



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 285

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Education and Training, Hon Jo-Anne Hersey MLA:

Flexible Learning and Youth Justice Education

1. What senior teaching or education expertise is embedded within corporate structures specifically to support:

The Department of Education and Training (the department) embeds a range of educational, allied health and subject matter expertise within its corporate and regional structures to support schools, students and families. This multidisciplinary workforce includes registered teachers, school leaders, allied health professionals, psychologists, social workers, school-based counsellors, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, student engagement specialists and policy and program experts employed across professional, teaching and administrative classifications.

The department's approach recognises that improving educational outcomes for vulnerable children requires a multidisciplinary response that draws on educational expertise, allied health knowledge and specialist program and policy capability across both schools and corporate functions.

a. Students intersecting with the youth justice system;

The department supports students involved with the youth justice system through multidisciplinary teams that work collaboratively with schools, youth justice, child protection, Northern Territory (NT) Police and community organisations. These teams include educators, student engagement advisors and teachers who support educational participation, transitions, re-engagement and individual case management.

The department supports students involved with the youth justice system through the Tivendale Campus of the Top End School of Flexible Learning (TESOFL), located within the Holtze Youth Detention Centre. The campus provides full-time educational education to young people in detention and supports continuity of learning, transition planning and reintegration into community-based education, training and employment pathways. Support is provided by qualified teachers, educational leaders, transition and pathways

staff, student engagement advisors and specialist education officers who work collaboratively with youth justice, health, child protection and community services to address the complex educational and wellbeing needs of young people.

b. Attendance and engagement strategies for vulnerable cohorts;

Attendance and engagement initiatives are supported by school attendance officers, student engagement advisors, educators, disability and inclusion specialists and policy officers with expertise in student engagement, attendance, inclusion and service coordination. These staff work directly with schools, students and families to address barriers to participation and coordinate support through individualised and multi-agency approaches.

c. Trauma-informed practice, including FASD and complex needs

The department maintains specialist capability in inclusion, wellbeing and student support through multidisciplinary teams comprising teachers, allied health professionals and subject matter experts. These staff provide advice, capability building, targeted support and professional learning to schools in areas including trauma informed practice, disability inclusion, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), mental health, behavioural support and complex learning needs.

2. How many students in the following categories are currently on reduced timetables across NT schools:

a. students with disability;

Data not available.

b. Aboriginal students; and

Data not available.

c. students with youth justice involvement?

Data not available.

d. Where a figure for an individual category is too small to report, please provide the Territory-wide total for students on reduced timetables.

Data not available.

e. If reduced timetables are not centrally recorded, in which system or record are they held, and in what format?

Reduced timetables are not centrally recorded by the department. Where a reduced timetable is implemented, information is maintained by the school as part of the student's educational record and case management documentation.

3. How is “soft exclusion” through reduced attendance tracked and reported?

Government schools are funded based on student enrolment rather than attendance. Accordingly, attendance data is used to identify and respond to engagement concerns and support student participation.

- a. **If soft exclusion through reduced attendance is not tracked, what record would show a student attending on a reduced timetable, and in which system is it held?**

As above.

4. **Are schools funded on full enrolment or actual attendance for these students?**

Refer to answer 3.

5. **What safeguards ensure families are not subsequently subject to compliance action when disengagement escalates?**

The department's approach prioritises early intervention, engagement and support for students experiencing barriers to attendance. Schools work with families to implement individualised attendance, inclusion and engagement strategies, including referral to specialist supports and flexible education options where appropriate. Attendance compliance processes under the Education Act 2015 are considered after reasonable efforts have been made to engage the student and family. This approach aligns with the department's Intensive Support Roll and inclusion reforms, which focus on understanding and addressing the underlying causes of disengagement and supporting students to remain connected to education.

6. **For the Top End School of Flexible Learning, please provide:**

- a. **total enrolments at each campus — Tivendale, Malak and Palmerston;**

The department publishes enrolment and attendance data termly for government schools, available at <https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/enrolment-and-attendance>

- b. **the proportion of students attending more than 40 per cent of the time; and**

The department does not publicly report attendance of students by attendance threshold. All students are expected to attend unless a sanctioned absence is recorded. For example, a medical appointment or other professional appointment or an approved leave of absence to attend an alternative education or therapeutic program.

- c. **the number of enrolled students not attending at all.**

Refer to answer 6 (a)

7. **Given the increasing number of children in youth detention or on remand attending the Tivendale campus, is funding allocated according to this shift in demand?**

The TESOFI is resourced to provide educational services at its Tivendale campus for young people in youth detention at HYDC. Funding is provided to support the number of students at the campus.

