

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Division 23: Education, \$4 133 439 000 —

Mr I.C. Blayney, Chairman.

Mr J.H.D. Day, Minister for Planning representing the Minister for Education.

Ms S. O'Neill, Director General.

Mr D. Axworthy, Deputy Director General, Schools.

Mr J. Leaf, Deputy Director General, Finance and Administration.

Mr J. Fischer, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Mr L. Hale, Executive Director, Statewide Services.

Mr C. Gillam, Executive Director, Workforce.

Mr P. Titmanis, Executive Director, Innovation, Performance and Research.

Mr B. Roach, Deputy Chief Finance Officer.

Mr S. Baxter, Executive Director, Statewide Planning and Delivery.

The CHAIRMAN: Good morning. We are dealing with division 23. Minister, could you introduce your advisers, please.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their questions. The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 19 June 2015. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office.

Member for Mandurah.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Good morning, everyone. I direct the minister's attention to the fifth dot point on page 258 of budget paper No 2, which refers to ensuring secondary students leave school with academic results et cetera. I have some concerns about the state of Western Australia compared with other states and territories' Australian tertiary admission rank participation. In my area, particularly in state government schools, I believe ATAR participation is significantly lower than the state and national averages, and there are reasons for it. What is the department doing to lift the aspirations of students attaining an ATAR qualification? Has a target been set? My understanding is that Western Australia trails all states and territories in the number of students who are participating in an ATAR subject. I would like the minister's comment on that.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I thank the member for the question. As the information here indicates, a lot of attention has been directed to trying to achieve better outcomes in recent years, but I will ask the director general to comment in more detail about how that is being done and to comment on the current outcomes.

Ms S. O'Neill: Thank you. In 2014, the participation rate for senior secondary schools is just over 98 per cent. It was a little lower than that last year, but we have to take into consideration the half cohort impact because the half cohort was in year 12 last year and has now exited. We have a range of students. Obviously, some of them pursue an ATAR pathway and many students are undertaking vocational education and training; in 2014, 64.8 per cent of students undertook VET. The minister has announced the focus of the new Western Australian Certificate of Education whereby students are expected to participate in and achieve an ATAR or a certificate II. Importantly, I think a new expectation has been set for not only participation but also a standard to be achieved. Obviously, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority could speak in more detail about that. An expectation has been set and previous to that the WA public school system has had a very keen focus on attainment for around the same standards. I personally interview principals and senior leadership of

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

those schools in which attainment is not quite as we want it. It is fair to say that attention is now clearly focused on the expectations and the standards that have been set in schools. In terms of what we do to support achieving that outcome, at a teacher level it is through teacher development centres, curriculum support and professional learning; at the student level, it is through individualised programs of support for Aboriginal students, on a general basis through vocational and educational training provision, and some students who are performing at a lower level are given more individualised assistance. Through the new student-centred funding model, of course, schools are now able to tailor their programs more specifically to their cohort. My response is that we are supporting and not only providing expectations and standards, but also giving schools the tools, opportunity and funding to have programs that they can tailor specifically to their cohort in their own schools. In the member's area in particular, there have been challenges across some of the senior secondary schools in terms of some students' aspirations and some of their history and background in schooling to achieve at that level. The schools are working quite cohesively and collaboratively to ensure that a broader curriculum provision is able to be achieved across the schools, as well as in each school.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Minister, the reality is that in Western Australia there are fewer students comparatively to other states and territories who are pursuing an ATAR pathway. When we drill down, as we get further away from the more affluent areas of the Perth metropolitan area, participation in schools drops even further. What is the department doing specifically to lift the aspirations? In my view, we should have a target seeking to have one in two students, as in other states, having the opportunity to participate in an ATAR pathway. As supplementary information, I would like a comprehensive list of the participation in ATAR pathways for the secondary schools and colleges in Western Australia.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will find out in a moment whether that is able to be provided, but I will just make an initial comment. Whether students pursue an ATAR pathway or a VET pathway depends on a range of factors, as I am sure the member well and truly understands, including family background and demographic issues. Pursuing an ATAR pathway is clearly not appropriate for every student, by any means. I know that is not being suggested. Pursuing a VET pathway, going into technical and trades training, is certainly appropriate and meaningful for a whole range of students, so long as they end up in that. In fact, in recent years, from an income point of view, it would seem many have done better going down that pathway than going down the university pathway. Certainly, the opportunities need to be there for those who have the ability, but there is a range of factors involved and it would seem to me, as an overall observation, that it is not just what the schools can do and there is a lot of effort put in in a range of ways. Whether that supplementary information is available, I will ask the director general to comment.

[9.10 am]

Ms S. O'Neill: The member commented about perhaps setting a target of one in two students having the opportunity to undertake Australian tertiary admission rank subjects. In fact, 100 per cent of students have the opportunity to undertake an ATAR pathway; they are not driven into one course or another. If we were setting a target of how many students have the opportunity to undertake a pathway, well, they all do.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We are the lowest in Australia. Is there something wrong with my statistics? My understanding is that we are the lowest in Australia in terms of pathways to university.

Ms S. O'Neill: Is the member talking about participation in ATAR pathways?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is right.

Ms S. O'Neill: I am not clear today whether in 2015 our participation in the ATAR pathway lags behind other states, but we are doing a number of things to drive that up, including support and counselling. In fact, quite specifically, this year, public schools were given direction in the 2015 focus document that we issue each year that states that we want to see a greater proportion of students undertaking an ATAR pathway. We are active in this area. The funding provides for a proportion of students to undertake that pathway. I need a bit more clarity about the supplementary information the member is after per school on ATAR pathways.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I want to know where Western Australia sits in relation to the number of students in state secondary schools —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: In what years?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Students in years 11 and 12 who have undertaken an ATAR pathway to lead them to university. I understand that Western Australia is ranked lowest of all the states and territories in that participation and the inclination to go to university. I want to know why that is, and I do not think that it is acceptable to simply say that we are trying to lift it.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, that is not really a question. All we are doing is seeking what supplementary information you want.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: But the director general cannot tell me whether we have these statistics. I have seen the table.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the member has made very clear the information that he is seeking from the Department of Education. Does the minister think it is clear?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will just ask the director general to clarify the information that can be meaningfully provided.

Ms S. O'Neill: I understand that the member is asking for the percentage of students in Western Australian schools, particularly public schools, who are undertaking an ATAR pathway and the comparison with other states.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I understand that in Western Australia at the end of 2014 it was something like 51 per cent overall.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Where did the member get that figure from?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: One source who has provided that sort of information is Professor Andrew Taggart. I know that he has met with the director general to highlight his concerns about ATAR.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We will provide the best possible advice.

[Supplementary Information No B53.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I have a question for the minister that I think the director general would be best placed to answer. I refer to the seventh dot point on page 261 and the construction of the new Lakelands senior high school, which will open in 2019. Can the minister clarify whether there are any plans to rationalise the John Tonkin College campus at Tindale? There are two campuses; one at the Peel Education and Training campus and the other at the old Mandurah High School site, which is known as the second Tindale site. Does the department have plans to rationalise or sell the old Mandurah High School site, which is known as the Tindale campus site?

Ms S. O'Neill: I understand that we have explored the infrastructure needs and enrolment growth et cetera around this new school and that is not something that we are pursuing at this point. We have no plans to pursue that.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Talking about students following an ATAR pathway, in my electorate of Albany, students in the North Albany Senior High School boundary do not have the same opportunities as the students in the Albany Senior High School boundary. If those students want to study certain ATAR subjects that North Albany Senior High School does not have, they have to go to a private school. Does the minister think that is a positive thing in regional areas? Those students do not have the same option as students in Perth to just go up the road to another school.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As a general statement, clearly, not every course can be provided at every school. I understand that in a lot of cases there are arrangements across schools to collaborate and students either participate by video or internet link these days or by physically going to another school for other classes. That is a general statement of what I am aware of, but on what happens in Albany specifically, the director general can comment.

Ms S. O'Neill: We also have in the chamber Stephen Baxter, who is the previous regional director in that area. He might be able to make more specific comments from a few years ago. The minister is right; we cannot, do not and have never provided every single learning area and subject in every single senior high school. The two schools will differ depending on the course options, skill sets and backgrounds of the school staff. That said, my expectation is that if one or two students at North Albany want to study a subject—schools are not and never have been funded to run classes for one or two students—there are ways and means for students to study those subjects. In other areas, such as Rockingham and Safety Bay, where schools have very small cohorts, they collaborate and between them offer courses in high-end maths or Chinese, for example.

Mr P.B. WATSON: These are core ATAR subjects.

Ms S. O'Neill: I am not sure what the member considers core subjects, but I expect that most senior high schools usually provide the main subjects. Again, it depends on what are considered core subjects and how many students are interested in studying those subjects.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will just get Mr Baxter to provide further information on Albany specifically.

Mr S. Baxter: My observation of both Albany and North Albany Senior High Schools over the past couple of years is that I was very pleased to see their ATAR performance. I think last year Albany Senior High School was in the paper for its performance, and the year before North Albany Senior High School was in the league tables for its performance. I open with those remarks.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

The videoconferencing network across six senior high schools in the great southern is still operating. That was established so that schools could collaborate to offer the scope of the curriculum. The Schools of Isolated and Distance Education is also available to all those schools, because none of those schools would offer the full suite of ATAR courses students may wish to select.

[9.20 am]

Mr P.B. WATSON: I know of six families who are affected; three have moved to Perth for their children's studies, and another three have put their children into private schools. I do not know whether that is what the government wants to do to take the pressure off the system, but the children of six families have been severely disadvantaged because they live on one side of the street. The people on the other side of the street get a better chance of an education. I am not having a crack at North Albany Senior High School; it is a great school, but if it does not have all the subjects available, it puts pressure on the students.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Families have been making decisions for their children to attend schools outside their immediate geographical locality for years and years, including when the previous government was in office.

Mr P.B. WATSON: They do not want to; they have to.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is a dilemma. A lot is being done, but it is impossible to meet every individual specific need in every location.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Especially for people in the country.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Those are the geographical realities of Western Australia but, having said that, a lot of effort and funding has been put in to provide meaningful options for students in country areas.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer to pages 258 and 259 of the *Budget Statements*, under the heading "Funding, Staffing and Structural Reforms", which mentions the student-centred funding model, and the funding allocated in the service summary under the new student-centred funding model. I particularly want to consider the issue of disability funding. I also refer to an answer received in the Legislative Council by Hon Sue Ellery from the Minister for Education, Hon Peter Collier, about disability funding, in which the minister stated that he had been advised that a number of schools had raised issues with him about disability funding. I am not interested in the process, so I would like the minister to keep his answer to the question that I will actually ask about the level of funding. Have concerns been raised by schools that, under the new level of funding, the money being generated is not at the same level as they were receiving under the old scheme? Has the minister actually received communications from schools stating that the funding they are receiving now is not at the same level as they received under the old funding model?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As the member has indicated, as part of the student-centred funding model, one of the criteria for additional allocations relates to disability. For the detail of how that operates, and the quanta available, I will ask the director general to advise.

Ms S. O'Neill: The overall disability allocation is more than \$286 million for the system. As the minister has indicated, and as the member has already stated, some schools have come to us to talk about issues they may have with individual students who, having had their analysis and review done, are receiving less funding than they might have previously. A small number of schools have come forward with that suggestion. I know that the member said that he did not want us to talk about the process, but part of the answer is that the process is for students to be reviewed. For students with a diagnosed disability, under any process in any state, funding for disability is reviewed over time. We are not funding the disability per se. From an educational perspective, we have to fund the adjustments needed in the classroom to deal with that issue. I point to autism as an example. At the moment just over 4 000 students in the system have autism. On the autism spectrum, some of them are high functioning —

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have asked a specific question. I do not want to know about the process. My question is: is the level of funding for disability under the current student-centred funding model the same as it was under the old model? That is my question.

The CHAIRMAN: Thanks, member. I will take that as a point of order, but I think the director general was getting to your question in a slightly roundabout way. I ask her to continue, please.

