer the minister to page 1062 under the major policy decision and to refer to two items in there because they are interconnected. That is the information and technology in schools and laptop for teachers? On 3 June, Minister, you announced by way of media statement that all government schools would be computer-linked and fitted with super fast telecommunications access within four years under \$120 million State Government IT program. You have \$30 million there, not for two years, though. It is only commencing in 2003 to 2005.

What were you thinking of to spend \$120 million on and what are we going to get with \$30 million? Is that just the Telstra connection to all the schools? If I can go on to the laptops for teachers, you have got funding. It does not actually start again until 2002-03. It is only \$23.49 million. We have estimated it is going to cost about \$30 million, so how many teachers over the four years are going to be provided with laptops? What is the breakdown through training, insurance, cost of computers etc?

Mr CARPENTER: I will answer that first part first. To give you the background, to I suppose open the door to the imperfect development of policy in Opposition, obviously we were keen to expand the provision of information communications technology if we got into government. I did my best to try and find out, to do some analysis of how much the IT program was costing the education system. The best we could work out was that when you incorporated that \$80 million that the then Government was rolling out, it was costing anywhere between \$200 million and \$260 million a year for the provision of the box, the cabling and all the labour that was going into it. I realised then that the numbers were very large and obviously we only had a limited amount that we could promise as additional funding.

My belief, and I think I have been vindicated, was that with the amount of money that was being expended already, if we could do it better we could achieve a much greater result without necessarily much additional funding at all and then we could top up in the outer years with \$30 million extra. I think the auditor general's report basically has given some credence to the argument that I was putting.

There was money available still left over from that \$80 million. Most of the schools had reached their required quotas of one computer for every 10 primary school students and one computer for every five. There was some money left over, so there was additional money we could incorporate there. When we came into government, the previous Government was in the process of negotiating a contract for increased bandwidth so that all schools could be networked. Previously the networking arrangement was really from the front office back to EDWA, as I understood it, but the classrooms themselves were not necessarily networked with other schools, or certainly some schools were networked internally but they were not networked between schools. There was also a problem with speed of downloading information and uploading information and so on. We concluded an agreement with Telstra and Optus. I think it was for \$127 million, was it, or \$120 million.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr MANCE: \$120 million over four years.

Mr CARPENTER: For \$120 million over four years, they could provide - I do not know the gigawatts or whatever it is.

Mrs EDWARDES: MBs.

Mr CARPENTER: Vastly improved bandwidth to all schools in Western Australia which would basically facilitate - it is like putting in the road system and then you start building the houses and putting the roof on top of it. They could facilitate that development and the funding could be found internally because there was a vast amount of money that was being expended internally anyway for data transmission and so on. That \$120 million has come without additional money being required.

Mrs EDWARDES: So the only additional money then is that \$30 million in those last two years.

Mr CARPENTER: That is for that part of it. The laptops was the second part of your question. That was another interesting situation. Clearly it was a very good initiative from the previous minister to move towards providing laptops for all teachers because it is obviously the technological tool of the 21st century that everybody needs in their workplace. There was a commitment given as part of the last enterprise bargaining agreement that all teachers who wanted them would be provided with low-cost access to laptop computers. There was never a sum nailed down on it but the provisional figure was that it would cost around about \$32 million to do that. That was an unfunded commitment. I am assuming, and I take my assumption from what I was told I think by the previous director general in fact, that the process would have been that the then minister would have come through this year's budget process and accessed the funding so the money would have become available.

The budget position that I inherited included no provision for laptops but there was a commitment for the laptops, so we had to find out how we could do it. Once again what I had to do was to ensure that through a reprioritising of spending we could honour that commitment without necessarily in this financial year having to find any extra money and we have done that.

Mrs EDWARDES: The program is up and running this year.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes. Ultimately, as you will see, the ongoing recurrent cost for it is \$8 million or thereabouts per year. That is where the \$32 million comes from over four years, but we are staging it to avoid the problem that the previous administration got into with their IT provision which was a box drop of computers to schools, regardless of their capacity to use them - "Here's your computers." I do not blame anybody for it. It was just the way the policy was done. "Here are your computers. Off you go. You do the rest."

My belief was that he could have run into the same problem and attracted the same adverse comment from the auditor general if we had done the same thing with the laptops whereby you simply provide to every schoolteacher a laptop, half of whom probably would have no idea how to use them - certainly not to get maximum use out of them. What I did was to then go to the Teachers Union and try to negotiate with them an agreement, not necessarily successfully, that we would provide the laptops at the same speed at which the bandwidth roll-out was occurring, so the laptops would be seen as an adjunct to the extra bandwidth so they could plug into the Internet and they could get maximum use out of it. Professional development would go with it.

Rather than having access provided in one hit in this financial year, we have staged it over two financial years in fact. Our anticipation is that by the end of next year's calendar year - the next school year - the bandwidth program will have been basically completed hopefully.

Mrs EDWARDES: I thought that was going to take four years.

Mr CARPENTER: I do not think so.

Mrs EDWARDES: That is good news.

Mr CARPENTER: 18 months. Also the laptop provision will be rolled out at about the same speed. There is some disquiet in the Teachers Union about that because they were promised they would get them almost immediately, but there you go. I mean, that is what I have done.

Mrs EDWARDES: Whilst the bandwidth goes on, training is going to be taken, or professional development, at the same time in advance.

Mr CARPENTER: As they get them obviously. That is all part of the deal basically. There is also extra money in there for professional development. I do not know if it is in that.

Mrs EDWARDES: It is in that area.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr CARPENTER: Essentially that is the program, to run it in parallel with the increased bandwidth provision and hopefully thereby avoid those very costly downsides that the previous approach to IT provision brought with it. Ultimately, as I said, once we get up and running the expectation is that because they will be on lease arrangements - so you have a rolling cost every year - you will be looking at around about \$8.5 million.

The other thing that is worth bearing in mind with the laptops is that the teachers as part of the EBA were promised access at low cost. The Government in Victoria provided the teachers with laptops at \$5 per week. The discussion in Western Australia was always using those same numbers. What I was told by both sides to the previous discussion was that it was always between \$5 and \$10 per week. Whether that was before tax or after tax is subject to some disagreement but we are hopeful that we will get teachers provided with those laptops at around about \$5 a week after tax.

Mr McRAE: Minister, I visit the schools in my electorate, and I acknowledge you have done that with me, which is the first time that a minister and local member in Riverton has toured the schools in that electorate. One of the things that came up during the course of our tour as a common theme raised with me is the extent to which schools are seen as a safe environment, as well as a pleasant environment. I notice on page 1061 the very last dot point has a small statement that I think has a large impact. The last dot point on page 1061 says, "A major initiative to improve school environments will commence." Could you expand on how this policy is going to be implemented? What funds are going to be allocated, if any, to this initiative and what can we hope to see as the practical outcomes of that?

[3.30 pm]

Mr CARPENTER: Basically I suppose there would be three main prongs - is "prongs" the word - to our approach on that. One is in relation to the human resources at the school and what can be done there. The other is in relation to the physical nature of the school, and that is the capital works. The other would be related to that, but on a recurrent basis to maintenance. If I can go to the first point first, about a month or so ago I announced, and it was part of one of our commitments that we made in the election campaign, that we would provide additional money. The exact figure disappears from the top of my head, but for a behaviour management and discipline program aimed specifically at the most difficult years which are years 8 and 9. We made the announcement for that policy up at Girrawheen High School.

Mrs EDWARDES: It was \$2.5 million.

Mr CARPENTER: Per year, yes. It was \$10 million. That is right. Essentially there were some issues to deal with there. Do you mind if I just explain?

Mr McRAE: No. I am very interested in it.

Mr CARPENTER: Thank you for that. I know that the ultimate figure was \$28 million and \$10 million of that in effect was additional money that had come in. We reorganised or we reprioritised other existing moneys and then laid over the top of that \$10 million which I had promised in the election campaign for behaviour management and discipline. One issue that we have to deal with when we take on these initiatives is how people will react to our actually talking about behaviour management and discipline in schools. It is quite interesting, because certainly within the school system itself and the education system itself there is a nervousness about addressing publicly and openly the issue of discipline in government schools.

Mr McRAE: Admitting to it in some ways.

Mr CARPENTER: That it is an issue, and certainly then you have the parent context, uncertainty as to whether or not parents would react positively or negatively to their school being identified as a school which needs some specific behaviour management and discipline issues addressed, but in the end I think we are better off taking the bull by the horns, so rather than labelling it safe and positive learning environments or whatever the member talked about, we decided to talk about behaviour management and discipline.

My belief is that that is probably the biggest reason that people divert their children out of government schools at high school level, that issue itself, so I pinned the ears back and went in and announced that in Girrawheen they have the New North Compact with Girrawheen, Mirrabooka and Balga; very progressive schools and a progressive local member obviously which we took into consideration. That essentially was then to do these things. Rather than me - not an educator or not a person, other than my own family, who is experienced in behaviour management and discipline - trying to prescribe how schools all over Western Australia should deal with the issue, do as I said we would do which is, here is a resource that is available, a certain amount of money and I think 60 extra FTEs across the system - full-time equivalents - in other words, people, plus money.

