

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Education:

School enrolment funding

The following question was asked during Estimates, could you provide a more detailed answer:

If the Commonwealth Government funds the NT Education Department per enrolment and the Department pays the school per attendance and schools with majority Aboriginal students are currently achieving 33% attendance, as per your budget statement, where is the other 67% of dollars being distributed?

ANSWER:

The Commonwealth Government funds the Northern Territory Department of Education based on the number of enrolments per the August Age Grade Census. As such, only students enrolled and attending in the 20 school days up to and on the day of census are counted.

The 33 per cent attendance rate referred to above reflects the proportion of primary, middle and senior students attending at least four days per week or more during 2018. As per the Education budget statement, the attendance rate for Aboriginal students was 64 per cent.

Commonwealth Government funding that is received by the Territory is pooled with Northern Territory Government funding for distribution through the school resourcing package.

The school resourcing package includes funding distributed using the student needs based funding formula. The Northern Territory Government does not fund on attendance, rather on effective enrolment. Effective enrolment is a measure that combines both enrolment and attendance data. Effective enrolment is calculated by averaging the two highest non-consecutive weeks of effective attendance in each term over four terms, with non-attendance due to sickness, sanctioned or funeral counted as present for the purposes of calculating effective enrolment. As a result, the effective enrolment rate is higher than average attendance rates.

The student needs-based funding formula uses the effective enrolment number for a school and other enrolment weightings to meet needs of students, such as remoteness of the school, number of Aboriginal students and socio-economic status of parents.

In addition to funding distributed using the student needs-based funding formula, the School Resourcing package also provides additional funding and support that does not necessarily depend on effective enrolment, as outlined below.

Fixed (facility) funding

Funding for school operational costs such as electricity, water, telephone, cleaning and ground maintenance.

Targeted funding

Targeted funding to respond to individual students on top of the student needs based funding formula.

Examples of additional funding provided to Arnhem schools in 2019 include:

- \$1 657 581 for bilingual education programs
- \$406 322 for homeland learning
- \$371 379 for child and family centres
- \$505 267 for special education
- \$1 430 203 for the Nhulunbuy regional boarding facility.

Centrally funded school costs

School costs that are centrally funded by the department include teacher remoteness allowance, principals' salaries, teacher relocation costs and remote study leave.

Centrally provided school support services

Funding is allocated to the system to:

- deliver enabling services to schools, for example, student support, curriculum development and school improvement.
- governance and development services, such as finance, human resources, information technology and other corporate costs.