Ms S. O'Neill: If the question is whether the funding at the systemic level is the same, the funding is more. If the question is about individual students, the answer always has to be that it depends on the student and when they had their last review. Students do not get funded an amount of money for all time. It is possible that a student could have been funded X amount of dollars three years ago, and the amount could be more this year—there are plenty who get more—and for some students to have slightly less funding because their needs are now different. I am not sure whether that answers the member's question.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister or the director general mentioned that some schools have communicated that they are receiving less funding than previously. What is the actual number of schools?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Is that schools receiving less than they did previously?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am referring to schools that have made complaints. The minister mentioned that he had received complaints about disability funding under the current student-centred funding model from a number of schools—how many schools?

Ms S. O'Neill: I do not have the number to hand, but this year would be the same as any other. As the reviews come forward and changes are made, we would have students whose funding level changes. I do not have with me today the number of schools that have specifically sought reviews or raised questions about individual students, given that we fund more than 8 500 students. I do not have that number.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Could I obtain as supplementary information the names of those schools and the number of complaints or queries that each school has made about disability funding under the new student-centred funding model?

The CHAIRMAN: Is the minister clear about what is being asked?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As I understand it, it is a request for the number of schools that have either expressed concerns or made inquiries about receiving additional funding for disability.

Dr A.D. BUTI: And how many complaints have been made.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is an ongoing issue, and it is not new this year or last year. It would have been the case every year since disability funding has been provided.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The figures must be there then.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am not sure whether the answer will be all that meaningful.

Dr A.D. BUTI: We will decide that.

The CHAIRMAN: But is the minister prepared to provide that information?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We will provide that, if it is possible, but I do not think it will provide anything really meaningful. I just clarify that it will be the number of students for whom schools have sought an official review.

Dr A.D. BUTI: And the schools.

[Supplementary Information No B54.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Has the department received complaints from schools about students with a disability whose disability has not actually changed, and who were being funded for five days a week for additional help, such as an education assistant, and are now being funded for fewer than five days for an education assistant or whatever?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is essentially the same question, so if there have been requests for official reviews in that situation, it would be captured by the information already agreed to be given.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am sorry, I do not think it will, because my previous question asked how many schools and how many complaints. It will not tell me the detail of those complaints. My question now is: has the department received complaints or inquiries from schools about students who, under the previous system, were receiving funding for five days for an education assistant or some other support and are now, under the new student-centred funding model, not receiving funding for five days a week?

[9.30 am]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am sure the department gets queries and issues raised by schools every day of the week, no doubt, on a whole range of things, but I will ask the director general to elaborate.

Ms S. O'Neill: Albeit not wanting to talk too much about process, but again the overall process is that the department does not fund people for disability; it funds for what has to happen in the classroom. The member asked whether someone's disability has changed. Disabilities usually do not change but people's capacity to cope in the classroom changes, and that is what people are funded for. Under the new model, full-time equivalents are not given; funding is given. Schools may choose, for example, not to put on education assistants in any case. That being said, regardless of the reason for the review—whether the adjustment funding is different or people are concerned that that is insufficient to support the student—the review process is the same. People come forward and we analyse the case put forward as part of the review. The official review that we said in the last supplementary question we would provide the information for, as the minister has said, if people are writing to us seeking a review because they feel that the funding is insufficient—because they now do not have the

number of days—the question and the answer to the question will come in when we provide the information about the number of official reviews. When people seek a review, it is usually for a range of reasons such as, “We believe more adjustments are needed in the classroom; therefore we need more funding”, or, “We believe that the student needs more support over four days and we do not think the funding is sufficient to provide four days’ support.” When we provide the supplementary information about the number of official requests for review of funding, that could be one of the drivers for that information.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The department may be providing that as supplementary information, but my question is quite easy for the minister or the director general to answer. As the minister’s answer to the question asked by Hon Sue Ellery states, the Department of Education has received communications and the director general has met with schools to discuss their concerns. I am sure the minister would be able to tell me. This time, I will not even ask how many. My question is: has the Department of Education received complaints from schools saying that due to the new student-centred funding model they are not able to fund a student with a disability? Yes, I understand the funding enables them to do X, Y and Z in the class. They may have an EA for five days of the week but now, because of the funding issue, they can have an EA for only two days of the week. I can tell the minister that schools have complained, because I know. Is the minister able to confirm that that is the case?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: If the member knows that is the case, presumably the answer is yes, but —

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister actually has not.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask the director general to provide the same answer.

Ms S. O’Neill: I cannot say it in any different way except to say what we can give the member is the number of schools that have written to us to say they are not satisfied with the funding that they receive because they cannot do what the member is suggesting. We can provide that information, so the answer is yes; but I think I have said that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The director general’s answer is yes to the question that the department has received complaints from schools saying that under the new student-centred funding model they do not receive the same level of funding to finance the support that their students or classrooms received under the old system. The director general is confirming that today; is that correct?

Ms S. O’Neill: I do not want to give an answer that is misleading, so I have to qualify it by saying if we take out for a minute the new funding model, we have the same complaints every year, whether we had the funding model or whether we did not have the funding model. Have we received complaints from people who have not got the same level of funding? The answer is yes, as we have every other year prior to the new funding model.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I will ask that again. Please, can I just get a straight answer? The director general knows the answer. Has the department received complaints from schools? Schools have told us they have complained to the department about the new student-centred funding model. Schools have complained that under the new student-centred funding model they cannot finance the support that they could under the old scheme. The department may receive complaints every year. My question is specific: have schools telephoned, emailed or in whatever form communicated to the education department that under the new student-centred funding model they are unable to supply the same level of support as they could prior to the new student-centred funding model? Can the department please confirm that?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The member himself said that he knows schools have made those complaints and I do not have any reason to disbelieve him. The director general has said yes, but she also made the point that getting concerns of this nature expressed are not new just as a result of the new model. They have been received over years. But have they been received in recent times? The answer is yes. The department, naturally, tries to address them as best possible and on a fair basis taking into account the ever-increasing amount of public funding that is going into government schools but on an equitable basis across the state. I understand that with the new model in place there is a large amount of flexibility available to schools as to how they direct their resources. That is particularly the case with the independent public schools of course, but also more generally with the student-centred funding model to a significant extent.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a follow-up question.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it on the same issue?

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to move on, but I will give you the call.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is on disability funding, which is incredibly important.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not questioning for a moment that it is not important.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Dr A.D. BUTI: There are different levels of funding for disabilities. I am led to believe that for a student who has a mental disorder, there is funding of about \$16 000. This may be education support centres rather than mainstream; I am not sure whether there is a difference in funding between the two. If a student has, say, a level 4 intellectual disability, that means the school gets \$44 000. That is what I have been told. What happens if a student leaves? Because it is a student-centred funding model, the funding follows the student. If a student who has a level 4 disability leaves, the money—\$44 000—goes with them. There may be an incoming student who has a level 1 disability, such as a mental disorder, which is funded at \$16 000. However, that school budgeted on the fact it originally had a level 4 student but now that student has gone. The minister may say that of course the money should follow the student. If one student leaves, that does not mean the level of support needed to supply the rest of the class changes. How are those schools supposed to adjust for that decrease in income throughout the year? It is a management issue. The difference between \$44 000 and \$16 000 is \$28 000. How will schools adjust to that? Say a school has received funding for a year 11 or 12 student with a disability and that student commences part-time work. I am told that funding is either terminated or at least compromised if they seek part-time work through a school program. How is the school supposed to manage these massive jumps in budgetary considerations in a school year?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: In relation to the more detailed management of school operations, I will ask the director general to comment in a moment, but the obvious answer to the member's question is that if a student with a higher level of needs leaves the school, clearly it is appropriate that the higher level of support goes with that student. It is not therefore continuing to be needed in the student's previous school. That is an obvious answer, and a bit simplistic perhaps.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is simplistic.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is the obvious situation. In relation to the more detailed management issues and how these things are dealt with, I will ask Sharyn O'Neill to comment.

[9.40 am]

Ms S. O'Neill: The question about student movement and therefore the management of schools and how schools cope with that, as the member said, means a student with a level 4 disability, or an adjustment needed at level 4, would receive \$42 900. If that student were then to leave the school, that money would go with them to the next school. That makes sense; it is per student. The member's example shows that a student who was categorised with a level 1 disability would accrue \$8 900, because that is what is deemed is needed to make their adjustment to the school. The new student coming in would accrue for the school the money it needs to assist that student. To cope with the ins and outs, the government agreed that under the funding model the department would be able to give schools a new allocation that did not exist before to help them with the ups and downs that the member refers to.

I will clarify the amount of money that went in across all schools for what we call educational adjustment funding. All schools receive that whether they have high-end disability students or not. I would like to answer the question in three ways. The first is the money moves with the student, and that makes sense, of course, because they need that support. The second is the educational adjustment funding, and I will clarify how much went into the system for that in a moment. We also have to remember that students with disabilities also receive the base funding every other student receives, so they are funded in three ways, and the disability funding goes with the student. In the example that the member has given about what happens to the school when a student with a disability leaves and what happens to the structure and what is left in the school, two other levels of funding are left in the school, so it does not break down the structure and the management of the school. The educational adjustment allocation that I talked about that went to all schools, which is a new allocation, is \$20 million. In fact, the new student-centred funding model greatly assists the movement of students with disabilities—they tend to be reasonably stable, but in some places there is some movement. We were unable to provide that sustainability and stability under the previous model.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the first dot point on page 258 of budget paper No 2, under the heading "Student Success and Achievement". Can the minister provide details on the changes being made to structures and services to better support and engage students?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I thank the member for the question. A new model has been put in place, as implied in the question, to provide greater support for disengaged students and those who have difficult behaviour in public schools. We need to know that we are providing the best possible support for students and schools from the funding that is made available and to expand services that will enable better access to support for students, staff and parents. The department is establishing an overarching school of engagement and positive behaviour—that is the current title but it may change—to provide a more effective model for all WA public schools to support

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

student behaviour and engagement. Where appropriate, other external services that work directly with these students and their families will be co-located and support for the families of disengaged and at-risk students will be better coordinated across government and other support services.

The current 12 behaviour centres will be replaced with 13 engagement centres, and they will support more students and have a wider focus, including addressing poor student attendance. There will be engagement centres in each education region, including new centres in the Kimberley and wheatbelt. Outreach services that support schools to build positive student behaviour and to manage very challenging students will be strengthened and made more accessible. There will be a learning academy—that is the current title but that may change.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Just table the paper, John!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The member for Albany might learn something.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: We always learn something.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The learning academy will be able to provide services for up to 20 students who have extremely complex needs and are unable to fit into regular schools. That will open in Midland in 2016. The learning academy will be on the site of the old Midland primary school. I know that location very well because I attended the kindergarten that used to be right next door to it. In fact, I think it is still there. The learning academy will be smaller and more informal than a standard school and each student will have an individual program based on the proven Bigger Picture Education approach through which each student's interests and aspirations will guide the program with support from mentors. I ask the director general to elaborate briefly.

Mr P.B. WATSON: There is nothing left to tell.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: This is an important issue and a significant educational management issue.

Ms S. O'Neill: The learning academy is anticipated to start at the beginning of 2016. We hope around 20 students will be invited to operate out of that school site. It will be a trial in the first instance and we will learn from that. Some of the students will be students who ordinarily are difficult to get to school and to keep in school, but also, alongside that, there may be some students at that school who are just not able to cope in the normal school setting. There is a range of things that we will be able to learn from that trial for the future.

Mr P.B. WATSON: My question is on the same issue. I refer to the first dot point on page 258 under the heading "Student Success and Achievement" and to the wellbeing, resilience, emotional regulation and behaviour of children. Could the minister tell us the location of the two behaviour centres that are closing in the metropolitan area?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask Mr Hale to comment.

Mr L. Hale: There is no intention to reduce services. There will be some relocation. At the moment in the metropolitan area there are some separate centres for primary and secondary. There will be some amalgamation of those in the sense that the centres are amalgamating under one leadership and coordination. However, provision for primary and secondary students separately within that will continue. We are yet to determine the sites. We are considering some relocation of those services to ensure that these places will be in the most suitable sites. That work is commencing. There is no reduction. Although there might be some movement, there will not, in that sense, be closure of services.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The minister's press statement said that two centres would be closing; they were going down to eight. Obviously, he knows what they are. Minister, what are they?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Mr Hale can answer that question further, if necessary.