Schools know their own discipline issues better than anybody else and have the best capacity to deal with them and every school and every situation, probably every individual child, will have a different circumstance and

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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different need. Schools come up with their own programs to deal with these issues and it will be verified by a district director of the education department - that is, their approach will be verified, and then funded. I cannot remember exactly how many schools it was that we funded. We made an assessment based on data that was available to the system as to which schools had the greatest need and applied funding or made funding available as best we could to match their relative needs. That is actually happening now and quite honestly I think it is a good proposal.

Mrs EDWARDES: I seek a supplementary on that to follow up? In terms of the criteria for the identification of the school, some of the criteria that is established for extra funding for schools in low socioeconomic areas is pretty quickly identifiable, but there are some schools which have major behavioural problems but are in, say, some of the further northern suburbs.

Mr McRAE: Beachside suburbs.

Mrs EDWARDES: Not quite beachside, which miss out on that level of funding.

Mr CARPENTER: I know and, let us face it, it is an imperfect science trying to deal with this, is it not? Probably every school has some children -

Mrs EDWARDES: So you limited your criteria to the local surrounds?

Mr CARPENTER: No. It was based upon the incidents and the needs identified in the school. It was not done on an H index or anything like that. It was done on what was happening in the schools and, as I said, statistics from the school, incidents in the school, and it was not necessarily, as it was portrayed, dealing with naughty kids or bad kids. It was dealing with kids who presented behaviour management and discipline issues and obviously behaviour management is not necessarily a discipline issue. There are all sorts of other things that impact on that and can make life very difficult for the teachers and the other kids as well, so that was the kind of data that we used. It was not an H index thing, but quite honestly we often find that things overlap quite significantly and, as I said, there were some schools in some areas that said, "Listen, we deserve more money than school B that got it."

We cannot please everyone, but I think basically we did as best we could and applied finding and resources to an extra 44 high schools across the State, which I think everybody was most grateful for and we will see how well the program goes. We have to do something and we have to do it with flexibility and to trust the local expertise.

Ms QUIRK: Minister, can I have another supplementary about that?

Mr CARPENTER: Okay. Sorry.

Mr McRAE: That was only point 1.

Mr CARPENTER: I have ticked off that.

Mr McRAE: That was the behavioural side and I was going to ask -

Mr CARPENTER: Do you want to ask about that particular -

Ms QUIRK: Yes. Thank you, Minister, for your kind words.

The CHAIRMAN: You have the call, by the way, member for Girrawheen.

Ms QUIRK: Thank you. It is a supplementary.

The CHAIRMAN: Not the call then. Okay.

Ms QUIRK: Just to follow on to what the member for Kingsley said, as I understand it in particular Balga, Girrawheen and Mirrabooka in fact put up a specific proposal to you and to some extent it was assessed on the basis of that proposal. I was very pleased to hear the announcement in July. How is it progressing today? Has the actual program commenced?

Mr CARPENTER: I will have to defer to someone in the department about that. Ms Banks?

Ms BANKS: Yes, the programs commenced immediately. The schools have been notified of their funding and they are able to take on staff and start using that funding immediately. A number of schools had already planned initiatives, as you have identified, the New North project and also some schools in Cannington with the Hillside Farm project. This funding will enable those to proceed. Other schools are wisely taking time to further plan how they will use the money and what they are not using now they can use in next year's implementation plan.

Mr McRAE: Minister, I was just going to say I think that combination in terms of school environments dealing with the behavioural and cultural environments and the physical environment - which I understand you were just about to deal with, were you?

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr CARPENTER: I was, yes.

Mr McRAE: Sorry. Okay.

Mr CARPENTER: As I said, there is the capital works program. Capital works as it is reflected in the budget is quite lumpy for education because obviously sometimes you get two new high schools, \$40 million, being built and the next year none, so it goes up and down, but you can generally run a line through it. We put in an additional \$30 million over the four years laid over the top of what was allocated already, plus over the top of the \$40 million that had been designated from the sale of AlintaGas, the AlintaGas money, so there is additional money for capital works and the objective there is to actually improve the physical environs of the school. It does actually have an impact on the way the school culture develop or does not develop. I will keep it brief, but I would have taken a different approach with the \$40 million from AlintaGas. I think it is a bit like the IT provision. The idea is right. The execution is wrong, but, anyway, schools were promised that money so it is going out.

Then of course we put in additional money for maintenance. Currently I think the amount of money expended on maintenance of government schools goes up and down - in the last four or five years between \$58 million and \$60 million. I think last year it was 59 point something or other. We put in an extra \$2.5 million per year to push it up. It was \$61 million, but if you extract some of the figures out, it is actually less than that, so we have actually put in \$2.5 million additional funding for maintenance. It is not doubling the maintenance budget, but it provides an additional capacity for schools for maintenance.

If you lock it in with the improved capital works funding plus some improved maintenance - I think the most important thing was to assure schools that the maintenance budget would not be declining, that it was going to be trending upwards. If we can get some significant redevelopments in the schools and improve the safety features of schools through those redevelopments and then have the maintenance program to maintain that level, then we can do a lot towards providing a more positive physical environment to go with a better resourced human environment. There is another initiative in there as well which is called Family Links Program which links into the same concept. I will leave that because there might be a question on that later, but that is another program that addresses the same sort of issues.

[3.40 pm]

Mr LOGAN: Minister, as part of that budget you have talked about redevelopments of schools, but does that also include the maintenance of existing schools such as the painting and improvement of schools; for example, in my electorate Spearwood Primary School, which is a great primary school and quite a large primary school for the area, certainly is in need of major refurbishment in terms of painting as opposed to major construction that is required there. I notice that down the road Phoenix Primary School has had a marvellous job done in recent times.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is, is the school going to get a paint job? Is that what you are after?

Mr LOGAN: You can put it like that, Mr Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Put the question. In my preamble I said, "Can you make the questions succinct?" so please do.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes, those elements that you talked about are included in the maintenance program. If we have a look back through the history of the maintenance funding, in 1990 the maintenance budget in Western Australia for schools was very low but obviously there were some big factors happening there impinging on Government financial capacity. I think only about \$18 million was being spent on maintenance in 1990. By the election year of 1992-93 the figure had gone up to about \$42 million, \$43 million. Immediately after the election this was something that I was keen to avoid, the perception arising. There was a significant drop in the amount of money made available for maintenance and I think in the first two years of the previous Government the maintenance budget was slashed back to about \$30 million and then, I think, probably coincident with the change of minister, the maintenance budget was up again. We have realised we have an ageing stock. We have ageing stock for schools.

Quite frankly, you could rebuild a whole lot of schools all over the place. The member probably has heaps in mind and so have I, but in the meantime we have to keep pressing ahead with an improved maintenance budget. I went to West Midland Primary School, for example, with the local member out there. That is the police minister. It is unbelievable that the physical condition of that school has been allowed to run down to a very significant extent. So somewhere in that refurbishment program you will see that there are several million dollars, I think, for the redevelopment of West Midland Primary School, but across the State, statewide, we have



Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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an ageing capital stock which needs significant work and no doubt Spearwood Primary School is one of them. You have Beeliar Primary School in your electorate.

Mr LOGAN: Yes, I have, but that is a new school.

Mr CARPENTER: I know; so there you go. There are the two ends. Beeliar Primary School is magnificent.

Mr LOGAN: It is a magnificent school.

Mr CARPENTER: The kids must leap out of bed in the morning and rush off down to get there.

The CHAIRMAN: Back to the speaker's lists because we have only had three questions so far in three-quarters of an hour.

Ms QUIRK: I turn to page 1060, Minister, and I note that there are plans for a review of current provision of service for students with disabilities and that that will be completed. I would ask what the progress of that review is and also what interim arrangements are being made for assistance in the meantime.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes, that review was announced probably about April some time. It got off to a slightly slow start and I will get Margaret Banks to update us on that, but in relation to the provision of facilities or provision of resources for children with disabilities in our school, everybody in the whole room would understand that is a major issue. I do not know if it is going to continue forever, but there has been an increasing desire for parents to have their children with disabilities mainstreamed, if you like, and provided with integrated educational environment which brings with it huge cost implications. I was a shadow minister for disabilities for two years and I would have to say I learnt quite a lot about the whole area of disabilities from contacts but also from the previous Minister for Disabilities who was a very good minister, Paul Omodei, the numbers man.

Paul Omodei had very good policies and had a good approach, but it was quite obvious to him and me and everybody else that the need was enormous and especially in the schools. It was having a severe impact upon the schools. So what the Labor Party did in the run-up to the election was to decide that we would provide an additional funding base for children with disabilities in schools. I think the policy spoke about an extra \$4 million and there was to be \$3 million extra for children with special learning needs as opposed to disabilities. There is obviously a difference there, although often the needs are similar.

After we went through the process of reprioritising spending and having a look at what we could and could not do, we actually found that with a bit of push and shove here and there we could improve that overall additional funding allocation from \$7 million to \$9 million. So there is an additional \$9 million sitting there in the budget in this and the forward estimate years for children with special needs and children with disabilities. Although you can apply money statistically, we are now awaiting the outcome of the review that you spoke about first of all. I have the terms of reference of the review here. We are hopeful that we will get a report soon. Actually Margaret might know better. She is dealing with it so she might have a better idea of where we are up to with it.