- a. **If attendance at Tivendale is increasing relative to other campuses, are funding and staffing being rebalanced accordingly?**

Funding is provided to support an anticipated number of students at the campus. The TESOFI has flexibility within its overall budget and staffing allocation to manage changes in enrolment and attendance across campuses as required.

8. **What consideration has been given to establishing the Tivendale campus as a standalone school, with dedicated funding reflecting its role in supporting remanded and high-complexity students?**

The Tivendale campus operates as part of the TESOFI, which provides significant advantages for young people entering and exiting youth detention. Educators support continuity of learning for students whose education is often disrupted by periods of detention, ensuring educational programs, student records, and transition planning remain connected throughout their engagement with the system.

Tivendale receives targeted funding that recognises the complexity of the student cohort and the additional supports required to meet their educational needs. While this funding is administered through TESOFI it is directed towards addressing the specific resourcing requirements of the Tivendale Program.

9. **What formal joint funding or coordination exists between the Department of Education, the Department of Corrections and the Department of Health to:**

The 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the department and Territory Families established a coordinated approach to delivering education, wellbeing support and transition planning for young people in youth detention. Following machinery of government changes and the transfer of Youth Justice functions to the Department of Corrections (DoC), DoC is now leading the development of a new Service Level Agreement to replace the MoU.

- a. **deliver rehabilitative education programs for children on remand;**

The department provides educational services to young people on remand, recognising that they remain of compulsory school age and retain the right to access education while in detention. The 2019 MoU notes that the department may assess and support the learning needs of young people on remand, particularly where the period of remand is likely to be prolonged.

b. support trauma-informed education and health responses; and

The department operates the Tivendale Campus at Holtze Youth Detention Centre, providing trauma-informed educational programs tailored to the needs of young people in detention. Staff work collaboratively with Department of Corrections and Department of Health personnel to support students through educational, wellbeing and transition planning processes. The model recognises the high prevalence of trauma, disability, learning difficulties and complex needs among young people in detention and provides coordinated supports to promote engagement and successful reintegration.

c. ensure continuity of learning and reintegration into community schooling pathways?

The department has dedicated positions supporting young people involved in the youth justice system. The Department's Continuum of Learning for Young People Entering and Exiting Youth Detention establishes a consistent approach to supporting educational continuity and successful transitions into, through and out of youth detention.

10. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 reports students attaining a Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training in the non-government sector at 421 non-Aboriginal and 75 Aboriginal students for 2025–26, with 2026–27 targets of 491 and 80 respectively.

a. What were the equivalent figures for the government school sector in each of the three years to 2025–26, by Aboriginal status?

i. The department makes Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) completion data for both educational sectors, disaggregated by Aboriginality, publicly available each year on the <https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/ntcet-statistics> site.

ii. Number of students attaining the NTCET

NTCET Government Sector			
Aboriginality	2023	2024	2025
Aboriginal	174	192	186
Non-Aboriginal	750	801	861
Grand Total	924	993	1047

- b. How many students were enrolled in Year 12 in each sector in 2025–26, and what proportion attained the certificate, by Aboriginal status?**

Budget Paper 3 Key Performance Indicator measures the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training (NTCET) attainment rate as the number of students who attain their NTCET as a proportion of the number of students enrolled in Term 1, Week 4.

In 2025, there were 443 Aboriginal and 1019 non-Aboriginal students enrolled in government schools, equating to attainment rates of 42% and 84% respectively.

The department does not collect year level data for the non-government sector for Term 1, Week 4 and is unable to provide an equivalent attainment rate.

- c. How many students in flexible learning programs or in youth detention were enrolled in a certificate pathway in 2025–26, and how many attained a certificate or a vocational qualification?**

In the 2025 school year, the TESOFI supported 2 students to complete the NTCET: one Aboriginal student and one non-Aboriginal student.

In the 2025 school year, 18 TESOFI students successfully completed Vocational Education for Secondary Students programs, with 5 Certificate II qualifications and 13 Certificate I qualifications issued across 3 different registered training organisations. A further 10 TESOFI students took part in Try a Trade activity at Palmerston Youth Skills Centre to prepare for vocational pathways.

- d. If certificate attainment is not recorded against enrolment in a flexible learning program or in detention, in which system is each recorded and what would linking them require?**

Not applicable.