Mr L. Hale: I am not sure what locations are being looked at, but there will be no reduction in service. Although the total number of centres as a coordinating base for the service might reduce, the service provision of spaces for primary and secondary students will continue in the metropolitan area and it will be expanded in the wheatbelt and Kimberley.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Mr Hale might want to read his minister's press statements.

Will the new learning academy be a public or non-government school?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It will be a public school, a government school.

Mr P.B. WATSON: What role will the not-for-profit non-government or private sector play in the new model?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There is no official role.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Ms S. O'Neill: There is no official capacity. The school will be like any other school. From time to time we might contract in some additional services like any other school would now, but it will be no different from any other school in that sense.

Mr P.B. WATSON: In the new learning academy, the engagement centres or the non-government schools, for other than the facilities of the state Department of Education, what will be the split of funding between the federal and state governments?

Ms S. O'Neill: My understanding is that it will be like all other schools—fully state funded. There may be some commonwealth programs that we will, like any other school, use there, but there is nothing about this school that is different from any others in terms of its base funding.

[9.50 am]

Mr P.B. WATSON: There will be a behaviour centre in Albany. Where will that be located?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Mr Hale.

Mr L. Hale: There is consideration of that in our planning at the moment, yes.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Consideration? The minister is issuing press releases saying it will be in Albany.

Mr L. Hale: Well, respectfully, then the answer is yes.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Do we know where the one in Albany is going to be?

Mr L. Hale: No, we do not.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Could we get that as a supplementary?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The decision has not been made yet about where it will be specifically located. I do not think it can be provided as supplementary information at this stage. However, I am sure it will be advised locally when the decision is made. We are happy to provide through supplementary information the most up-to-date information that we have, but clearly the final decisions have not been made and therefore we would not be able to advise the outcome.

Mr P.B. WATSON: They just issue press releases and nothing happens!

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Albany, the minister is going to provide you with supplementary information.

Mr P.B. WATSON: For something that they do not know whether they have the answer to! We do not know where they are up to at this point in time.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We are in June of this year. There is still half a year to go.

Mr P.B. WATSON: So why issue press releases saying it is going to happen? My community is asking when it is going to happen, and I have come to estimates to ask that question, and the advisor says “Maybe; we do not know”.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Clearly, it is going to happen.

Mr P.B. WATSON: It is going to happen, is it?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The final decision as to where has not been made.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Unbelievable!

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Albany, I will have to call you shortly.

[*Supplementary Information No B55.*]

Dr A.D. BUTI: The press release states that \$20 million has been allocated to the new learning academy and the engagement centres. The Labor government set up 12 behaviour centres. The press release states that there will be 13 new engagement centres and a new learning academy in Midland, and it will be cost neutral. Does that \$20 million include funding for the new learning academy in Midland plus the 13 engagement centres, or does it include only the engagement centres?

Ms S. O'Neill: As the minister’s press release says, the overall change will be cost neutral. It includes the new learning academy. Those students will come from other schools and obviously they will accrue the funding per student that they would have ordinarily accrued in the other schools.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It was mentioned in a previous answer to the member for Albany that there will be no change in the level and quantity of services. I would like to know the answer to this question. How can we fund a new learning academy, which actually is a new school, plus 13 new engagement centres, vis-a-vis 12 behaviour centres, for the same amount of money and not lose any level or quantity of services?

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Ms S. O'Neill: As we have said, it will be cost neutral. The way in which that is possible is—as I think was said by the minister in his previous comments—that by working with the behaviour centres collectively, we will be able to make efficiencies. It needs to be recalled that students will be coming to the learning academy from other schools and will bring with them the funding that they would have had in their previous school. They are actually enrolled, and the base funding that they would have accrued from their other school will come to the learning academy. We already own and maintain the site. Therefore, across the total, we will be able to gain those efficiencies by bringing some of the services together and getting better leverage out of them as a group of services.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Will that \$20 million be recurrent funding, and will it include the capital works for the new learning academy? Also, to which towns in the Kimberley and wheatbelt will the new engagement centres be allocated?

Ms S. O'Neill: The funding is recurrent. The specific locations are still being finalised. To go back to my answer about the overall cost-neutral funding, I was talking about the engagement centres and how we will be working as a total and gaining efficiencies. Behind the scenes, we are also restructuring our back office—our central office portion of this service—and there will be efficiencies there that we are going to push out to support the engagement centres. So, yes, it will be cost neutral. In terms of location, we go back to our previous answer that the finalisation work is underway.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Will these behaviour centres be on school sites or away from school sites?

Mr L. Hale: It will be a mixture. Some will be co-located with school sites as they are now, and some will be off school sites. That is part of the decision-making process. We have to look at where that best fits. As a general rule of thumb, the primary co-location probably makes good sense, but that is not always the case with secondary. We will be working with our regions and schools to help us make that judgement. Also, we want to get the service to where geographically it is most needed. So that will be the first consideration.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I refer to page 258 and the heading “Funding, Staffing and Structural Reforms”. The first dot point refers to independent public schools. I am keen to be corrected here, but my understanding is that there are only five secondary schools in the Perth metropolitan area that are not IPSs. Is that correct, minister?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am advised yes.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: My understanding of the arrangements is that IP schools are not required to draw from the redeployment pool and may make their staffing choices without reference to that pool.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is correct.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: How many people are in the redeployment pool now?

Ms S. O'Neill: In answer to the first part of the question, yes, there are five secondary schools that are not IPSs, and they are not required to take what we have historically called redeployees. Of course there is some change in that process and language with the government’s new regulations. My understanding is that at the moment—this would be as at 1 June—there are 886 employees who require permanent placement.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: What is that number again, please?

Ms S. O'Neill: There are 886 out of 30 000 or so staff who require permanent placement. Historically, we have always managed internally, because we are such a large employer, our own redeployment. Of those 886 staff, 328 are currently in fixed-term positions, so they are already gainfully employed, and we have a range of staff who are undertaking other roles, and of course we also have a bunch of them who are on leave. As I understand it, this is a much smaller number than we have had previously in terms of redeployment. We have worked pretty hard on making sure that we have good staff stability. Quite a few of the 886 employees are fractional, so in fact it is 590 full-time equivalents. We manage our redeployment generally internally. The new regulations are under discussion for us at the moment.

[10.00 am]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: If there are 500 FTEs, and the equivalent of that is 800, and there are 200-ish in fixed positions now, how many are not gainfully employed?

Ms S. O'Neill: They are all gainfully employed; no-one is sitting about. Of the 886, as I said, 328 are in fixed-term positions, 80 are on leave and therefore do not require placement, and 469 are in supernumerary positions undertaking specific roles in schools in support of schools. That is reasonably ordinary for us year in and year out. In fact, as I said, this is a smaller number. Most of these people are education assistants, not teachers.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Given that independent public schools are not required to use the redeployment pool, are the figures that the director general has put out going to hit a floor and they are not going to be exhausted, if that is the right word?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Does the member mean that some of the individual staff are not going to be allocated to IP schools?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: If IPSs do not have to pull from the redeployment pool, which is one of the purported benefits of IPSs—they have a wider remit—the redeployment pool will potentially sit there forever and wait for its own attrition.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Hopefully, it will get smaller over time, at least. I will ask Sharyn to comment.

Ms S. O'Neill: We have always had a redeployment pool. The department, with its 35 000 FTE employees, never has a zero sum total in redeployment. It is always this number, but, indeed, historically larger. During that period that IPSs have been in place, and with the work that we have been doing to maintain a sustained employment situation, the total number of redeployees has been lower than it has been before. I do not think we can draw a line between the size of the redeployment pool and IPSs in that way. IPSs are not required to take redeployees, but they do, and they do that by choice and because it matches their particular circumstance. We saw last year, particularly with the year 7s coming through, IPSs selecting redeployees even though they do not have to. Our redeployees are a very good group of people, but we do work with them and we are introducing case management to ensure that they find suitable places. Our redeployment pool is also driven a bit by our geography in so much as, in past practice, if an education assistant was put in place for a student with disability living in Latham in the country, for example, and that student with disability left, as the education assistant was permanent with no reasonable prospect of placement in that area, they would work supernumerary in the school. The numbers are—I am not sure whether “inflated” is the right word—representative also of the difficulties of that regional-based employment. Rather than directing someone, which we could do under the act, to work in Karratha where there is a vacancy, we hold them supernumerary and they work at that school providing very good service and sometimes to the schools around that area. We will never have a zero level of redeployment. Remember, during the year we have fluctuations in our staffing. They are a very good source, obviously, particularly in regions, to assist with the staffing situation.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The director general mentioned that the language has changed from redeployment pool in compliance with government policy on staffing. Can we get more information on how the department is reorientating its staffing model, with particular reference to the redeployment pool, to meet the government’s requirements?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The director general.

Ms S. O'Neill: Under the new redeployment and redundancy regulations, which redefine redeployment, staff who find themselves in this situation are either registrable or registered employees for the purpose of redeployment, remembering that into the future under the new regulations, there is the possibility of the involuntary severance as a last resort. On the member’s question about how we are managing it, at the moment those 886 headcount employees are on our internal list of Department of Education employees requiring placement. We are yet to advise people whether they are registrable, so we do not have any yet in that category and we certainly do not have any who are registered for the purpose of redeployment, which is when they go into that six-month possibility under the new regulations. In Education, no-one is registered for redeployment and is therefore in that six-month period; in fact, we are working through the process as we speak. We are advising people whether they are registrable. As I have said, we largely do manage and have managed our own redeployment situation internally.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Just for clarification, what are the criteria for “registrable”, and can we get a better word?

Ms S. O'Neill: I do not make the word. “Registrable” basically means that they have been made supernumerary to the requirements of their particular situation. Under the new regulations that were gazetted in December and came into operation in May, it is a three-stage model. In the first stage, they are identified as registrable; in the second stage, they are registered; and in the third stage, if they find themselves in that position after some period, it is a termination.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Of the 886, how many are registrable now?

Ms S. O'Neill: At this point, we have not declared anyone registrable because we are going through that particular process. Their job had to be abolished, so they would basically be without a position. We have to work through trying to place those people before we declare anyone registrable. We have no-one, and we do not foresee in the near future anyone being, registered for the purpose of involuntary severance.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Mr P.C. TINLEY: When will the department have the registrable number?

Ms S. O'Neill: We are working through that process as we speak. I think it would be a matter of a couple of weeks probably, and we will advise those individuals directly.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, when you pass the question to an adviser, could you say the name of the adviser when you do, please?

Ms E. EVANGEL: I refer to the line item for additional funding for chaplains under the heading “Spending Changes” on page 257 of the *Budget Statements*. Could the minister please explain what this additional funding provides for?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The provision of chaplains in schools has become quite strongly supported in school communities in recent years and they play an important role. When the schools seek to have a chaplain on their staff, important pastoral care support is provided. There have been funding changes in the last 12 months or so. The commonwealth government and the state government, essentially, have been jointly funding the program. The commonwealth government reduced its funding by \$1.45 million at the end of last year and the state government made the decision, obviously through the Minister for Education, to backfill to provide that \$1.45 million out of the state budget, but changes were made also to the way the funds were distributed. I understand that that was a result of the commonwealth government’s requirements that the funding be made available to all three school sectors, rather than just the government school sector. A panel was established involving representatives of the three sectors, and that meant that some schools in the non-government school sector that did not previously receive funding did receive it. Given that the total amount of funds available at that stage was not changed, that meant some government schools therefore missed out. I am conscious of that in my own electorate where some schools previously had chaplains but because of those changed arrangements, they were told they were not able to have chaplains this year. A more recent decision was made by the Minister for Education to provide additional funding so that all schools that applied for a chaplain would be able to receive one. That is essentially what has happened in relation to the amounts involved. I will ask the director general to add a bit more.