Ms BANKS: Yes, we are running several stages in this process. We have just called for submissions. We also have an independent consultant who will be running focus groups with all key stakeholder groups to obtain their views and then we will be collating the information in order to inform the planning in the organisation of facilities and resources in order to meet the requirements of the Education Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.

Mrs EDWARDES: Does the minister know what the numbers are of children with disabilities in schools and those that have been identified as requiring special needs? Can I just add a comment? Some of that money would be used far better if there was the complementary health services. In the northern suburbs there is a major reduction of occupational therapists and speech pathologists for five-year-olds and over and some four-year-old. Those major developmental years in those early years of school when they need that extra support is no longer there in the health system in the northern suburbs and so therefore the minister will find a greater drain on the money being allocated when it could have actually gone further.

Mr CARPENTER: I will respond to that. I do not have the information one way or the other to agree or disagree, but I take what is being said at face value. There are two points to it. One is it is all very well to say, "Here's extra money available for children with disabilities." It is another thing to actually find the services that they want. Up in the goldfields, for example, I think there is one speech pathologist. She is South African and was preparing to go back to South Africa to try and recruit some of her friends to come over and work. It is quite difficult in some places of the State and obviously very difficult in some places for parents with children with disabilities to access the services and assistance that their children need.

The other element of what was talked about, how the budgets are being played out in other areas, I was very keen to ensure that the additional money that we established or we set aside provided for children with

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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disabilities actually remained in our budget because I did not want to actually pass it over to Disability Services, for example, and then never see it. So I appreciate the point being made and that was one of the motivations when we were writing the policy that led us to decide that as far as we possibly could, for as long as we possibly could, we would maintain that additional resource for children with disabilities inside the education department budget so that it did not get dissipated somewhere else and we would never see it. Obviously you are right. There is a huge issue here.

Mrs EDWARDES: We only have two ITs in the northern suburbs so you can see what the drain from that would be. The numbers - provided by way of supplementation.

Mr CARPENTER: They used to be in the budget papers.

Mr RYAN: We can provide that now. There are 3 923 students in education support facilities.

Mrs EDWARDES: Is that the number you have specialised as children with special needs? You tended to identify two categories.

Mr RYAN: 3 923 children we have identified with special needs who receive special consideration in staffing requirements. There would be other children with special needs whose needs would not be so great who would not receive specialised staffing.

Mrs EDWARDES: Do you have a number on those ones?

Mr RYAN: No, I do not, I am sorry. It is usually taken on an incidence model which is I think approximately about three per cent of the population.

Mrs EDWARDES: I think last year it was identified that there were about 6 000 in the school system totally.

Mr RYAN: Take another three per cent. That would probably get up, because we have 258 170 students enrolled. As I said there is an incidence model that they usually take across the population.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you.

Mr LOGAN: Minister, page 1069, the capital works program, the first dot point is the completion of four new primary schools and the replacement of primary schools. You have listed there three, of which I am interested in two.

Mr McRAE: We are interested in all of them.

Mr LOGAN: We are interested in all of them but as the member for Albany is not here I certainly would like some further information from the minister about the completion of Swanbourne and the time frame for the completion for Stamford. I thought it was Stamford.

Mr McRAE: It is Stamford, yes.

Mr HARVEY: Swanbourne Primary School is currently under construction and the expected completion date is November this year. It will be well and truly ready for the start of next year. Stamford is the third term of next year. That was actually brought forward. The idea with Stamford Gardens was that it would replace South Coogee because of the roadworks and because of its condition, so we have brought that whole project forward.

Mr LOGAN: What is the end -

Mr HARVEY: Third term of 2002.

Mr LOGAN: Third term of 2002 is the completion date.

Dr CONSTABLE: A very brief supplementary, Minister. There is a lot of information here about the schools that are going to be built. Are you planning to close any schools and specifically I would like to know about the status of Buckland Hill in Mosman Park.

Mr CARPENTER: In relation to Buckland Hill, there has been a proposal that was put to the previous minister and has been put to me by suggestion. In fact I had a discussion about Buckland Hill with the previous minister.. His proposal at that time was to close Buckland Hill and Kim Beazley and to develop a brand-new facility. I think the proposal was on the site of the South Fremantle High School. I have not progressed that any further and I have not been involved in any discussions with a parent group from Buckland Hill or Kim Beazley, although I know the parents from Kim Beazley because a lot of the kids in my electorate go there. It is a completely inadequate facility for a lot of the kids now. I have not been to Buckland Hill so I cannot visualise it.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Dr CONSTABLE: There are very few students there now and there are students with very severe disabilities, as I understand it, because some children have gone over to Kim Beazley. It is actually being run through Kim Beazley with only one principal. It is something that I would encourage you to look at.

Mr CARPENTER: I will get Steve to elaborate a bit but if it is anything like Kim Beazley, it is well past its use by date for the purpose for which it is being put. You have got children with, as you say, very severe disabilities. There are no lifts. It is upstairs. I mean, the staff at Kim Beazley do quite a heroic job, providing an educational experience for the kids, given the conditions they have to work with.

Mr HARVEY: The facilities both at Kim Beazley School and at Buckland Hill School are far from satisfactory. Also you are correct. The numbers of children attending Buckland Hill in fact at the last count was eight. The proposal that is yet to come formally to the minister as well is the proposal to in fact close Buckland Hill formally but for it to be an annexe of Kim Beazley and that ultimately the two disposed of and amalgamated in some form.

Dr CONSTABLE: Does that mean the current children will stay there until something is built? Is that the proposal?

Mr HARVEY: That is correct.

Dr CONSTABLE: The parents are very concerned about it, quite properly.

Mr HARVEY: I can quite understand that. The fact is that the children who attend Buckland Hill would not be suitable in Kim Beazley. The proposal is really to amalgamate the administration.

Dr CONSTABLE: I thought that had happened.

Mr HARVEY: Not formally actually - to amalgamate the administration and to keep the children there until there is a final solution.

Dr CONSTABLE: Thank you.

Mr CARPENTER: I had better answer your first part though.

Dr CONSTABLE: Are you going to close any others?

Mr CARPENTER: As far as I am aware, there is no concrete proposal for any other school closures at the moment. There have been negotiations involving various schools - Maylands and East Maylands, for example. I think those negotiations are still going on - but there is not a list of schools that I have or been presented with at any stage which say that these schools have to close by a particular date. Obviously with changing demographics, that will always be occurring.

Mrs EDWARDES: You do not follow the previous Government's policy that it is a decision of the school to close?

Mr CARPENTER: I do not know whether it was a decision of the school so much.

The CHAIRMAN: A bomb scare.

Mr CARPENTER: But certainly what we will be doing is having negotiations with the parents and so on. Otherwise you create mayhem.

The CHAIRMAN: I postpone this sitting.

*Sitting suspended from 3.58 until 4.44 pm*

The CHAIRMAN (Mr Edwards): Minister, with your indulgence I am going to start. We just keep moving and the call is with the member for Roe who is not here, so we will go to the member for Churchlands.

Dr CONSTABLE: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, I refer you to page 1 058, the first dot point under "Major Achievements for 2000-01". The last sentence raises a very important issue about changing the school starting age which began this year, I think, in kindergarten. On my calculations by the year 2009 those children will be in year 7 and some of them will be turning 13 in year 7. I am very anxious to know what planning you have in place now for the changes that may need to be put in place in our schools when we have 13-year-olds in year 7 and later on 18-year-olds in year 12.

It seems to me that this raises a number of questions about the organisation of schools, the teaching of children, the sorts of issues that you raised about year 8s and 9s, behaviour problems and so on, earlier. You have a committee in place now and what capital expenditure perhaps do you see we might have to incur in order to have high schools or more middle schools or whatever in place to handle this quite fundamental change that I think is

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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looming? The sooner we think about it, the sooner we are going to get it right for when those children move through the primary schools.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes. I agree with you. Let us take a step back. I think the general objective when these changes of ages were brought in - and I think it is a good thing to bring kids in earlier and so on and to change the ages - was to first of all get more children engaged at an earlier age in kindergarten and preschool, but I think the objective in the longer term was to have year 7s - that is, that slightly older age cohort, as you have just said - engage in middle school by that stage. How realistic that is going to be in every location remains to be seen and we have to start developing contingencies for that.

Dr CONSTABLE: I am sorry. I missed that. The minister has or has not started?

Mr CARPENTER: We will have to start, but the thing is some of the middle schooling experiences now are already involving year 7.

Dr CONSTABLE: I realise that.

Mr CARPENTER: Ballajura Community College, Kinross - so I think that is going to become more common and obviously the pressure is going to start building as that age cohort goes through, but I did not sit down in the pre-election period and map out a plan for that, I must admit. Perhaps we can get some more information from -

Dr CONSTABLE: Can the minister assure us then with the planning of new schools, such as the schools that are on the drawing board now or are being constructed, that these issues have been taken into account? What sort of committee does the minister have in place or intend to put in place to start coming up with some recommendations across the board so that we do not miss the bus on this very important issue?

Mr MANCE: It is a very good question and we have been working on it. We have made a start by setting up an internal committee which represents all phases of schooling and all areas of expertise, including Aboriginal education, early childhood, middle schooling. We are also using the sites where it is operating at present to try and find our best practice and what the issues are about staffing, resources, learning communities, the way we design the schools. So we are learning from Kinross and Ballajura, for instance. There will be capital expenditure required. There is no doubt about that, and it will be a location specific thing. Some locations will have the capacity, so it will not be a capital expenditure, but there will be resources required, for instance, in terms of the staffing provisions for secondary.