[10.10 am]

Ms S. O'Neill: The state government’s response was to the \$1.45 million decrease in commonwealth funding. In two stages the state government has put in \$20.5 million for 2015 and 2016. The outcome is that any of the 500 schools that applied in 2015 and 2016 will now be funded. That is obviously a very good outcome because the chaplaincy provides really good support to schools and increasingly, interestingly, to parents. It started off more with the students themselves but we are increasingly seeing parents seeking someone to talk to about issues relating to their children and sometimes their broader family situation. That is a great adjunct to our school psych service and other services that are provided in schools. Interestingly, that is occurring not just in areas with a low socioeconomic status where people assume that it would be required, but also right across the board. It was a collaborative effort with the other sectors. Schools are obviously pretty pleased that anyone who applies now will have that funding for the time period.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer to pages 258 and 259 of the *Budget Statements* and the student-centred funding model. As we know, the principle is that the money follows the student. It has been expressed to me by some schools that have a high transient school population that it is very difficult for them to try to manage their finances. I am led to believe that a census is done at schools twice a year. For instance, a school in my electorate has had a transient student population of up to 40 per cent in a year. How is that school supposed to manage its budget? If there are 350 students at the school on the day of the census and that goes down to 300 students or fewer over the next month, how will the school operate? If the students have learning difficulties or if they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or if they come from a lower socioeconomic background, they are all add-on factors in the student funding model. If three or four students leave, that could amount to a teacher in funding. What would the salary be for a teacher? How is that school supposed to operate? It cannot lose a teacher because it still has another 20-odd students in the class. Firstly, would the minister admit that there is a management problem for schools under the student-centred funding model? Secondly, has the minister thought about tweaking the model to take account of schools that have a high transient student population?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask the director general to comment. I understand that not all of the assertion in the question was correct.

Ms S. O'Neill: Previously we were talking about disability. For everyone’s benefit, I will make it clear that the disability funding that is ascribed to an individual follows the student. The base funding per student does not in the same way. If three Aboriginal students left, the school would maintain the funding for those students. If, as per the member’s example, 40 children upped and left over the first term, the funding would not move with them.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Dr A.D. BUTI: The add-on factor because they are Aboriginal moves with them, does it not?

Ms S. O'Neill: No, it does not. The only funding that moves with students is funding for students with disabilities. Let us take Armadale Primary School as an example. It might have 400 students. If 20 of those students leave and the students are disabled, the funding goes with them. If they leave and they are not disabled—that is, they are regular students who do not have those characteristics or if, indeed, they have those characteristics—the funding does not go with them. This has always been the case because of the stability that we need to provide to schools. When students leave, we do not take the money off the school. In the same way, let us take Kalamunda Primary School; if two new students come, it does not receive the funding for the two new students.

I will go back to where the member started. The census is the structure that drives the number of students that we fund in that school. That is kind of the starting place. After that, if small numbers of students, leaving disability aside, come and go, we do not shift the funding because, as the member said, it could mean taking out a teacher. Every state around Australia that either has a per student funding model or does not is organised on the same premise because we do not want to pull apart and restructure schools. It has always been understood that there is what is called some incremental change up and down—what they call swings and roundabouts—in schools. However, if those changes are enough to impact the organisation of the school, so if 50 kids turn up tomorrow, the schools apply to us and we then have the capacity to assist them. It is all about funding and organisational stability in a school. Disability is a bit different because the students have very specific and personal individual needs.

At any time we have a budget review committee. Schools apply to that committee if there are any changes in their situation that they would like reviewed. This model came into play in February. We have already had a number of applications. There is a base funding arrangement. There are some tolerances because they win sometimes and on other occasions they have had new kids come in. If there is any particular impact, it is open to them to come and work with us. We have already provided additional funding to some schools. It is not a forever allocation. At the next census, the allocations are revised. We give a provisional funding allocation in about August based on projections, so schools can make their arrangements based on the projections and then we consolidate that in the February census.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: So adjustments are made from one year to the other but not suddenly during the year.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Many of the minister's principals do not understand the model, if this is what we are being told today. There is base funding—X amount of dollars. Let us leave disabilities out of it. There are other add-ons for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, Aboriginality and maybe X, Y and Z. Is the minister saying that those add-ons do not follow the student if they go to another school?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am advised that the funding for those additional factors does not follow students if they move within that year but, obviously, from one calendar year to the next, changes need to be made. That is based on the initial predictions from the census done in August. The rationale of that is so no sudden impacts and adjustments need to be made within schools that would be quite disruptive. I will ask the director general to add a bit more.

[10.20 am]

Ms S. O'Neill: Just to clarify, that is why it is different from disability. If a student has a disability, they are funded for an adjustment. With Aboriginality, for example, there are factors of density, and it is calculated more on a minimum group of students and performance. A student is not necessarily funded because they are Aboriginal. We have a number of Aboriginal students who are high performing. Again, there are a range of factors, including their performance on National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy scores; hence they may require additional support. The premise of the equity line is a little different from that of disability. I am surprised to hear that principals do not understand. They have been to two training sessions with individual support. This issue, the one we are talking about now, is not much different from what they have done for the last 25 or 30 years. We have always had some support for groups of Aboriginal students and it has never followed before. If people need additional help to understand, we are happy to provide it. It is a different grouping from disability, whereby it is one-for-one correspondence. It does not follow and, again, I would say that if any school—schools have been told this several times—finds itself under any form of pressure as a result of characteristic subgroups coming into and going out of the school, there is a process by which a school can apply for assistance and that assistance is provided.

Dr A.D. BUTI: This is actually a comment. Many people in the government do not understand that either, because in answers to questions they have basically been following the principals' lines. Anyway, I will leave it at that.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Mr C.D. HATTON: I refer the minister to the second dot point under “Funding, Staffing and Structural Reforms” on page 258. My question relates a little to what has just been discussed. There has definitely been a transition in 2014–15 to the new student-centred funding model. Obviously, the operational procedure of schools has changed and the leadership, which is very important, has to be good at implementing the new model. Can the minister provide some details about this implementation of the student-centred funding model and the support that has been provided to school leadership and schools?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I think members are well aware by now that the new model has been put into effect following a lot of consideration and the report that was done by the panel chaired by Professor Richard Teese from Victoria. In general terms, the rationale is to provide a greater level of support for students in the early years of education, which was identified as being critical to future success, of course, and the recognition that the support at that level was not as much as was necessary. In general terms, it has involved a transfer of resources from the secondary sector to the primary school sector. As to how that is being done and the support that is being provided for implementing the new model, I will ask Sharyn to elaborate further.

Ms S. O’Neill: We have committed to maintain the training for as long as the training is needed for not only the school leaders, who are central to it, but also the business managers because it has required some change for the business managers. We have introduced a new system that the schools use, which is terrific for them. They are able to do things automatically that previously they might have had to handle more manually. From a system perspective, we are able to support them directly. We have a small team that assists by going out and working with individual schools. As I said, we have a budget review process under which schools can apply for some assistance where it is needed. It has been well regarded. In the past four months I have met with more than 460 principals in small groups, and they have reported to me their regard for the training and for the personalised attention, and that of the business managers. We have also asked other groups—for example, through the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations and parents and citizens associations et cetera—whether they would like to engage in some background briefings around how the model works. We are happy to do that as well. I can report that the support, from my understanding, has been well received.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will just add that in relation to the funding support that is provided to schools, 82 per cent of all public schools are receiving more funding under the new model than would have been the case if the model had not changed. So, most schools—as I said, 82 per cent—have received more funding.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I refer the minister to the spending changes on page 257 and public–private partnerships and the arrangements for a private contractor to run eight new schools for a 25-year period. Is that a head contractor model or will that contractor be able to subcontract to other firms any or all services that it is charged to undertake? I am sure we all understand the particular policy I am talking about.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Did the member say this is on page 257?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am pretty sure, unless I am mistaken. On page 258, I refer the minister to the significant issues impacting the agency, of which there are many.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes, I know that. Can the member just point out the specific dot point? I want to respond to that specifically.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The introductory paragraph states —

... structural changes focus on reducing centralised management of schools and placing in the hands of principals and their staff ...

I think we all understand the particular policy we are talking about.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The member is talking about the proposed public–private partnership for establishing new schools.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: For the eight new schools, yes, and the service provision for the 25-year maintenance arrangements.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask Mr Fischer to provide some information.

Mr J. Fischer: The public–private partnership arrangement provides for a project company to take full responsibility to finance, build, maintain and operate the schools. The way that it might deliver services, particularly through its operations, is not specified in terms of who will do it, but the performance levels are specified. The company will identify the best means—that is, whether they want to subcontract out, for example, the cleaning, gardening or maintenance of schools to particular subcontractors. That is not much different from what happens with maintenance today. The performance levels are set, and if the project company fails to meet those requirements, there are abatement measures in the contract that would deal with the performance.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Can the department and the minister guarantee that we are not going to see a race to the bottom on cost cutting, as we saw in 1990 when cleaners were outsourced and privatised? With the quality of the work, I am particularly focused on the comment made by the minister's adviser about there being no dilution of the standard required.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The important aspect is that the contracts will establish the standards that need to be met, and the contractors obviously need to comply with those standards. They will be monitored, and if the standards are not met, changes will be put in place.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Are those standards publicly available, or will they be?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Mr Fischer.

Mr J. Fischer: All the standards are described in the request for proposals, which were released and closed, in fact, on 12 May. I do not see any difficulty with making those available, but it is a fairly detailed document describing every performance standard required for meeting the whole delivery of eight schools.

[10.30 am]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Minister, are those standards the same ones that were put out for the tendering process and are they in any way negotiable through to the contract stage or are they omissible?

Mr J. Fischer: The standards are set in the contract and the only way they can be altered is by mutual agreement between the parties.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Is it correct that they have not been agreed to?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As I understand it, we are currently seeking expressions of interest and proposals from the private sector. As to the process from here, I will ask Mr Fischer to elaborate.

Mr J. Fischer: Requests for proposals were received on 12 May and those proposals are currently being assessed. A decision about whether they will proceed with the public-private partnership will be made later this year.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I request that those standards referred to by the minister's advisers be provided as supplementary information.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: In relation to which aspects specifically?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: The PPPs for the 25-year partnership with the private companies.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Is it for cleaning, gardening or maintenance?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: For all services, if I can.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We will provide as much information as possible subject to excluding anything that happens to be commercial-in-confidence.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I assume that the required standard is a standard.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Presumably, that is the case.

I understand that the member has asked for and we have agreed to provide information about the standards in relation to services provided in schools required through the PPP requests for proposals.

[*Supplementary Information No B56.*]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer to spending changes, particularly the line item "Workforce Renewal Policy" on page 258. I am led to believe that the workforce renewal policy is expected to provide \$74 million in savings over two years. Is the department on target to achieve its 2015-16 financial year target?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am advised that the answer to that is yes, the department is on target for that to be achieved in that year.

Dr A.D. BUTI: What ways to meet that target have been identified so far, and are those savings being found in central office or in schools?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I understand the changes will not be required within schools; they will be within central and district offices, where appropriate, in administrative support areas without impacting the operations of schools.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It is interesting that support services will be reformed but that will not impact schools. Can the minister be a bit more specific, because he said that targets will be met? What specific changes are being made in head office to meet that target?