Dr CONSTABLE: Minister, do you have any idea -

The CHAIRMAN: Is this a supplementary question, member for Churchlands?

Dr CONSTABLE: Yes, it is. It is about the actual expenditure of money.

The CHAIRMAN: I will take it as a supplementary question.

Dr CONSTABLE: Thank you. Do you have any idea of the cost that we might be looking at over the next eight or nine or 10 years to put this in place?

Mr CARPENTER: To be quite honest with you, I have to say I have not got a handle on the cost. To give you an example of what has happened already, the Geraldton experience, for example, where the two high schools were reconfigured to produce a middle school with middle schooling at John Willcock and a senior college at the old Geraldton High School. Very little, if any, capital works was done and subsequently, or consequently perhaps, there are significant issues about the success or otherwise of that experiment there. There is going to have to be some significant capital expenditure at some stage in that area to try and make that whole concept work. I cannot put a figure on it at the moment. Give me some time. I have only just got into the position and I appreciate that this is something that is going to have to be addressed all over the State.

Dr CONSTABLE: I will come back and ask you the same question next year.

Dr WOOLLARD: Minister, my question is in relation to dot point 6 on 1058 where it says that in society the status of teachers as a whole is not keeping pace with that of other professions, the last dot point on 1061 where a major initiative to improve school environments will commence and on page 1057 where we are looking at salaries. Earlier today you talked about methods the education department is using to attract people into the teaching profession.

[4.50 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Alfred Cove, are you linking those all together?

Dr WOOLLARD: Yes, rather than go one to the other.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Dr WOOLLARD: Within my area one of the main complaints that is coming from schools and from teachers is, yes, the maintenance and buildings which you discussed earlier, but also the fact that when teachers go into that profession, their salary rises for eight years and then, if they want to stay hands-on in the classroom, their salaries are set or that is the peak of their salary and the only way their salaries rise is if they move into administration, so I am wondering what you are doing in relation to the salaries to attract more teachers to stay in the teaching profession.

Mr CARPENTER: The issue of the salaries is an important one, but I think probably the bigger issue, what the member is talking about, is the career structure really, is it not - the career pathways that enable teachers to continually upgrade their skills and with their experience and so on be remunerated at a higher rate? The EBA that teachers are currently working under was only signed off I think in November or thereabouts and that extends for at least another two years, I think. In the meantime I think what we need to do is to have a changed relationship, if you like, with the Teachers Union in discussions about their career structures and what capacity there is for increase in salaries so that instead of three or four months before the EBA expires and we start banging heads and get into an industrial confrontation, we actually try to work constructively with them to develop some programs for improved career structures.

This was an area that I tried to identify or tried to deal with in Opposition, as in doing policy, and what we have done is to initially address the number of level 3 teachers, who are the highest paid classroom teacher levels. I think 200 positions are available at the moment for level 3s and within the EBA structure that exists now, I want to try and increase that and I think the figure we have arrived at is another 200, so internally within the career structure it will be possible for a greater number of teachers to reach higher salary levels without having to go into non-teaching duties, which is the irony of career development in teaching - that you obviously end up earning more by no longer teaching - and the best people, not always, but often, find themselves no longer teaching. So we have to find ways of keeping the best people in the classrooms and remunerating them for their skills. The first step in that is to increase the number of level 3 teachers, double it in fact, over the four-year period, but I think there will be other ways that we can explore with the representative bodies for the teaching community about improving their career structure.

Mrs EDWARDES: Minister, can I refer you to page 1062 on Major Policy Decisions and refer you back to your commitment leading up to the election to reduce class sizes for years 1 to 3? In an answer on a question without notice in the Legislative Council, the minister representing you in that House stated that the Government commitment is to reduce maximum class sizes in years 1 to 3 to 24 children from 2003. Given that that would have been a major policy decision, I would have thought that we would have seen it there. Can you tell me is it somewhere else hiding in the budget papers here because the only reference I can find on reduction of class sizes is on page 1064 under the supplementary information of quantity, quality and effectiveness under other information dealing with student-teacher ratio primary from 18 down to 17.7? That is for last year, not to do with next year.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes. The commitment is as you described it. In answer to your question, it was to honour the commitment given by the previous Government to reduce class sizes by that number, by that time. What we discovered coming into government was that that commitment - which as I recall was costed at \$11 million, it may have been 14 but around about that amount - was not funded and so what you have here in relation to these policy initiatives are additional moneys that have been allocated to meet our election commitments. That commitment that you are referring to is going to be met out of existing funds and it was a prior standing commitment anyway. Whilst it was a commitment of ours as well, it was already there but it was not funded. What we have had to do to maintain the integrity of our funding prior to the election is to find the money for that internally, and it has been done.

Mrs EDWARDES: I wonder, Minister, then whether or not you could provide to the Committee by way of supplementary information, because so much is not in the budget papers, a total breakdown of the output which is on page 1057, item 93, net amounts appropriated to purchase outputs. That might give us some idea about exactly what the funds are going to be used for, which would incorporate these sorts of things and what we were referring to earlier in terms of IT, etc.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you prepared to supply that as supplementary information?

Mr CARPENTER: Basically what you want then is a breakdown of the expenditures on all the different outputs.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: I will take it that supplementary information is going to be provided.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr CARPENTER: I was just told that that is a reversion to the previous budgeting program. Anyway, I will do my best.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thank you.

Ms GUISE: Minister, my question is in relation to page 1060, the second dot point. I note that school grants have been expanded and in addition a number of new specific purpose payments were transferred to schools through the school grant gateway. I ask the question in four parts and in doing so realise that some of it may need to be provided as supplementary information: (1) how are the grants expanded; (2) could you please provide a list of the components of the school grant for primary and secondary schools respectively; (3) could you advise what new specific purpose payments have been made available and the reason for making these available; and (4) could you please advise what percentage the school grants allocation was increased for the year 2000-01 and the expected increase for the following year?

Mr CARPENTER: Mr Chair, I might defer to the finance director, Mr McCaffrey - the specifics for that one. That is the question.

Mr McCAFFREY: Thank you for the question, honourable member. The grants were expanded this year. There are some small additions made to them. I can read them out for you.

Ms GUISE: How lengthy is it? If it is really lengthy, I will be more than happy to receive as supplementary information.

Mr McCAFFREY: The list of components for the school grant for primary and secondary is a very large list, which I can provide.

Ms GUISE: Thank you.

Mr McCAFFREY: There are only some small adjustments to the school grant. We were providing some funds centrally that now will go out for mobility and communication for education support centres. There is also some additional per capita funding of \$25 per student for the four-year-olds in kindergarten years and there was indexation provided in the 2001 grant at three and a half per cent which is an extra \$2.1 million. The estimate for the 2001-02 year - which will be the 2002 calendar year - has been provided as a figure from the State Treasury of 2.75 per cent and that is the level that we will be factoring in, unless it is updated at a later date.

Ms GUISE: Thank you, Minister.

Mrs EDWARDES: Can I inquire about something relevant to that?

The CHAIRMAN: A supplementary question?

Mrs EDWARDES: Regarding those grants and funds and your commitment in terms of the school fees - that they not be compulsory - is there going to be money in that area to help schools because I thought you said, Minister, a fund was to be set up to assist schools where fees were not paid and I could not find it in the budget papers? Is it in that area?

[5.00 pm]

Mr CARPENTER: I will answer that, if you like. This is obviously a very interesting area and the ramifications are subject to some discussion. What I have made clear to the principals is that there will be a fund which will be available for schools who have demonstrably tried and not been successful in maintaining their fee collection base. I have not actually determined yet the size of the fund and it will be found out of existing resources. I am obviously, and you would appreciate this, reluctant to at this stage, very early in the prior calendar year, to come out and say, "X amount of dollars will be sitting there waiting for you," because I want two things. I want the parents to voluntarily continue to pay and I want the schools to do their best to try and raise the money.

I do not want a scenario which sets up one of two situations: where the parents think there is a big pot of money so no-one has to pay and/or the principals think, "We don't even have to try and collect it because there is an amount of money sitting there waiting for us if we do not." We have gone through a very lengthy process with a committee involving the Principals Association, the Department of Education, the Department of Education Services and so on to develop a structure to allow us to allocate sums of money to schools that find themselves out of pocket because of the change in the fees arrangements, but it is not going to be a huge amount and I will indicate probably a bit more towards the end of the year what that sum might be, if you do not mind.

Mrs EDWARDES: Thanks, Minister.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I understand you did say that there would be some supplementary information coming forward from Mr McCaffrey. Is that correct?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: On the member for Wanneroo's question.

Mr CARPENTER: We have a copy of the question.

The CHAIRMAN: And you are happy and comfortable with that?

Mr CARPENTER: I am, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We need to record it here.

Mr McRAE: Minister, at page 1069 there is an outline for capital works program. Certainly in my electorate, as you know, there has been pressure for capital works upgrades and I understand where we are in that bidding process and evaluation process. Could you maybe explain how the department is going about addressing the vast range of capital works upgrade demands because it seems to me that there is a requirement to be able to filter those out into some sort of priority listing or some way of evaluating a hierarchy of needs?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes, you are right. There is a need and there is a system and I think Mr Harvey might be able to better put the detail to it than me.

Mr HARVEY: You are quite right in saying that there is a need across the State in respect of capital and we have well-defined processes which are quite open and transparent in terms of arriving at what capital projects end up on the capital works program, but in addition to that what we are endeavouring to do over the next year is to undertake an audit of all those schools promised in order to evaluate where they stand in respect to their condition and also in respect to the delivery of education. So that process will inform the decision about capital works processes but, as you can understand, the amount of funds available for capital upgrades is limited every year.

Mr McRAE: Can I say it is from my direct experience in the Riverton electorate, particularly dealing with three high schools, that all have particular needs? I am not sure that there is a level of awareness about the open and transparent criteria that is used. Could I ask whether there are any plans in process to communicate those -

Mr CARPENTER: Districts.

Mr McRAE: Beyond districts, and indeed ensure that the schools understand how that process works so that they can start matching their bids against those. I have to say in working with the schools, they say that the past few years have been a bit of a fog.

Mr CARPENTER: I do not have any problem in providing the criteria.

Mr HARVEY: No, that is fine. Basically we deal through the districts to undertake evaluations of schools and our client service officers deal with schools directly in evaluating schools when they ask and when we identify that there is a need. There is no need for a principal to be foggy about it, I should say, because the processes are well defined and clear and if they are unsure, they really need to either contact the district or the centre and we are only too happy to go over the processes involved.

Mrs EDWARDES: Minister, this is obviously an issue that you raised in Estimates previously too in terms of dealing with forward estimates for capital works. I wonder if we could have a list of the projects which are going to be included in the forward estimates for the capital works program. I know the member for Wanneroo obviously is interested because there is East Marangaroo which in one of the budget papers is referred to as \$5.5 million but they do not know when. The Carramar Primary School is \$5.5 million but again they do not know when. Neerabup, who is in a home school, want to know what is happening with them because they are near capacity now as well. Are they going to have to go to Carramar? There is no road linking them yet. If we could have that breakdown, that would be really appreciated.

Mr CARPENTER: I am being told that we do have that list but it is subject to change obviously because there are occasions when, for example, the demographics do not develop as quickly as they might otherwise. We have one situation down in East Waikiki, I think it is, where there was an anticipation that a new school would be required. The developer for one reason or other slowed down the development so there was not the housing stock and there was not the number of children so we have gone to a school-in-houses situation there. Probably the potential development of that school has shown up in forward estimates for quite a while. I do not have any objection to giving it to you, but I think it is wise though to be able to always put on a rider that it is subject to change. Other things do come up which could impact upon it, not the least of which, I hope, that I might be able to access a bit more money for capital works.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mrs EDWARDES: Are you happy to provide that by way of supplementation?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I take it that will be supplementary information, Minister, on that particular issue?

Mr CARPENTER: Yes. Member, do you mean specifically in your area or do you want statewide?

Mrs EDWARDES: Statewide.

Mr CARPENTER: I am sure you will appreciate this as well. Obviously we will give you the information and you can do what you like with it, but as I am going around to various parts of the State which I have not been to before, it would be fair to say that I think I am identifying places which might not have been considered to be a priority for one reason or another which I think are a priority for capital works for schools. I will not name them because I do not want to raise expectations, but there are places where I have been where I think we have to build something here pretty quick, but you understand that.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes. Put the rider on in terms of flexibility.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes, there are going to be occasions when people are disappointed.

Mr MANCE: Can I just add one point, if you do not mind too. Some things we cannot control are things like the allowances for first home building and new developments by local authorities. They can move very quickly and come out of the blue.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes, and the infrastructure does not pick it up.

Mr MANCE: Yes, and then we have a site but the infrastructure is not there to give us access to the site.

Mrs EDWARDES: Yes, we understand that too well out in the northern suburbs.

Dr WOOLLARD: Minister, following on from the member for Riverton's question, schools in my electorate have had issues which have been given a priority one in terms of maintenance and maybe capital. They were priority one in 1995 and then priority one in 1996 and 1997 and they continue year after year to be priority one. Will this Government give a commitment that if a school does have an issue which is deemed priority one, it will be dealt with and the repairs made within that financial year?

[5.10 pm]

Mr CARPENTER: I have the same issue obviously as a local member, but the reality is there are probably far more schools in category priority one at district level than there is available funds to deal with them. The fact is that they are recognised as being in a category or a priority which requires work to be done on them, but this has been an issue that has been going on for a long time - that is, the amount of money that is available to meet all these priority schools is not sufficient to do the work that is require.

As I said, I can go to schools now where there is water running down the interior walls of some places. They have to be done. I appreciate that there are schools in some other areas where the principal or the parents believe that they have an urgent matter, but it is a matter of what is possible and what is not and it is simply not going to be possible to guarantee every school that reaches a priority one category in a financial year that they are going to be dealt with. It is not going to be possible and I would not pretend otherwise.

Dr WOOLLARD: Minister, my question then is, is it worth providing the member for Riverton with the criteria if these priorities which are identified by the educational review team who go round to the schools are not going to be dealt with? Why bother with this paperwork exercise for the member for Riverton when that is going to be left on the table? Nothing is going to happen to improve the schools.

Mr CARPENTER: I did not mean to indicate that nothing would be done. It was asked if I could guarantee, but there are going to be occasions when schools are going to be sitting in a priority one for more than one year.

Dr WOOLLARD: Several years in my electorate.

Mr CARPENTER: I know. If I could get your support for raising extra revenue out of your electorate, I could guarantee probably that all the schools in your electorate are going to be dealt with. We can have that discussion if you like. Everybody knows that we are limited by the funds that are available.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I think you have answered the question, thank you.

Dr CONSTABLE: Minister, I would like to comment that I am delighted to know you have been to visit schools in the electorate of Riverton and also Girrawheen and you have a standing invitation to come to Churchlands.



Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr CARPENTER: I have actually. Was it from you or from the community nurse there?

Dr CONSTABLE: I am sure I have invited you, but to all the schools in the electorate of Churchlands. I would like you to come - pardon?

Mr McRAE: You have probably had a visit from the Minister for Education.

Dr CONSTABLE: No, this is a new one. I would like to show him some things. I want to follow on with capital works, please. Page 1069, the very last dot point refers to \$5.4 million worth of new works committed to provide library resource centres, upgrade administration staff facilities and replace or upgrade toilet facilities in schools. I know there has been an ongoing program in these areas for some of the older schools and I have a particular interest in this when some of the schools in my electorate are now 50 years old and so on.

It is the issue you have been discussing, but if we turn to the specifics of this, to new works on page 1072, there is a commitment for \$5.4 million which I in looking at this assume is over four years which is not an awful lot of money. This year there is a mere \$1 million to cover admin, libraries and toilet replacement. Can you tell us which are the lucky schools this year and how many schools are awaiting in line for those particular things? Toilets particularly are a major concern to schools and parents, as you would know.

Mr CARPENTER: Steve Harvey will answer that, but I will come to your preliminary remarks, don't worry!

Dr CONSTABLE: I know you will. I will make sure.

Mr CARPENTER: In the first seven months of being the minister, I have gone to 75 schools. I think it is probably an unprecedented attack on schools by a minister in this State.

Dr CONSTABLE: I think your predecessor was pretty good at going to schools.

Mr CARPENTER: I am quite happy to research the figures. I think you will find that I have been to two or three times as many in the equivalent period that he would have.

Dr CONSTABLE: It is what you should be doing.

Mr CARPENTER: There are approximately 920-odd government schools in the State and another 300-odd non-government schools. I would like to get to all of them but you guarantee me that I will be in the job long enough and I will.

Dr CONSTABLE: I cannot guarantee you that, I am sorry.

Mr CARPENTER: Anyway, you understand my point.

Mr HARVEY: The process for the subprograms - administrations, covered assemblies, libraries, toilets, educational support - are in the process of being evaluated now. What that means is that districts are going through the very process we have been speaking of earlier. They are prioritising and they are coming through. What we anticipate is being in a position to make a recommendation to the minister on administration upgrades in November, on covered assembly areas to the minister in October, on libraries in October and toilet programs in November. We would anticipate that as soon as the minister has had an opportunity to look at that, we can make announcements about them.

Dr CONSTABLE: I understand what you are saying but my specific question was, if you look at, say, admin upgrades, this year it is \$100 000. Which school is that going to? You just do not know where it is going yet. Is that what you are telling us?

Mr HARVEY: We have not made that decision yet but you have to remember that \$100 000 needs to be added to our works in progress.

Dr CONSTABLE: I am asking only for new works. I am not interested in the works in progress. It is the new works. We will not know until later in the year. Is that the answer to that?

Mr HARVEY: That is correct.

Dr CONSTABLE: It is only \$1 million this year. Is that correct, Minister? It is only \$1 million being spent of that \$5.4 million.

Mr CARPENTER: For the admin upgrades?

Dr CONSTABLE: No, across those areas in that dot point.

Mr CARPENTER: Yes, that is right. I am looking at the four-year commitment though.