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Ms S. O'Neill: Just to clarify, when the minister referred to services, he was not implying services to schools. There will be no impact on services to schools or school funding for the 2015–16 financial year, which is the year in question. In terms of meeting the 2015–16 target of \$24 million, there is a range of ways that we will account for that funding, such as some internal efficiencies across central office and regional office cost centres. We are projecting a reduced cost for things such as Government Regional Officers' Housing; some of the rent for housing in the north west has come off, as it has for all other agencies, so costs have reduced. We are looking at a reduced insurance premium; it is administrative, so the cost of our insurance bill has come down somewhat, as have transport and superannuation costs. There are internal areas of operation, which through planning and decisions taken some years ago, we are looking at improved financial outcomes for insurance, teacher housing, transport and superannuation. Alongside that, as I said, we will do as we do each year and look very closely at our central and regional office costs that do not flow on to impact schools. At this stage, we believe we will be on target for the 2015–16 financial year.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Can the minister provide by way of supplementary information a list of all the savings the department will make to reach its target and the actual saving of each measure being made?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The decisions have not been made in detail in that respect at this stage, so it is not possible to provide that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: How then does the minister know the department will reach its target?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: No doubt, as the year goes on, there will be more detail determined, but the general areas that are being looked at have just been outlined. The final decisions have not been made.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Chair, we ask questions and the government members respond with, “Yes, these targets will be made”, but when we ask for specifics, they say that they have not actually decided that. The minister cannot say that the department will reach a target if he cannot specify how the department will get there. Once again, I ask: by way of supplementary information, can the minister provide a list of the savings that will be made this year and the quantity? If the minister cannot provide that information, please do not tell us that the department is on target to reach its target, because he does not know the target. If the minister is going to commit in Parliament that the department's target will be reached for 2015–16, he must know how that target will be reached. So, by way of supplementary information, can the minister provide me with a list of savings and the quantity of each saving?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The director general and the department are very confident that the amount of \$24.3 million will be found through the changes that have just been outlined. It is important to appreciate that that \$24.3 million is out of a total allocation for cost of services of close to \$4.8 billion. That amount has increased by 6.5 per cent, so even taking into account the workforce renewal change, the allocation for the Department of Education in Western Australia has increased by 6.5 per cent, which is well above the rate of inflation. If one considers the total appropriation, the increase is actually 7.4 per cent. I might get someone else to explain that difference in a moment. In short, as it does every year, the allocation for providing government school education in Western Australia has grown substantially. Since we came into government in 2008, it has grown by about 70 per cent. That is a huge amount that has put a lot of pressure on the budget—there is no question about that. We have difficult financial circumstances at the moment, with a substantial predicted deficit for the whole budget of about \$2.7 billion this year, and it is reasonable that some response to that overall reduction in state revenue is addressed through the Department of Education budget, albeit that funding for education is increasing substantially.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Can the minister clarify whether he is in a position to provide me with a list of savings for 2015–16; yes or no?

[10.40 am]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: In the time needed to provide supplementary information, as I understand it the final decisions have not been made as to the budget adjustments that will be made. We are not at the end of the financial year yet; the new financial year has not started. Fairly early within the financial year, more final decisions will be made about that. It is simply not possible to provide the precise figures at the moment as to how the \$24 million adjustment will be provided. Generally speaking, as the director general has outlined, it will be through reduced housing costs, changes to insurance costs, reduced superannuation costs and so on. We cannot provide the specific numbers at this stage; a bit later in the year, that will no doubt be possible.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Regarding the government's wages policy in replacement at 90 per cent and 40 per cent, will that be applicable to the education department's teachers, educational assistants, cleaners et cetera? If it is,

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

particularly for gardeners or educational assistants, will that possibly place them under the award rate which they should be being paid?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The education department has been accommodated substantially compared with other agencies across government as there is a much lower impact through this policy, particularly so that there is not a 40 per cent reduction in the cost of employing teachers; it is only a 10 per cent reduction. So there is a significant variation, taking into account the needs of the school system. I will ask the director general to add a bit more.

Ms S. O'Neill: In the context of how schools operate, it will not be applied in the sense of the next person who comes and fills the vacancy will be paid 10 per cent less because we have, as the member has pointed out, the awards and the required payments. The figure for 2015–16 of some \$24 million that the member referred to in his first question will be taken as a total and will be dealt with as a total through the means that I have already pointed out. In 2015–16, this will not affect the costs and staff, and pay of salaries for schools.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I believe the \$74 million is over two years—2015–16 was mentioned. Will the government's wages policy not be applicable at all to any teacher or other employee working in a school? Will it be applicable to only a few people; and if so, how many? Will it apply to schools in 2016–2017?

Ms S. O'Neill: In 2015–16, I think we have already answered that part.

Dr A.D. BUTI: No, you did not.

Ms S. O'Neill: Okay. For the other staff types?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Sorry, Chair. In 2015–16, will the wages policy apply at all to anyone employed in a school?

Ms S. O'Neill: No staff in schools will be affected by the workforce renewal policy in 2015–16. In the forward estimate years—the member is talking about \$74 million across the two years—we are accounting for the 2015–16 year in the first instance. The out years will be under discussion about how we meet the financial cost of that policy. Cleaners, gardeners and education assistants—it does not apply to anyone in a school in 2015. The \$24 million in 2015–16 will be made through the examples that I gave previously, not from the salaries of anyone who works in a school.

Dr A.D. BUTI: And the year after?

Ms S. O'Neill: As I said, they are in the out years. The means of making those savings in the out years are under discussion with the minister as we speak.

Dr A.D. BUTI: It was \$74 million over two years and this year it is \$24 million; that means a substantial saving has to be made in 2016–17. Some savings have been listed that the department thinks it will be able to make this year without being able to detail them. Is the minister able to tell us today how the much more substantial savings will be made up in the next financial year if the government's wages policy is not utilised in the school system? How will the department make the roughly \$55 million in one year, which is over double the savings the department had to make in this financial year?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As the director general just indicated, those issues are being discussed with the minister and presumably involving Treasury. At the moment, there have not been any decisions made. We are still more than a year away from that point, of course.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is the minister confident that the department can make that substantial \$50 million saving without the wages policy being applied to school employees?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The possibilities and options are being discussed at the moment, including Treasury. As I said, that year is more than 12 months away so things can change in that time if they need to.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the fourth dot point on page 258 under the heading "Student Success and Achievement". With year 7s moving to secondary school this year, can the minister please provide some details of how schools are managing this relocation, and provide an overview of the specialist teaching and facilities that they now have access to?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The movement of year 7 students to secondary schools has been a very significant change in the government school system in the state this year. It has required quite a large amount of additional funding to be provided. Those decisions were made at least a couple of years ago and it follows the non-government sector largely having made that move. To a large extent, there was not much option for the government school system in the state. Having said that, the change has been very successful. From what I have been told anecdotally, my local area has required new facilities to be established in a lot of schools. In some cases, brand-new classrooms

were built and additional, transportable facilities were required. It also involved the need to provide additional training for some teachers. That has been done through the Switch program, which started in early June 2013. That was intended to provide support to about 700 teachers, for them to be able to operate in secondary schools. So far, I understand that 1 223 teachers have expressed an interest in the Switch program; 629 have been trained or are currently undertaking the training; 330 teachers who have been trained through that program are now employed in schools. A whole range of schools have received additional accommodation. As I said, I probably do not need to go through the whole list. The amount of funding for capital works was about \$230 million, so it was a significant allocation. When people complain about the state's overall debt levels and so on, they need to not only talk about some high profile projects around Perth, but also remember the very large investment that has been made, amongst other areas, in the school education system in this state. That is where a lot of the money has gone. I have just given one specific example. I will ask the director general to elaborate just a little on how the change has been going.

Ms S. O'Neill: From our perspective, it is very successful. In fact, the Auditor General did a review of the implementation of this policy and made many commendations about the implementation, so obviously, we were pleased with that. Importantly, it is about the kids at the end of the day, and schools almost generically report that the students look like they have been there forever; they have pretty well assimilated into the general school population. It was pretty smooth, in fact. Teachers are coming to terms, and did last year, with the different curriculum required for secondary teachers and they are doing a very good job of that. It was a very smooth start to the year, on top of a range of changes, and a historic moment for such a big structural change. From our perspective, and that of those who evaluate our implementation success, it could be counted as a job pretty well done, as schools report to me.

[10.50 am]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I know there was concern in some small primary schools in country areas about the impact of year 7s leaving those schools, and some families wanted their year 7 students to remain in primary school. As things have turned out, only a very small number of students are still in year 7 in primary schools in country areas. If I remember rightly, the figure is only 20-something. I will ask Mr Hale to comment, because this was of quite significant concern to some people in country areas.

Mr L. Hale: I have the exact figures here, although we need to be mindful that there is still a slight fluctuation because people can opt in or out at any time during the transition. Currently, 44 students are in year 7 in small country primary schools. At this stage, 27 are approved for 2016, and 20 approved for 2017.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I want to pick up where I left off with my last question about public-private partnerships for the eight schools for which requests for expressions of interest have gone out. In that expression-of-interest phase, what dispute resolution processes are included between the head contractor and the department?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask Mr Fischer to answer that.

Mr J. Fischer: The project deed, which describes the arrangements for managing the contracts, is still being finalised, as no contractor has been appointed yet. That process will be undertaken in a public-private partnership arrangement. That is part of the discussions that will take place when the preferred bidder is identified, and before financial closure.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am coming to the standards portion of this and the delivery of the service that is being contracted. What oversight will the department have for delivery of the service, particularly the quality assurance side?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am advised that a contract manager within the department will have that responsibility.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: What direct supervisory role will the department have in quality assurance? When a service is provided—cleaning, maintenance or whatever—what is the quality assurance methodology for the department to check that the service is being delivered?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I do not know how these are dealt with in detail, but a commonsense approach would be that inspections would be made, announced in some cases and unannounced in others, and school principals would have the ability to liaise with the department, and if they have concerns they would get the department to investigate further. That is my commonsense response, but I will ask Mr Fischer, who is more of an expert, to answer further.

Mr J. Fischer: Until the contract is awarded, the final details of such things as how it is to be managed are still to be formalised, but the contract provides performance reporting arrangements relating to all the things the member mentioned, such as the turnaround time for undertaking maintenance tasks—all things that would be expected. It appears at this stage that each of the project companies will have a caretaker located in each school,

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

who would liaise with the business manager, so there will be greater opportunity for the school management to talk with the operators of the public–private partnership project company about the level of services. The first level is that school reporting mechanism, and then there is a tiered arrangement under which regular performance reports are provided and, as already indicated, there is oversight of the performance of the contracts by a contract management team located in the Department of Education.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: What is the capacity for the government to issue a breach notice and seek a remedy? What is the anticipated time frame between breach and remedy?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask Mr Fischer to answer once again.

Mr J. Fischer: I am just going from my best remembrance at this stage, but the contract provides for abatements—in other words, financial penalties—if the contractor does not deliver the services as specified in the contract. The time frames will reflect the importance of the breach.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer the minister to page 261, and the asset investment program. Under the heading “New Primary Schools”, schools in the final stages of construction are listed, and also the commencement of construction on four new primary schools. Are there any plans for a new primary school at Caversham South?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: From memory, this issue was raised in a grievance to which I responded three weeks ago. My recollection is that, although it was expected that a school would be needed sooner rather than later, a more up-to-date assessment of the predicted student numbers and how students could be accommodated in nearby schools indicated that it is not needed quite as soon as was thought to be the case. I will ask Mr Fischer to add to that.

Mr J. Fischer: Page 264 of the *Budget Statements* indicates funding for new primary schools. The announcement of primary schools is not normally made as part of the budget process, but is normally made two years before a primary school is required to be opened. In the case of Caversham, as part of the public–private partnership, the announcement was made 12 months earlier, and the detailed analysis of that site had not really been completed to the extent that we would normally undertake an analysis. A decision was made after review that Caversham was a lower priority than another school that was selected as part of that process. As to the question about whether a school would be located in Caversham, when the numbers require, there is provision for a number of primary schools in the Caversham area.

Dr A.D. BUTI: At this stage, has nothing been announced or planned?

Mr J. Fischer: At this stage, there is no date for the announcement of a new school in Caversham; that is correct.

Dr A.D. BUTI: While I am on questions about schools, I refer to the positive announcement made some time ago about Cecil Andrews Senior High School and Armadale Senior High School. Basically, what will be available and when will it be available?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Is the member talking about the capital works allocation to improve the vocational education and training facilities at the two schools, as I recall?

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is right—the specialist schooling at Armadale Senior High School and Cecil Andrews Senior High School. It is on page 262 in the third dot point under “Additions and Improvements to Secondary High Schools”.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The allocation is \$8.5 million. I will ask the director general to comment on the timing of the construction.

Ms S. O’Neill: The expected time frame is 2017. I can ask Mr Baxter to talk about the programs, because I think the member is asking about not just the building, but also the specialist programs. Perhaps Mr Baxter can talk about that.

[11.00 am]

Mr S. Baxter: There is \$9.4 million in total. The programs will be available at the commencement of the 2017 year. Some of that \$9.4 million is to provide for staff at both schools in the lead-up year and in 2017. The construction program through the Trade Training Centre at Armadale will continue but there will be new programs in hospitality and health services. Consequently, we will see a new commercial kitchen at the school with cafeteria food and textiles facilities upgraded. Cecil Andrews Senior High School will be establishing a new academic extension program for students in years 7 to 10. New facilities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics will be built. They will include laboratories, a lecture theatre and preparation areas. The focus will be more on the academic subjects at Cecil Andrews, with a real focus on STEM.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer to “Additions and Improvements to Primary Schools” on page 261. The first dot point states —

Construction will continue on six additional Child and Parent Centres to be completed by the end of 2015 ...

Can the minister tell us where those schools are? When completed, how many will be operational as at the end of the year and is there any planned after that?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There will be 16 in total when they are all completed. I know some are in operation now and some are under construction, including one at East Maddington Primary School in my electorate. The six additional ones that were announced in January 2013 are East Maddington, East Waikiki, Gosnells, Mount Lockyer, Rangeway and Wilson Park Primary Schools. Rangeway is in Geraldton —

The CHAIRMAN: I am on the board.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Mount Lockyer Primary School is in Albany and Wilson Park Primary School is in Collie. They are the six additional ones, but the 10 centres that were announced in March 2012 —

Dr A.D. BUTI: If they are publicly available —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I think the member asked whether there are any in Armadale.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is Challis.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I think he would be aware there is Challis Primary School. Is that its right name?

Dr A.D. BUTI: That was the head honcho one.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes. That provides the catchment area for Neerigen Brook, Gwynne Park, Grovelands, Willandra, Westfield Park, Armadale, Kingsley and Kelmscott Primary Schools.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The dot point under “Miscellaneous Programs” on page 262 states —

An allocation of \$13.1 million will be made in 2015–16 to purchase and develop land for the construction of new schools.

Is the minister able to tell us where?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Which dot point is the member referring to?

Dr A.D. BUTI: The dot point under “Miscellaneous Programs”.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The \$13.1 million allocation is to purchase and develop land for the construction of new schools. Have locations been determined yet? I will ask Mr Fischer to provide a direct answer.

Mr J. Fischer: I understand it is for part funding of Hammond Park high school and Lakelands high school. These are the secondary schools that were announced as part of the public–private partnership.

The CHAIRMAN: I will vacate the chair and we will start again at 11.10 am.

Meeting suspended from 11.03 to 11.13 am

[Mr P. Abetz took the chair.]

Mr C.D. HATTON: I refer to “Student Success and Achievement” on page 258. The second dot point relates to disproportionate outcomes across education for Aboriginal students, which has been a problem historically. The reasons are probably quite varied. I believe that a new national strategy is being developed as well as a state plan to improve the outcomes of Aboriginal students. Can the minister please provide details on the status of the development of the state plan to improve the outcomes?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We touched on other aspects of Aboriginal education earlier to some extent in relation to the student-centred funding model. More specifically, as the question indicated, an Aboriginal education plan for WA public schools has been put into effect. That is largely guiding the department’s efforts in this year, 2015. The particular areas of focus include placing high expectations on all students, strong partnerships, evidence-based practices and accountability. Research and consultation is being done at the moment into the content of the next plan and there were some workshops and discussions between March and May this year to develop the next plan. I will ask Sharyn O’Neill to elaborate a little on what is being done to try to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students, which is quite a challenge in some cases.

[11.10 am]

Ms S. O’Neill: It continues to be a challenge across all states. Our national plan, which all states are involved in developing, again goes to those Closing the Gap targets and the work done around that. Of course all states are grappling very much with the issue of Aboriginal student attendance, which continues to be difficult to shift.

Obviously that is an issue the further away we get from Perth, because geography plays a part in that as well. Importantly for this state, we are again focusing on attendance, outcomes of students, and also, to go to an earlier discussion, that aspiration for higher outcomes for Aboriginal students when they finish at the end of schooling and at the NAPLAN points along the way. It was good that we had a two percentage point increase of Aboriginal students with the minimum standards on 14 of the 16 assessments. It is pretty hard to get those sorts of improvements and we were pleased to be able to maintain that. However, of great concern is the final outcome of schooling for Aboriginal students along the way as well. We had 37 Aboriginal students who got an Australian tertiary admission rank, but obviously we want many more than that. The plan has to work at the early intervention level in the child and parent centres, right throughout schooling, on attendance and engagement and working with parents, and then aspirations at the higher level. The plan will need to span all of those areas. Of course we need that kind of wraparound service that we know is important not only in the country where most people assume it is important, but also in the metropolitan area where a number of Aboriginal students need higher levels of personal support to be able to engage on the same level as other students.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I refer to the bottom of page 258, under the heading “Funding, Staffing and Structural Reforms”. Is the department tracking the reduction in full-time deputy principals or associate positions in Western Australian public schools, as schools are reporting that as a result of budget cuts, deputy principals are needed back in the classroom to teach rather than engaging in management roles?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask the director general to comment further in a moment. The member used the term “budget cuts”. I mentioned earlier that the allocation of taxpayer funds for government school education in this state has increased by 6.5 per cent this year.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I do not know where it has gone.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is far above the rate of inflation and has happened in the context of very substantial financial pressures on the state budget, which has been well covered. The school system is being well supported by the state government and by taxpayers of the state. There are no budget cuts.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Can we get away from another big speech and go to the question, minister?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is relevant for those who happen to read *Hansard* or might be listening or doing further research in the future, whatever the case may be, to see it all in that context. It is also important to ensure that there is the best value for taxpayers’ money on how that large amount of about \$4.8 billion is allocated, including in schools themselves.

[11.20 am]

I make the point that just spending money or just referring to the amount of funding provided to a particular school or across the sector, or whatever, is not the only important issue. The quality of outcomes is what is important, and that is not determined only by the amount of funding provided. Maybe some changes can be made in how schools operate their administrative and teaching structure in order to get better value for the taxpayer funds that are put in and better outcomes for students. I make the observation that over the fairly long period that I have been in the political arena, there have been huge increases in the taxpayer funds provided for education but it is debatable whether in some cases the outcomes have changed very much, and that is what we really need to focus on. We need to focus on what has been effective. That is my general answer. I will ask the director general to comment on the specifics about deputy principals.

Ms S. O’Neill: We have in the system just over 1 200 deputy principals. Previous to the current model, FTE was allocated for deputy principals. It should also be noted that implicit in the previous model many years ago—remembering that the previous model has been there for a long time—there was always an expectation that deputies were teaching deputies for a portion of their time, and decisions have been taken at the school level over time to resource deputies often to not have a teaching component. However, it is understood that historically that was an expectation, and funding was provided for that purpose, even though that is not how it ended up necessarily playing out.

Under the new model—I have spoken, as I said, to many, many principals about this—schools will put their funding where they think they will get the best return on investment. If a school were to decide that its best return on investment for its money was to have a deputy full-time in administration, it could make that call. We know that there is sufficient funding in the model—because we have done the analysis—to provide for all of the industrial arrangements. So, the industrial entitlements of every person on the school site are entirely catered for, and the operations of the school, as a minimum, are funded further to that. We know that if schools believe that the best value for their money for their students is to, firstly, have a deputy principal, and, secondly, full-time release that deputy principal, that is now the school’s decision. In the past, we would have required schools, through our funding and through our formulas, to have a deputy principal and to have it in a certain configuration. That choice is now in the hands of the schools themselves. Many schools are making the decision

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

to have full-time deputies, some are making the decision to have some deputies for fractional time, and some have gone from two deputies to one deputy, because they believe that is the best structure and configuration for their school and their children. They usually take that decision to the school board or school council chair so that the community understands why those decisions have been taken. My understanding is that some deputy principals are teaching. But that now rests entirely in the hands of the schools, and we believe the schools should be funded to make those decisions themselves and not be held to end up in that position.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Minister, the director general was just saying that previously schools had deputies and they did not work in the classrooms. However, things have changed a lot in schools, with behavioural issues, bullying and drugs—all those sorts of things—and schools need leadership. It is obvious from the way this is being done that the director general does not value leadership in our schools. I have been told that some schools are advertising for a deputy principal as a 0.8 FTE position, and the other 0.2 FTE is a teaching position. The reason they are doing this is that they do not have enough funding, so they have to put the deputy in the classroom. The director general can sit there and shake her head, but she should get out to the schools. Go and talk to the schools and the teachers. To make these decisions in the ivory tower—I forget what they call the place the director general is in —

Dr A.D. BUTI: “Silver City”.

Mr P.B. WATSON: We talk to the teachers, the parents and the parents and citizens associations. No-one is going to the P&Cs and saying we are taking the deputy away and we are doing this or this. If the minister can show me where schools have been doing that, I would like to know. What they are saying is, “We have not got enough funding, so we have to cut this, this and this.” The minister says that the government has increased the funding. Maybe the government has increased the funding. Going into the last election, during the caretaker mode when the government was not supposed to do it, the government came to an agreement with teachers under which they got much more pay. Maybe that was so that the government could win the last election; I do not know. But for the minister to come in here and say the government has allocated so much more money to education —

The CHAIRMAN: Member, just remember that we need to keep the questions really short, so try to keep the question short.

Dr A.D. BUTI: He will keep the question short!

Mr P.B. WATSON: I have forgotten what the question was!

The CHAIRMAN: This is not the time for speeches. It is the time for questions.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I feel much better, though, Chair!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Can I also ask that the member direct his political-type comments to me rather than to the public servants, including the director general?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I would not have said that if the minister had not gone on with his five-minute dialogue before and his motherhood statement. The question is, minister: is it true that schools are advertising for deputy principals as a 0.8 FTE position?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: If that decision is made within the school administration, then yes, that would be the case. There is now a large amount of flexibility in our schools as to how they use the funding that is allocated to them.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I still cannot get away from the fact that schools have to shift everything around and not have deputy principals and things like that and the motherhood statement is, “We are doing this because it is in the best interests of the children”. These things have been working well for a long period. However, the stress on schoolteachers is now increasing, for the reasons I mentioned before. The government is taking away the leadership role in schools. It is making cuts everywhere. There are cuts for kids with special needs. I am on the board of two special-needs schools, and the cuts that we have to make are horrendous. I cannot accept the fact about the money that is going into the schools. I reckon the schools do use it wisely. The reason they have to use it wisely is that they do not get enough money to enable them to meet the basic needs of the kids in our community.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As I said earlier, there is quite a bit of flexibility as to how schools use the resources overall that are allocated to them. I do not know whether the member has had concerns raised from specific schools in his electorate. He has just referred to a couple of special-needs schools.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am on three school boards in Albany and I have had representations from six other schools, from principals, P&Cs and school councils, saying they do not have enough money to run their school.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Mr J.H.D. DAY: What would the member like to see done differently within the overall funding that is allocated to education in this state?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I would like to see funding to give our kids the best opportunity to go forward if they have special needs, or if they have behavioural problems—all those sorts of things. However, the money is not there to enable the schools to do that. I do not blame the schools. They are doing the best they can, they are working short, and they do not have enough funds. They hear all this stuff about how the funding has been increased. I do not know where the money is going, but it is not going to where it needs to go. That is it. Thank you, minister.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask the director general to add some more information,

Ms S. O'Neill: With respect to the member's comments, we get out and talk to all our schools. As I said, I have met personally with 470 schools in the last four months.

Mr P.B. WATSON: In regional areas?

Ms S. O'Neill: Yes—right across the state, not just in Albany. They come, and we have a discussion, and I have asked them specifically about the situations in their schools. I need to put on the record that our conversations are directly with principals on these issues. Those discussions are held in “Silver City”, but equally they are also held in country locations by visiting schools. For example, under a previous model, the Albany Secondary Education Support Centre would have expected an allocation of \$2.36 million. Under this model, it will be better off with \$2.489 million plus another \$85 000. I think we have to look at it school by school. If schools in the member's region cannot afford, as he says, to have a deputy principal in the way that they would like, I am very happy to talk to the principals of those schools about the kinds of priority decisions that they have taken because obviously school principals make decisions. We support our leaders and I reckon our leaders have done a very good job in the way they use their money. They are making decisions about where to place money—here, here or here. If they believe that they cannot run their program and undertake leadership in an efficient way, we would be happy to talk to them about it. No school in Albany that I am aware of has come forward to our budget review committee, which is the process that has been in place, to seek an adjustment on the basis that it cannot afford to run a program or have leadership positions in place in a reasonable way. If it did, it would be assessed like any other school. That offer is there. If those schools want to put their case forward, that is the process, and we would be happy to work with those schools that the member is referring to.