Dr CONSTABLE: It is \$5.4 million. It reads like it is all happening in one year.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr CARPENTER: That is new money but I have administration upgrades, \$7.5 million over four years; the asbestos program, \$4.5 million; covered assembly areas, \$8 million; early childhood programs, \$16 million.

Dr CONSTABLE: With due respect, Minister, I was asking you specifically about that dot point and the new money. That is all I was interested in.

Mr LOGAN: Page 1069, dot point 9 - the new commitment of \$7.4 million over four years to air cool 61 schools and the extended priority zone for air cooling. What is that priority zone? Does Wattleup Primary School fall within it, given the issues that have befallen the township and the residents of Wattleup.

Mr CARPENTER: I will check that.

Mr HARVEY: The situation with respect to air cooling of schools is that we have -

The CHAIRMAN: Just for protocol, is the minister seeking your advice on this?

Mr CARPENTER: Mr Harvey will answer that question.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr Harvey.

Mr HARVEY: We have completed air cooling to the Kimberley, Pilbara, Goldfields North and Mid West East. In the previous budget there were 80 schools announced and now this budget announces a further 61 schools which will include some schools in the districts of Swan, Cannington and Fremantle. In terms of Wattleup, I do not believe that school falls within the zone, the 25-day relative strain index zone.

Mr LOGAN: Can I ask a supplementary to that? Can you define how that zone is established? What do you mean by that last statement?

Mr HARVEY: It is the RSI zone as determined not by the department but by the Bureau of Meteorology. They determine those zones.

Mr LOGAN: It is warmer in Fremantle than Wattleup, is it?

Mr CARPENTER: The schools in the Fremantle district are Brookman Primary School and Langford Primary School.

Mr LOGAN: There are only two schools in that area.

Mr HARVEY: No. We use the Bureau of Met stats to tell us which schools fall in a zone of over 25 days of relative strain index. We believe this is the only objective way of analysing the heat of schools which gives us our program of 61 schools which is yet to be announced.

[5.20 pm]

Ms WALKER: Minister, you are probably aware of some of the problems that exist at Shenton College. There are no lockers there. They had a swimming pool at Hollywood Senior High School paid for by the parents and the classrooms are intolerably hot. My question to you is, firstly, given the capital works program first mentioned by the commitment of \$7.4 million for the air cooling and the improvements for secondary schools, is Shenton College one of the 61 colleges in the air cooling program?

Mr CARPENTER: I believe there will be some air cooling at Shenton College. Mr Harvey can answer that.

Mr HARVEY: Certainly Shenton College does not fall within the zone for air cooling. However, when school commenced there were complaints from the school in respect of some hot areas within the school. There is a number of reasons for this, one of which was that the natural ventilation system was not working properly but quite apart from that there was some validity to the complaints. We engaged consultants and did a thorough examination through the architects of Shenton College which in our briefing requires that very high standards of natural ventilation, thermal insulation, are provided for.

In that evaluation we did find that there were a number of areas within the school which were unacceptable. As a result, we have looked sympathetically at that and we will be providing some remedial action; in particular we will be providing air cooling to the food technology area at a cost of \$23 000, to the performing arts we are providing additional temperature controls, to the staff studies area \$10 000 for additional air cooling and to the staff studies resource centre \$8 000 for additional air cooling. We believe that we have identified the areas of concern within the school and are progressively addressing them.

Ms WALKER: When will that be done?

The CHAIRMAN: Is that a supplementary question?

Ms WALKER: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, member for Nedlands.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr HARVEY: Advice about the cost has only just been received and we will within the next week or so be advising the architects to proceed.

Ms QUIRK: Minister, I am going to be totally parochial and ask you about the capital expenditure on page 1073 and, in particular, I am very pleased to see that Balga High School has received an amount - well overdue, I am sure. Perhaps you can explain for what purposes that capital grant has been given.

Mr CARPENTER: For the sake of brevity, I will allow Mr Harvey to answer that.

Mr HARVEY: We are converting years 9 and 10 into middle schooling. That has been an ongoing process. We will complete that process.

Ms QUIRK: Thank you.

Ms GUISE: Capital works, page 1069. One of the new major capital works projects for the department is the construction of the senior campus at Mindarie with \$6 million allocated to the project in this financial year, which is more than welcome, I might say. First I would like to know how the project is progressing and, further to that, can the department explain in more detail the reference in the budget papers to the campus reflecting the trend to young adult learning. Are we talking middle schooling here per se or are we talking about some other concepts as well? Could that be explained, thank you?

Mr HARVEY: The total allocation for Mindarie College is \$15 million. We are providing \$6 million this financial year. The project is on schedule, although I must say that the project timetable is extraordinarily tight and we will be calling tenders next month. One of the reasons for that is it has been a difficult process to acquire the site, but that process is now approaching completion. In respect of what we are providing, we are providing for years 11 and 12 in, I think, a highly innovative design which will provide, we believe, an outstanding environment for young adults, years 11 and 12, and provide for that whole region an outstanding learning environment for your senior kids.

Ms GUISE: In terms of 11s and 12s, if we are talking about young adult learning, what are the different concepts the minister is planning that are different from a normal 11 and 12 setting - the minister is obviously talking about something different - in terms of classroom settings, the make-up, or are we talking about student-centred learning? I am more familiar with that language.

Mr HARVEY: It certainly is student-centred learning, but is a move away from middle schooling where the concentration is on the student in providing an adult learning environment, so it more closely equates, I guess, to a university or a TAFE environment where students feel that they are free from the normal constrictions of school. It is identified by physical things such as lecture theatres, cafes and the like rather than cafeterias.

Dr WOOLLARD: Minister, is the cost of school vandalism contained within the behaviour management and discipline component of the budget on page 1062 or where is it budgeted for vandalism and how much is allocated for 2001-02?

Mr CARPENTER: It is not in the behaviour management and discipline. That was a completely separate initiative. Mr Harvey can tell us where it lies in the budget.

Mr HARVEY: School security lies within our maintenance vote and there is a whole raft of different items that are dealt with in there, but generally we provide for minor works, maintenance, plus cost to risk cover provided in that area.

Dr WOOLLARD: I was asking for the amount for this year.

The CHAIRMAN: I will take that as a supplementary question.

Mr CARPENTER: I think the member means the reparation and repair of damage.

Mr HARVEY: I have those figures. Is that what the member wanted?

Dr WOOLLARD: Yes.

Mr HARVEY: The total bill for 2000-01 for wilful damage is \$14.8 million and that includes theft of computers, electrical goods theft, vandal damage, breaking and entry, graffiti.

Dr WOOLLARD: With these figures, \$14.8 million, will the minister consider in schools with a population of 1 200 or more reintroducing school caretakers?

Mr CARPENTER: I have not considered that and it is not something that I would want to give a commitment to. I do not think that is the answer to this issue.

Mr AINSWORTH: Minister, I turn to page 1069, dot point 5, major additions, extensions, etc, and it is a two-pronged question. Firstly, as you would be aware, Esperance Senior High School had an allocation from the

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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AlintaGas sale - I think it was \$1.5 million - from the previous Government as the initial capital for establishment of a junior campus. Where does that lie in the forward estimate, because it certainly does not appear to be in the current budget?

Also as part of that question, assuming we are keeping the old Government policy of having transportables up to a certain percentage of your school population, is the minister looking at a different formula where you have a stand-alone senior high school with a large catchment area which is not going to suffer from population decline like one gets in some of the older metropolitan high schools where the emphasis shifts up the suburban growth area, whereas with a country high school like Esperance we have a big catchment area where, even if the population shifts, it is still focusing on that same school on a permanent basis, so the argument for transportables becomes different. I am looking at both of those together because this is the situation that school faces, having a plethora of transportables plus the need for the funding to establish the junior campus.

Mr CARPENTER: I will get Steve Harvey to address the \$1.5 million. I have not considered that issue that you raised in relation to the changing demographics. Basically what the member is saying is, the static nature in many ways of schools like Esperance means they are always going to have a certain number of children there. It is worth considering. I have given a commitment. I will go down to Esperance at some time in November or later this year to have a look at the situation there. I know that Esperance has grown a lot. I remember the time when the school had hardly enough there and there may be special circumstances at Esperance. The policy that the member is asking about I have not put my mind to and no-one has raised that with me before. It is certainly worth considering.

Mr AINSWORTH: Thank you, Minister. And the other part of the question?

[5.30 pm]

Mr HARVEY: \$1.5 million is being allocated. What we have done is, we have engaged consultants and our own people are involved in discussions with the school. Clearly the priority of the school is a junior campus and the creation of a middle school and that \$1.5 million will be in effect in the discretion of the school. It is in the third year of the program, so it is at their discretion, but it essentially will be used for design and tech and in particular the setting up, the first phase if you like, of creating a middle school. The comments also about transportables in country schools are quite right.

Mr McRAE: Minister, at page 1062 under "Major Policy Decisions" and the table there divided into two parts - decisions taken prior to the election and decisions taken since the State election - there is the notation there of increase in the number of senior teachers which has allocations in the forward estimates without years.

Mr CARPENTER: Is this page 1062?

Mr McRAE: 1062, yes. I understand from my earlier questions that that might be for level 3 teachers and, if so, I would be very interested to hear what the whole policy drive is behind that.

Mr CARPENTER: I will be brief because the member for Alfred Cove touched on this. When I wrote the policy, I actually referred to senior teachers, but I think I subsequently found out there is a category of teachers called senior teachers. There are specifically level 3 teachers. This is for the level 3 teachers and it was to increase the number of positions available for teachers to access level 3 status. I thought it was a really good initiative for the previous Government to provide that additional position that teachers could reach. There was a large number of people who applied for it, who met all the criteria but who could not get it because the restriction on the numbers was so tight. Essentially this is to provide for another 200 over four years, by the end of the four years another 200 level 3 teacher positions

We have to go through a selection criteria and a process which some teachers do not particularly like but I do not know what other way you can do it. The reason there is no allocation in this current financial year is because that process will lead you into the next financial year and then the numbers stage up from there - \$600 000, \$1.2 million. The process is to get going now and into the next financial year obviously there will be additional numbers of teachers who are granted that level 3 status.

Mr McRAE: So we are expanding the total number of positions available, as you just described it, Minister. Can you briefly tell us what the functions of a higher level teacher are? Do they continue to be the same as those lower level teachers or do we anticipate greater outcomes or levels of service from those teachers?

Mr CARPENTER: Both for the criteria and what is expected. John Ryan, human resources?

Mr RYAN: Through you, Minister, please. The level 3 teachers go through quite a comprehensive assessment process to become level 3 teachers. Once they are level 3 teachers they have an expectation. Not only do they stay in the classroom but they are granted an extra one day a fortnight to mentor and coach other teachers and engage in strategic conversations with other teachers to assist them with their teaching so other teachers can

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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learn from them. They are used as an expert teacher in the coaching role throughout schools. So there is further expectations for them for their extra money. Not only are they exemplary teachers but they also become a coach and mentor to other teachers.

Mr McRAE: Good program.

Mrs EDWARDES: Minister, I refer you to page 1059, please, and 1060? It is dealing with VET in schools. It has been a fantastic program. In 1997 there were 683 students in 36 schools that participated. In 2000 we had 7 700 which is just phenomenal. On page 1060 you are saying that it is going to be expanded even further. Can you tell me how much money has been provided to you for VET in schools through the Commonwealth ANTA agreement and what total amount of money have you for VET in schools?

Mr CARPENTER: With your indulgence I will defer to the financial expert; that is, Kevin O'Keefe, acting executive director. I agree, it has been a good initiative in WA schools. I think that this is the big area of unaddressed policy in high school education in Western Australia, or secondary school education in Western Australia. Whilst we have gone through some processes to increase access to vocational education and training, we have not really grasped the nettle. We have not really grasped what is going on out in the world and I am hopeful that within the next 12 months we will be able to make some major policy steps forward in relation to the provision of vocational education and training.

We need to be able to use our resources better. One of the shortcomings, I thought - and it is only my opinion - of the distribution of funds from the AlintaGas sale was that it was applied in many ways to try and replicate in miniature some of the resources that TAFE has. I believe we need to have a higher degree of integration interface between TAFE resources, high school resources and structure workplace learning, private providers of expertise and so on that is the policy development that I am talking about pursuing. In relation to the specific funds, Mr O'Keefe may be able to provide it for you.

Mr O'KEEFE: Yes. The current funding is almost \$1 million, in excess of \$900 000, and the assumption over the next few years is that it will remain about the same. A good deal of the focus of discussion at the moment is the development of some productive conversations between the Department of Education and the Department of Training to actually improve the quality of provision to students in schools by getting better links between schools and TAFE to actually develop that, but it is widely acknowledged as a very valuable program. Students have basically voted with their feet into the program and what we are looking at now is how we can improve the quality of training providers, in particular the links between school and TAFE.

Mrs EDWARDES: Almost \$1 million this year. What was it last year?

Mr O'KEEFE: \$900 000 I think I said.

Mrs EDWARDES: So you are going to be expanding the program but there is no extra funding this year or in the out years.

Mr O'KEEFE: The dollars will remain basically the same but what we believe is that we can develop some efficiencies by better conversations between schools and TAFE and that is where there is a fair focus of conversation at the moment.

Mrs EDWARDES: It should have been happening, I would have thought, over the last few years.

Mr O'KEEFE: Sure. Across the State there are lots of very good examples of school-TAFE links and in some of the recent constructions there have been some discussions about co-locations and so on. So we do have a lot of very good examples of effective school-TAFE links and what we want to do is to investigate those jointly with the Department of Training and take those lessons into expanding it across the State further than we have at the moment.

Mr CARPENTER: I pick up the point that the member made and I think she is absolutely dead right. It is something that should have been developed. This is a national issue and it was an issue that we have discussed at the ministerial council and so on. There has been a lot of pressure on the Commonwealth to try and get the Commonwealth to provide more funding in this area. One of the drivers that I have in education is to try and maintain more of our young people in education. At the moment in our government schools it is around about 60 per cent. That figure has actually declined in the last decade. It is a tragedy that we only have that number of young people in education to year 12 equivalent.

Everybody around the nation now is talking about pushing that figure up to 90 per cent of our young people finishing year 12 equivalent and for a large bulk of that extra 30 percentile vocational education and structured workplace learning and integration with TAFE is what we have to do, is the way we have to do it. So looming out on the horizon - and the member here has put her finger on the pulse - there is a significant resource issue which has not been addressed and we have to do it. Despite the proliferation of vocational courses in Western

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Australia and the growth in the number of students doing it, the retention rates have not changed. We need to really seriously address this whole issue in a hurry.

[5.40 pm]

Ms WALKER: Minister, back to Shenton College buildings on page 1070, there is \$200 000 estimated expenditure for 2001 to 2002. Is that for the provision of lockers and the replacement swimming school? Is that contained in the \$200 000 expenditure? If not, is there provision in the budget for those items and if not, for what is the \$200 000 being used at Shenton College buildings, bearing in mind there are no lockers at the school? The kids have to hump these books back and forward all day.

Mr CARPENTER: I know.

Ms WALKER: It is absolutely ridiculous.

Mr CARPENTER: When I went down to Shenton College to have a look at it, I did notice that there were no lockers. I had a discussion there with the principal. I do not want to say the wrong thing, but the indication that was given to me was that was a decision made in the development of the school - that lockers would not be provided because of security and safety factors and so on. Whether or not there has been a change in the policy in relation to that since my discussion, I am unaware. I do not believe that that money is for the provision of lockers but I will let Mr Harvey address that in a moment. In relation to the swimming pool, I appreciate the arguments that have come forward about the swimming pool. The situation is that there is no money in the education budget for provision of a swimming pool at Shenton College and I do not intend there to be.

There is, though, a program that is going on and it involves cross-government involvement but I think the lead is being provided by the University of Western Australia for a recreational development centred around Shenton College. It may well be, and I think is, that the plan - and I have seen the plan - does include a swimming pool development adjacent to the college but not on the college grounds. As part of a major recreational development in that vicinity a swimming pool is being planned and that process is going on. You have listened to everybody else around the table and we are all aware of the situation at some schools and it is just a matter of priorities: fixing up schools that are desperate for some sort of attention as opposed to providing a swimming pool for Shenton College.

Ms WALKER: The point, though, Minister, is that the parents have paid for it and were promised that they were to get the same - from Hollywood High School to Shenton College and they have already paid for it.

Mr CARPENTER: I think the way through this is this wider recreational development which probably ultimately the parents would prefer.

Mr HARVEY: The \$200 000 provided for in the budget is to complete the cost of the college, outstanding accounts essentially.

Dr CONSTABLE: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, my question relates to page 1060 and dot point 4 from the bottom of the page. I will read it out because it is important -

A Social-Emotional Developmental Continuum will be developed as a tool for schools that will identify those factors that impact on student achievement, particularly for boys.

In my experience, Minister, this is a very ambitious project, having been involved over the years in development of psychological measurements. I am rather curious that the education department might be taking this on. Is it going to be developed from within? If not, who is going to do it? Who are you going to contract it out to? These are very expensive exercises, in my understanding of doing it properly, and there are a number of standard rules for doing these things. You cannot let something like this loose in schools for untrained people to use and I am very concerned to know the details of it, including the costs, experience of the people developing it, the training for the people that will be using it, because there is an implication in this that it will be used by schools to identify students, and who is going to be interpreting and using this information is really very critical.

Ms BANKS: The details of how it will be put together and developed are yet to be put into place. It was identified that there needed to be such a tool in acknowledgment of the mental health reports that have come in and the number of students that need support as part of the Students at Educational Risk Program, but the specifics of the process for development I am unable to provide at this point.

Dr CONSTABLE: Supplementary question: Minister, are you convinced that the skills exist within the education department to develop such a measure and, if not, will you look into contracting it out to either a university or a testing service that has expertise in developing instruments such as this? It is a very important question.

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr CARPENTER: I suppose the way to answer this is that there seems to be a shared recognition that this is a step that we need to take, but your concern is about who takes it and how it is taken.

Dr CONSTABLE: Exactly.

Mr CARPENTER: I think what Margaret Banks is saying is that there is an initiative that is going to be undertaken in this forthcoming year to start this process. The way that that is done and how it is done and by whom must now be the subject obviously of discussion.

Dr CONSTABLE: What is the funding for this year? That was the other part of my question.

Ms BANKS: Specifically for that initiative it is subsumed within a health and well-being funding which is \$503 000.