[11.30 am]

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister keeps mentioning flexibility but flexibility is reduced when we do not have the finances. Is it not true that some schools have decided that they can have only a deputy principal, being 0.8 of an FTE, and then 0.2 in the classroom because of financial constraints? Previously that deputy was not in the classroom. It seems to be inconsistent with the government's policy of valuing leadership. The minister can keep saying that schools have the choice but they do not have the choice. Because of financial constraints, they are advertising for deputy principals, being 0.8 as an administrator and 0.2 in a classroom. The minister and his adviser may go and see the principals. We also see our principals in schools. We must live in a parallel universe. They tell us that because of the financial constraints they are under, deputy principals who were previously not in the classroom have to go back into the classroom.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is important to recognise that schools may have put in place other leadership positions in some way in their schools. It is probably good practice for deputies, maybe even in some cases principals, to spend some time in the classroom. That is where the coalface is and where they are using their training most directly. That is a general comment.

It is also worth remembering that, as I said, schools have a fair amount of flexibility these days, including through the grants that are provided to them directly. It is worth knowing the total amount of funds that schools have in their bank accounts. In March this year they had \$275 million in their bank accounts. That was before this year's grant went out, which was \$151 million in total, making \$426 million available to them this year. Obviously, a fair proportion of that will be used during the year. Going back to 2014, last year, there was \$369 million in school accounts. The growth each year over the last few years has been between 10 per cent and 15 per cent. As I said, quite a large amount of flexibility is available to schools to make decisions about how they use the substantial taxpayer funding provided to them. I just add that I am advised that 601 schools are better off through this model.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Could the minister please provide by way of supplementary information the current breakdown of deputy FTEs in 2015 split between department and teacher in classroom time vis-a-vis what it was in 2013?

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you prepared to provide that information? If you are, can you spell out exactly what it is?

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Dr A.D. BUTI: I would like to know the current breakdown of deputy FTEs in 2015 that is split between the department and teachers between being an administrator and a teacher in a classroom.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Is the member talking about the number of deputy principals who also have some classroom responsibilities?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes, the FTEs.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am advised that that is just not practical within the time frame available.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Why?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Because the information would have to be sought from each school. It is not something that is centrally held in the department.

Dr A.D. BUTI: If the information cannot be provided by way of supplementary information because of the timetable, would the minister be able to make a commitment that he will supply that in a reasonable time?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The member would need to put a question on notice. If that is done, that would be able to be provided on the assumption that it does not involve a huge use of resources within the department and the education system. I will ask the director general to elaborate on why it is not easy to get that information.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Surely the human resources department has that knowledge.

Ms S. O'Neill: We would need to go back and look at what we can provide, particularly the historical aspect. The human resource system does not distinguish between whether the person is a deputy in the class or in the office. We would probably have to go to individual schools and ask for a manual calculation. Has it been the same for the entire year? I am very concerned whether we would be able to provide it historically because the management system does not distinguish whether that person in the school is in the library, the office, the classroom or out on the sports oval. We would really need to examine whether it is at all possible to provide it in the way that is being asked.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Would the minister not consider this to be incredibly important information? If the funding model is forcing deputies to go back into the classroom, that may impact on the leadership et cetera of the schools. People at the back are nodding their heads. I used to be a teacher. I think it does affect people if we do not know what the teachers are doing in the department. Should not a department know whether its deputies are being forced back into the classroom? Surely a department would want to know if that is the situation.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As I mentioned earlier, over 80 per cent of schools receive more funding under the new model. That means that about 601 schools are better off under the new model than they were. If schools that are better off are making that decision for deputies to spend some time in classrooms, it is certainly not because of any reduction in funding provided to them. In relation to the other schools that are not better off, it is because of the new model obviously and there is a strong rationale to that now. Maybe they have had to make some adjustments. Whether it has been in this way or not, I am not sure. It might be hard to find that out. Overall, schools are a lot better off than they were, but they also have a fair degree of autonomous decision-making to do.

[11.40 am]

Ms S. O'Neill: If I can just add to that, I think we have to make reasoned judgements about leadership in schools and, of course, leadership is incredibly important in schools particularly during reform. However, the member cannot just focus on the deputy principal because it is not the only leadership position in a school. The principal, the deputy principals, the heads of learning areas and level 3 teachers are all leadership positions. I do not know the particular incident to which the member referred—obviously he has some concrete examples—but it is possible that schools are making decisions about more heads of learning. Remember in a senior high school all the things that were referred to before about student behaviour and student services, for example, are not all done by the deputy principal; indeed, a lot of those roles are also undertaken by other leadership positions in the school, including year level coordinators and student services coordinators. I do not think on the surface it is reasonable necessarily to make a judgement that somehow leadership in its entirety is affected because of one position. Once again, if there are particular examples in which schools believe that their total operations have been impacted by the one-day reduction of a deputy principal, there is a process for those schools to come forward and discuss it with us, and that process is open to them—it is in their hands.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Surely, though, in some situations a deputy principal is 0.8 as a deputy and then a 0.2 in a classroom and when that person is in the classroom, he or she is paid at a teacher's rate, not the deputy rate.

Ms S. O'Neill: No.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is the director general saying that there is no case at any of our schools in which there has been an advertisement for a 0.8 as a deputy and a 0.2 in the classroom and that there is no difference in the pay scale because they will always be paid at the deputy rate even if they are in the classroom for 0.2 of the time? Can she guarantee that that is the case in all Western Australian schools?

Ms S. O'Neill: If I can clarify, potentially there are two separate things happening. When I was a deputy principal in Carnarvon, which was a very tough school, I worked 0.8 as a deputy and 0.2 in the classroom for a specific reason; namely, to demonstrate classroom leadership, which is a requirement of a deputy principal's role. The deputy principal inherently is not only an administrator doing administration because the role is also about providing leadership to classroom teachers. I did exactly what the member is talking about. I worked in a classroom at 0.2 —

Dr A.D. BUTI: That was not my question.

Ms S. O'Neill: I am providing some background. It is absolutely reasonable for deputy principals to be paid as a deputy principal and to be in the classroom. That is not foreign—that happens. The other side of the coin is the example that the member gave whereby a new four-day position was advertised as a 0.8. If the position is advertised as a four-day deputy principal job, the person would be paid as deputy principal, but they would apply knowing that they would be deputy principal for four days. We have deputy principals who job share—one works three days, one works two days. There are many variations as to why people would find themselves working fractional time as a deputy principal. If a school has made a decision on the basis of its profile and the needs of the school, we would need to know more specific details about that school in order to make a judgement.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I have a follow-up question.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to give a little word of advice. Rather than asking questions, this is starting to become a debate about an issue. I will take one further question.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am asking a question about a background statement. Is the department in a position to provide information about a situation in which someone has been employed as a deputy at 0.8 and as a classroom teacher at 0.2? I am not referring to the situation that the director general personally had in Carnarvon. Can that supplementary information be provided?

Ms S. O'Neill: Given that I have said that it would be very difficult to get the total, to give a snapshot we could provide how many deputy principal positions have been advertised at 0.8 this year and last year. I think that we would be able to go back through our advertisements to at least get a picture of how many 0.8 positions have been advertised.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that supplementary?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is supplementary information, because we are being as cooperative and as helpful as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: For the record, please state what the department is providing.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We will provide the number of deputy principal positions that have been advertised at 0.8 or less—in other words, as part-time—in public schools in 2014 and 2015.

[*Supplementary Information No B57.*]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I just hope that that does not involve three full-time equivalents working two weeks to find the information.

Ms E. EVANGEL: I refer the minister to the line item “Child and Parent Centres” under the heading “Works in Progress” on page 263. I note that in a previous answer the director general made reference to child and parent centres in line with the importance that they provide in the overall success rate of Aboriginal students within the system. Can the minister provide further detail on the overall progress of the centres?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We touched on this earlier to some extent, as the member indicated. It is a very important program and follows the recognition over a number of years of the work done by organisations such as the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research under Professor Fiona Stanley originally, and more recently under other leadership. It also follows a lot of research and practice that has been put in place in Canada under Fraser Mustard, with whom I am familiar, who is an eminent leader in the area of researching and recognising the essential period from birth through to the age of six in relation to brain development and the social and environmental aspects of family, educational experiences and exposure to reading and interaction with other children, which is so crucial in those years in determining what is likely to be future success and participation in

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

society meaningfully at later stages in life. There has been a lot of development not only internationally, but also in Western Australia over the past 15-plus years. I remember when I was health minister, which is now hard to believe was 15-plus years ago, when work was being developed in this area. It has been recognised that we need to do a lot more. This government, I am very pleased to say, has made a substantial allocation to build and fund the operation of child and parent centres to deal exactly with the issues I just mentioned. We mentioned the locations earlier, but there are 11 in the metropolitan area and five in regional centres and all 16 are operational, although some are still being constructed. That is the overall picture. I will ask Sharyn to elaborate a little further because it is an area in which she has had particular involvement.

Ms S. O'Neill: The progress of the CPCs is very good, particularly in the first 10 because, as one would expect, they are a year ahead of the others. The work with the not-for-profit sector is going really well. We met with it again the other day. I am happy to say that 15 000 children have gone through the first 10 centres and more than 260 programs have been offered with more than 550 parents attending parenting programs. They reported to us that co-location on the school site is beneficial to them because they take their child to school so there is a natural affinity. We know that the longstanding Better Beginnings early literacy program, which is usually run through school libraries, will be introduced to CPCs, which is another terrific adjunct to the work. I remind people that the independent evaluation will be completed in 2017. On that basis, a further decision will be made about the possible expansion of child and parent centres. From our perspective, the centres provide an additional service to the community and give families and young children in lower socioeconomic areas a nice introduction to schools when parents often do not want to be on the school site. The benefit for schools, let alone the health sector, is that they are getting to know young children who have particular issues before they go to school. That transition into schooling and what teachers know about the needs of those students happens even earlier, which is, of course, what we know is required under early intervention.

[11.50 am]

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I refer to asset investment on page 263. Two new schools—Ellenbrook north senior high school and Harrisdale senior high school—are listed under the heading “Works in Progress”. Are those schools under the public–private partnership program?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am advised that Ellenbrook is, but Harrisdale stage 1 is not.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Is Harrisdale stage 2 under the PPP program?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Sorry; stage 1 of Harrisdale is not, but stage 2 is a PPP. Has a contract already been signed for stage 2?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask Mr Fischer to answer that question.

Mr J. Fischer: There is a contract in place for the delivery of Harrisdale stage 1, which has commenced. Harrisdale stage 2 is part of the package of schools that will be delivered under PPP arrangements. That is correct.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I assume that Harrisdale stage 1 is contracted for construction. Is that contract in accordance with PPP arrangements?

Mr J. Fischer: The specification of whether our schools are under a PPP or a traditional design and construct delivery are in effect the same in terms of the size and functionality of the school and the services provided to the school; it is just the delivery mechanism that is different between the two models.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I just want to clarify that Harrisdale stage 1 is not under the PPP package.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is right.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am pretty sure that is what I heard. Will the PPP package for stage 2 be applied retrospectively to the entire school?

Mr J. Fischer: At the moment, we have discussed the construction and delivery of those two schools. Harrisdale stage 1 will be constructed under a traditional design and construct arrangement and the operational school will be completed in 2017. The operation of the school will be included as part of the PPP arrangements. The project company will take over the future management of the school, including the long-term maintenance and operation of the school, which will be included as part of the PPP arrangements.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: That \$57 million asset will be partly delivered under a traditional contract for construction, and the maintenance, through-life support and construction of stage 2 will be provided under a PPP.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is correct.

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer to significant issues impacting the agency and student success and achievement on page 258 and the reference to the wellbeing, emotional regulation and behaviour of children. Can the minister provide information on how many children were either suspended or expelled for assaulting a teacher or other staff member in the last two financial years? How many teachers and staff members were assaulted by students in the last two financial years?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask the director general to answer that question.

Ms S. O'Neill: Thank you, minister. The total number of students suspended—sorry; did the member say in 2014?

Dr A.D. BUTI: I asked for the numbers for the last and current financial years.