Dr CONSTABLE: But that covers a range of things.

Ms BANKS: That covers a range of things. It is our usual strategy when we are developing to involve appropriate research.

Dr CONSTABLE: I am not suggesting you do not. I just want to know the details of it, which obviously are not available.

Mr LOGAN: Minister, page 1061, the last dot point, "Major initiatives to improve school environments will commence." I am aware of your earlier comments about prioritising need, but I do draw your attention to the problems faced by Midvale Primary School and West Midland Primary School and the ongoing problems in regard to Midvale Primary School of the facilities there over a number of years making maintenance costs increase significantly and what it really requires is the construction of a new school. In terms of Midvale Primary School I am asking to be advised of when the first stage of redevelopment will commence and also with West Midland Primary School of the timetable for bringing those facilities which are abysmal up to standard.

Mr CARPENTER: Mr Harvey has the detail, but West Midland and Midvale are two schools that I have visited. West Midland had been waiting for some time for a commitment given previously by the minister out there to be acted upon. I referred to West Midland earlier, about the condition of the school there, especially in the wet. It was not a good environment and something needed to be done quite urgently. Midvale Primary School is a different sort of context. There was a plan developed for it and it needed to be given some time definition, so we have done that. Mr Harvey can give you the details on that.

Mr HARVEY: Midvale is essentially a replacement school. We accept the condition of the school falls far short of what is desirable. However, we did not want to rush into replacement of that school for a number of reasons. The site was not adequate and we needed to undertake additional purchases of land which is ongoing and approaching completion now. There is one extra lot we want to buy. The other factor was that we wanted to understand the full impact of the Moorditj Noongar School on the development of the school, and I think we have a pretty good handle on that now. We will be in a position to provide the minister with a recommendation about the replacement of that school. With respect to West Midland, again that is a school that falls far short in terms of standard, as the minister has suggested, and \$3 million will be provided to replace that school.

Mr LOGAN: What is the time?

[5.50 pm]

Mr HARVEY: The replacement of West Midland is virtually now. We will start the planning now. We have \$50 000 this financial year and \$2.950 million next financial year.

Mr CARPENTER: In relation to that, West Midland Primary School is the sort of place you can go where, when you walk in there, something has to be done. If children are going to be staying in that school, something has to be done now. So basically the decision was made, "Let's do something now before something terrible happens at this school." Midvale Primary School provides a very interesting opportunity because there is a possibility of a concept being developed to engage more than just the educational community; to have other agencies - Family and Children's Services, Health, Disability Services and so on - involved in the same location so that service provision and assistance can be provided from the very earliest prenatal stage right through to well into the school because it is an area where many government agencies are active, often dealing with the same families, not in a very well coordinated way. The development site out there is lending itself to quite an interesting concept which we might be able to see, if it is successful, replicated elsewhere where you have far more than just the educational environment. There is the whole community family support structure and I think that there is great potential there for a good development.

Ms GUISE: Minister, my question is in respect to, "Quality and effectiveness (Details of subgroups and detail over time)" that appears on page 1064. Minister, personally I have never been a fan of the national benchmark

Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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testing. However, I do applaud the effort that the wonderful people in our schools have made to improve outcomes for students. I have noted in respect to the national benchmarks in reading, the figures shown for Aboriginal students have increased dramatically from 58 per cent to 88 per cent as an estimated actual for 2000-01, and also the increase for students from a language background other than English. I would like to know if the minister could please advise the reason for the increase and perhaps briefly advise the measures that have been put in place that will ensure that Aboriginal students in particular have the ability to reach parity with other students. Obviously there are improvements being made. Could the minister briefly outline what has been happening in our schools to bring about the dramatic increase, which is wonderful, I must say - a great improvement?

Mr CARPENTER: Could you just point me to that particular line?

Ms GUISE: It is "Quality and Effectiveness (Details of subgroups and detail over time)".

Mr CARPENTER: What page are we on?

Ms GUISE: Page 1064, output measures, and the last two line items deal with Aboriginal students and students from a language background other than English, showing the improvements that have been made with the measures that were put in place.

Mr CARPENTER: There is a very significant improvement shown in those figures - remarkable.

Ms GUISE: It is great.

Mr CARPENTER: There are some qualifying factors that should be taken into consideration and Peter Hamilton has the information, but I just want to say in relation to this testing, and I think everybody agrees, there is a good deal of imperfection in the testing and there is nationally now a recognition, probably apart from the federal minister, that there is an inadequacy in the testing regime.

Ms GUISE: Minister, just to clarify, I will not take those figures as absolute gospel. I am indicating an acceptance that I believe there have been improvements made and I would like to know about the measures that were taken to bring that about.

Mr CARPENTER: This obviously predates my arrival on the scene.

Mr HAMILTON: Yes. To reinforce the point the minister made, even though this looks like a spectacular improvement, I would refer the member to the footnote above, footnote (d) for the previous table, which alerts people to interpret all these results to do with reading with caution because the measurement scale that is constructed for these results over those two years is a different scale. As the minister said, this has been a complex exercise nationally to do. Even though it has been going for three years, we are still finding all sorts of statistical problems. It has not been done elsewhere in the world, so we have no other international experience to draw on. Each State runs its own State testing program. It is not a national test so the results are directly equable, and then there is a statistical equating process to equate the difficulty of the different states' tests. This is a world first experience and we are learning from it and so these results do have to be treated with some caution and it is difficult to know how much of that huge jump in performance is attributable to some real performance. As the member says, there may be some real performance in there, but it is difficult to know how much.

Mr McRAE: Minister, at page 1068 under "Supplementary Information on Quantity, Quality and Effectiveness, continued", there is a table there that details apparent retention rates, trends, 1980 to 2000, proportion of year 8 cohorts studying in year 12. What is startling about that is two distinct periods: one of continuous growth from 1983 to 1993 and then a fairly concerning decline, maybe a slight increase in the last few years, but a fairly flat rate of retention into year 12. Given what we know about preparedness for the adult world and the world of work and further study. I am very concerned about the trends that this is indicating. Does the minister have a couple of key things he is able to identify as the causes for these sorts of trends and what are we doing to turn that graph into a growth chart again?

Mr CARPENTER: This is the opportunity I get to attack the previous Government for neglect, I suppose. The fact of the matter is, I put those same questions to the previous minister and he attributed it to changes in the youth job market, other educational opportunities available through TAFE, neither of which to my way of thinking stack up. What we need to be able to do is engage more people in education and I do not think there was enough attention paid to that. I do not think there was enough policy attention. The member for Kingsley pointed out the vocational education training element.

Mrs EDWARDES: Some good work had been done and acknowledged by the minister's staff. It just needed to be improved.



Chairman; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Alan Carpenter; Dr Elizabeth Constable; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Mr Tony McRae; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Fran Logan; Ms Dianne Guise

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Mr CARPENTER: It certainly does need to be improved, I agree, but it is also interesting to note that this is a trend that was nationwide, apart from, I think, the ACT where the numbers held up. In South Australia, for example, their retention rates got up almost to 90 per cent at one stage and fell down alarmingly into the 60 percentile area. Now that this debate is on foot nationally about the future of Australia being the knowledge nation economy and so on, and both sides of politics are embracing this, we need to put in place as many different options and opportunities for people to stay engaged constructively in education. We can do that by approaching the post-compulsory years - that is, years 11 and 12 - with vocational education and other options, but we also have to apply a lot of resourcing right down to the very earliest years of education, which is where we started with our literacy and numeracy programs because you have to have students who have the fundamental skills required to allow them to stay engaged in education.

The other critical point is in years 8 and 9 where you have the alienation effect from the movement from primary school, the onset of adolescence and so on, which is why we concentrate a lot of resources into that area, but I just think that there was not enough attention paid and not enough effort put into changing the educational environment with the change in the times to continually engage people in education. I made an issue of this in Opposition and I suppose I have nailed my colours to the mast. This is something which I am committed to reverse, the decline in the retention rates, and to reach the targets that we have set for ourselves, 90 per cent at least.

Ms QUIRK: At page 1062 there are a couple of programs which I would not mind having further quick clarification on. The first one is self-explanatory. It is increased professional development for teachers. Obviously we are asking more of our teachers, so we need to increase their professional development. What is envisaged to be undertaken with that? The second one is, can the minister briefly explain what is involved in the Sports Challenge?

Mr CARPENTER: I will be brief. The Sports Challenge is a program which is run by Dr Gary Tester based at, I think, South Guildford Primary School. It was initiated in 1992. I think the education minister was then Carmen Lawrence. It was picked up and continued by the changed administration, funded to a level of around about \$70 000-odd per annum.. It provides schools with educational -

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I am going to have to ask you to wrap it up very quickly.

Mr CARPENTER: We have increased the funding for Sports Challenge, which is a very good program which engages people in physical activity related to developing their self-esteem and their capacity to achieve in education.

Ms QUIRK: "PD", professional development.

Mr CARPENTER: Margaret Banks will provide the specifics of that.

Ms BANKS: The key focus of professional development is in the curriculum improvement program, improving outcomes for students and supporting teachers to do that, and professional development in the use of information technology as a learning tool within the classroom.

[6.00 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. The question is that in respect to division 60, appropriation be recommended. It is carried. Thank you.

*Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*