Ms S. O'Neill: Can I just clarify that because this information is school based, it is collected in calendar years. In 2014, the total number of students suspended was 12 188. In 2014, 2 071 students were suspended for physical assault or physical intimidation—that is, students against staff—and it was about double that for the verbal abuse of staff.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am not sure that we have information on the number of teachers affected.

Ms S. O'Neill: That is students against staff.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is the number of incidents.

Dr A.D. BUTI: How many teachers was that, because it might be that one teacher has been assaulted 20 times?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We do not have that information.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the line item “Revitalisation Specialist Schooling for Armadale and Cecil Andrews Senior High Schools” on page 258 of budget paper No 2. Can the minister please describe the plans for this revitalisation?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Because it is such a good news story, we are happy to reiterate for the benefit of the member for Vasse who has taken a big interest in what happens in Armadale. The revitalisation involves upgrading science and vocational education and training facilities, and putting in place additional courses, including an academic extension program at Cecil Andrews Senior High School. It was a very significant decision by the government to allocate an additional \$9.4 million to these two schools in the Armadale electorate, and I think the member for Armadale appreciates that. In the context of substantial pressures on the state budget, it has not come easily, but we have made the commitment and it is a good thing.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I refer to expenses on page 280 and teacher training for vocational education and training in non-government schools. I think it is called VETiS.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Which page number is that?

Mr P.B. WATSON: It is on page 280.

The CHAIRMAN: We are on division 23 at the moment.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am sorry. Can the minister help me find where teacher training is in the budget papers? I cannot find it anywhere.

[12.00 noon]

[Mr I.C. Blayney took the chair.]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is embedded in all the school budgets.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Can I ask a question of the minister about training? Since we do not have a regional office in Albany now—the director is in Bunbury and only occasionally gets to Albany—could we get the figures on what percentage of teachers in the great southern are able to get training? The schools do not have money in their budgets to send them to Perth for training, compared with what happens in Perth.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I cannot provide an answer just like that but I am sure we can provide some information.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am happy to take it as supplementary information.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is not really meaningful, but we can provide some informed comment in response to the member’s question. I will ask the director general to do that.

Ms S. O'Neill: We believe that there is, and there always has been, funding in school budgets for professional learning. Schools and teachers in Albany access professional learning both externally and through the department with our institute. People from the city and other regional areas go to places such as Albany and provide professional learning. Teaching staff and others travel outside of Albany to attend courses, so there is

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

clearly some funding for that. It is a mixed mode; we have a couple of different ways. They can come to Perth or we can go to Albany. We also provide online, right throughout the state, the Connect learning communities program, in which teachers are connected in learning communities to help develop each other. We also fund networks. Funded networks in Albany provide professional support and development to teachers. There are a range of ways for teachers to access training. Some of them are externally funded. For example, under the new student-centred funding model, people have gone to Albany and provided professional learning at independent public schools, as we do with protective behaviours, professional development and so on. I can give a range of examples of professional learning undertaken by all staff in regional areas.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Would it be possible for the minister or the director general to provide me with the percentage of the facilities available to teachers in regional areas compared with those in Perth? From what I have been told by the teachers in Albany, Mt Barker and Denmark, most of them have to go to Perth. Airfares from Albany to Perth with our beloved airline are very expensive, so a lot of them are driving up, which is extra stress, whereas people in Perth just come into the city and go home the same day. I am concerned that people in regional areas are not getting the training that I think is essential for them.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There is some allocation in the budget for schools that takes into account their geographical location. The member has raised the distance issue, but people need to travel. I will ask Ms O'Neill to add more to that.

Ms S. O'Neill: It is more challenging for people in the country, and it always has been. Because of that, in the new student-centred funding model we have allocated \$36 million across regional areas for exactly this reason. It is understood that there are greater costs in country areas for not only professional learning, but also other areas where costs can be escalated. This additional \$36 million is part of the student-centred funding model, but is distinctly for this purpose, and city people would not get it. It is true to say that teachers living in the city can drive to Leederville and go to a course that may be offered more times in a year than it would be in the country. I spent most of my teaching life in the country, so I understand that issue. That is why we provide that in the model and why we run our key programs in regional areas and spend such a lot of money on information technology provision to connect people for professional learning.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The director general has just said that things cost more in the country and that money has been put aside. It is also a fact that when somebody comes to Perth for training, it means two days off school. Does that money come out of the school's funds? In Perth they can go to a course in the morning and be back at school in the afternoon. Does that extra funding the director general talked about cover airfares, accommodation and two days off school? That is a fair whack to come out of the school budget.

Ms S. O'Neill: That money has always been in school budgets. For example, under awards et cetera, those people would be entitled to travel allowances. All the industrial entitlement that existed in the past for professional learning for regional people is built into budgets in the new student-centred funding model. All the assumptions about costs in the country for professional learning and connecting to other people, and the fact that sometimes people have to stay overnight, are the reasons for that adjustment, in recognition of those additional costs.

Mr P.B. WATSON: When principals need to see the district director, they need to go to Bunbury. Is that correct? They have to drive, which is a concern for us. For principals and deputy principals, most meetings are in Bunbury, where the district education office is located. We are concerned that people trying to get back to the schools are going for a day and then driving back late at night. That is a real concern.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: They do have access to telephones, internet, emails and so on as well.

Mr P.B. WATSON: When they are called to go there, they have to go there. They cannot just say that they will talk to the director on the internet.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Maybe videoconferencing can be used. I am not sure whether it is. I will ask the director general to comment.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is a pretty stupid answer, minister.

Ms S. O'Neill: It is important to understand the role of the regional executive director, remembering that 75 per cent of all students and staff come under independent public schools, where the regional executive director is not in a position to require them to come to meetings. A fair amount of choice is exercised here. Even when those people meet with me, I do not require them to come, because that is the professional approach we take. The question is whether it is true that they are required to drive to Bunbury to meet with the regional executive director. They could choose to do that or, as they do with me and the regional executive director as well, they could teleconference or videoconference. There are a range of ways of doing that. Often, principals choose to do it face-to-face because they want to be part of the collegiate support, which is one of the issues about living

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

in the country. It has long been the case that someone in a remote community in the Kimberley who wants to be part of a group meeting will have to travel, and that is why the funding is there.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Can the minister tell me how many schools the regional executive director has under his watch?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Is the member referring to the regional executive director based in Bunbury?

Mr P.B. WATSON: Yes, that is right. I think the figure is about 140.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask the director general to answer.

Ms S. O'Neill: The answer is many fewer than there used to be, because, if I can be clear, independent public schools do not report to the regional executive director. For example, in the south west, there are 96 schools, and 59 of them do not report to the regional executive director anymore because they are autonomous. When we first set up the regions, as the member might remember, all 96 schools would have reported to the regional executive director. Now the figure is 59, because the others are independent public schools, so the ratio has reduced significantly.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Previously, there was someone based in Albany and someone based in Bunbury. We actually had a district director in Albany, so there was more than one. Now there is only one in Bunbury. How can the directors be doing less if there used to be one each in Bunbury and Albany? The workload would have gone up a huge amount. That is why we never see the director.

Ms S. O'Neill: We are going back five years to the time when there was a district director in Albany. The job was different then; the district directors reviewed schools. They do not review schools now. We have a different process for that. The requirement of the ratios has changed significantly as the roles have changed. There is not a requirement. The comment has been made that we do not see the person; with the number of independent public schools in the region, the schools determine whether they want to meet with the regional executive director. If they needed to meet, the regional executive director, Neil Milligan, would respond in a range of ways. The simple fact is that since we have had regional executive directors, the number of schools that report—for example, in the south west—has gone from 96 or so to 59. Previous to that, yes, there was a different district structure but the roles were very different and they had direct line management of the schools that they do not have now.

[12.10 pm]

Mr P.B. WATSON: One good thing before was that the director could drop into schools without them knowing. The director general just said that people can ring up and he will come to them. If he is overseeing things, surely if people ring him up to come down, they would have everything right. He used to drop in and say, “You have not done this right; you have not done this.” Now schools can get everything done and say, “Come and have a look at my school.” That it is not really an overseeing role, to me.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: My advice is that the executive directors can still just drop in. I just want to clarify the numbers. It was 96 schools in the south west region and 59 are independent public schools, so that means 37 schools are still under the executive director.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I got those figures, minister; thank you.

Ms E. EVANGEL: I refer the minister to page 261. Under the heading “Additions and Improvements to Primary Schools”, there is the very welcome second dot point that outlines the \$5.5 million two-storey development for Highgate Primary School. Can the minister provide further information on the design and construction of this two-storey addition? Is there opportunity for the school board, whose members I am aware are very keen to be a part of the design process, to engage with the design as it progresses?

Ms S. O'Neill: Yes, there is an occasion for the local community to be involved in the design process. We want members of the community to love their school and be a part of it. I point to Mt Lawley as a good example where the community has its say. Obviously, there are some non-negotiable aspects because of the education delivery that we need to have at Highgate, but it is a terrific school. The community is very involved and very passionate and we will certainly seek its views through the normal project management that we have in place.

Ms E. EVANGEL: Thank you. I think that is going to be very welcome.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I give the call to the member for Armadale, I just want to remind everybody that we have 45 minutes to go and there are still another three divisions. That is okay, if members know.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay, very quickly; we only have a couple of questions left.

I refer to “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 258. In talking about the significant reform of the public school education system in WA, the minister has stated that those reforms needed to be advertised

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

through the Bigger Picture education costs, which I have not seen itemised but they may have been. Can the minister tell us the Bigger Picture advertising costs for the 2015–16 financial year? Has any royalties for regions funding for 2014–15 been used to fund that education advertising?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: For 2015–16, I am advised that the cost of the communications about year 7 students moving to secondary school—informing people about that particular change in 2015–16—is \$561 000. The cost of communications about child and parent centres—the more people who know about those and their role, the better—is \$68 000.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Royalties for regions was used in last year’s funding. Was any royalties for regions funding used?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: My advice is no.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister said that the advertising campaign is necessary. Was it an initiative of the department to have the Bigger Picture education advertising program or was it the government’s initiative?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: To have it under the Bigger Picture banner?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I would suspect that was not a particular initiative of the Department of Education. The department was publicising and communicating those changes anyway, but the decision to put it under the Bigger Picture banner, so to speak, was more widely from government. The aim is to have a consistent theme to inform the community about what is being done. The whole exercise is done in a far more modest way than when the previous government was in office; some of us can remember that.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The question was whether it was a government initiative or a department initiative.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask the director general to answer that.

Ms S. O’Neill: We, as a department, were undertaking research already because there were concerns that people in the community were not aware of all the changes that were taking place. We had already done some community marketing and we had planned a campaign, or the beginnings of a campaign at least, which included television, radio, online et cetera. Through discussions it became apparent that there were various reforms across government, so we came in under the Bigger Picture banner. But as we would do with our reforms anyway, we had already taken decisions to undertake community and parent information campaigns in any case.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Was the department’s initial investigation into the possible campaign going to be done under the Bigger Picture umbrella?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It would not have been because the Department of Education is not responsible for that branding overall. I think it is a worthwhile aspect that it is part of an overall message that is being communicated so that we do not have people not understanding and not relating to the changes that are being made overall, because it is actually part of the broader reform across government.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I refer to page 265. Under “Other School Facilities”, the last line item is for the toilet replacement program—my favourite! I see an allocation there —

Mr P.B. WATSON: A bit flushed, are you?

Mr P.C. TINLEY: A bit flushed, yes. Where is Melville Senior High School in the priority of works for its Third World toilets?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: My advice is that some work is underway at the moment.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Correct; phase 1.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is correct. Future funding will be a part of next year’s program, but that has not been finalised as yet.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Is the further funding subject to another round of prioritising and allocating? But, of course, Melville will be at the very top of the new funding list, will it not?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Obviously, the member would be advocating so and there is probably very good argument for that to be the case.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: My point is made; thank you.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Thursday, 11 June 2015]

p514c-543a

Chairman; Mr David Templeman; Mr John Day; Mr Peter Watson; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Peter Tinley; Ms Eleni Evangel; Mr Chris Hatton

The CHAIRMAN: I do not have any further questions for division 23.

The appropriation was recommended.

[12.20 pm]