

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Education:

Annual Report – Department of Education

1. Why has the number of subsidised early childhood education and care places in the Northern Territory been reduced from 5419 to 4944?
2. Has the Behavior for Learning Framework been implemented? Please provide details of the international research and practice on which the framework was based, and a list of stakeholders who have been consulted prior to the implementation.
3. Has the Middle Years Transition Framework been developed (due 2017) and could you please provide a comprehensive list of the 'evidence-based research' on which the framework will be based?
4. Has the NT Teaching and Learning Framework been developed (due 2017) and could you please provide a comprehensive list of the research of current literacy and numeracy practices being used to inform the framework?
5. The rate of primary, middle and senior students at government schools, both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal, attending at least four days per week are at their lowest over five years, as are the rates of Aboriginal students attending non-government schools. How can Government account for these rates, and will any new strategies be employed to reverse this trend?
6. Are there any engagement programs specifically targeting students prior to middle school? Are any strategies planned?
7. Will results of the Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics and the Foundations of Early Literacy Assessment (FELA NT) be published (similar to NAPLAN), or will they be made available only to teachers and the department?
8. Of the 245 newly recruited teachers and school leaders who undertook the two day orientation program, how many have separated either through retirement, resignation or termination? How many newly recruited teachers and school leaders did not participate in the program, and how many have separated either through retirement, resignation or termination?

9. How many teachers and school leaders have accessed the online training resources for mentee-teachers and teacher-mentors? What has this service cost to develop and maintain to date?
 10. When will the final report and recommendations from the review of the global school budget funding model be released?
 11. Has the tender for the eDASH trial been awarded? When will this project commence?
 12. Please detail any new strategies or plans for attracting international students to the Northern Territory.
 13. The rate of Department of Education employees with ongoing (permanent) employment has decreased to a 5-year low, while those on fixed periods (temporary/contract) have increased to a 5-year high. How can Government explain these rates, and will any new strategies be employed to reverse this trend?
 14. Of the 18 graduate teachers from Charles Darwin University who accepted permanent employment offers to teach in Northern Territory government schools, how many have separated either through retirement, resignation or termination?
 15. The reported number of work health and safety incidents has increased significantly over the past year, and the proportion of employees who have reported incidents has also increased significantly. Both are the highest they have been in the past 4 years. How can Government explain these rates, and what mitigation strategies will be employed to reverse this trend?
 16. Can you please list the NT Government Schools in Palmerston, their respective enrolment capacities, and their respective latest enrolment details? Which schools have declined enrolments in the latest enrolment period?
 17. When will the Zuccoli Government Primary School commence construction? When is the expected completion date?
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Response

1. The subsidy is provided to services based on the number of eligible children enrolled in and attending the service.

The number of subsidised early childhood education and care places in the Northern Territory has reduced from 5419 to 4944 due to fluctuations in service demand and staffing levels at some services, which may result in services operating at a lower capacity at times during the year (Department of Education Annual Report 2016-17, page 27).

2. Throughout Semester 2, 2017, the draft Behaviour for Learning Framework has been out for consultation with school and corporate departmental stakeholders. This has included the School Support Services Principals' Reference Group, Regional Directors, Regional Managers, principals and teachers throughout the NT. Once feedback has been considered and incorporated into the framework document, an independent Quality Assurance process will occur in mid-January 2018, in readiness for publishing and implementation.

Resource material considered during the development of the Behaviour for Learning Framework can be found at Attachment A.

3. Throughout 2017, the Middle Years Transition Framework was developed in consultation with representatives from primary, middle and senior schools across the Northern Territory and is supported by the findings of the Supporting Students in Transition review, prepared by Professor Helen Cahill, Catherine Smith, Dr. Jessica Crofts and Anne Farrelly. A detailed list of the research used to inform the review can be found at Attachment B.

The Middle Years Transition Framework is currently in final draft form. It is anticipated for implementation during Term 1, 2018.

4. The *Fundamental Expectations: A Teaching and Learning Framework* has been developed from recommendations made by the Expert Literacy and Numeracy Panel work chaired by Professor Peter Sullivan, Professor of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, Monash University and Doctor Kathryn Glasswell, Senior Lecturer, School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University.

The Framework will be ready for implementation at the commencement of the 2018 school year. As part of the implementation plan, supporting documents and resources will be developed in collaboration with teachers and school leaders as part of a suite of digital and printed resources. A list of references is outlined in Attachment C.

5. The Department of Education recognises the importance of supporting children and young people to engage in their education to ensure they are both successful in their learning and able to access a range of positive life opportunities.

The Education NT Strategy 2018 – 2022 outlines the department's plans to ensure every child in the Northern Territory is engaged, grows and achieves. It promotes strong partnerships with children, students, families, industry and the community.

There are a number of external social factors that impact attendance including student mobility, cultural obligations and community safety. Northern Territory Government schools employ a range of localised strategies to encourage strong patterns of attendance suited to the local community. Where these strategies have not successfully re-engaged students, conferences are held with families to discuss non-attendance and develop attendance plans to mitigate such barriers.

In addition to localised school activities, the department works in partnership with the Commonwealth Government to implement Northern Territory-wide attendance programs such as the Remote School Attendance Strategy.

6. Engagement programs are primarily targeted at students in secondary years, where research shows the student cohort is at greater risk of disengagement.

Encouraging a strong pattern of attendance is critical in the early years of schooling and all Northern Territory Government schools implement localised targeted initiatives to improve attendance.

In addition to the response detailed in sub-question 5, the Department of Education is commencing implementation of the community-led schools initiative which will aim to improve school attendance rates through strengthened community engagement.

The Department of Education Annual Report 2016-17 page 38-39 refers.

7. Results of the Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics and the Foundations of Early Literacy Assessment (FELA NT) are available to school leaders, teachers and the department through internal systems. These test instruments are designed to inform teacher practice to support student learning.

Results will not be published by the Department of Education.

8. Of the teachers and school leaders who undertook the two day orientation program, four have separated through resignation, one has separated through termination and none have separated through retirement.

35 invited participants did not attend orientation programs for a variety of reasons. Of these, none have separated either through retirement, resignation or termination.

9. The online training for mentee-teachers and teacher-mentors was launched on 28 August 2017. There is no usage data available for the period of

1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017. Usage data will be provided in the 2017-2018 Department of Education Annual Report.

The total cost to develop both training resources is \$92 257. There have been no additional ongoing maintenance costs to date.

10. The final report and recommendations from the review of the global school budget funding model were released on 5 December 2017 and are available on the Department of Education website:
<https://education.nt.gov.au/education/statistics-research-and-strategies/school-resourcing-model-action-plan-for-the-future>.
11. The eDash Phase 1 Project is in the final stages of the tender evaluation process. Development is expected to commence in early 2018.
12. The Northern Territory International Education and Training Strategy 2014 - 2024 guided work in 2016/17 to attract international students to the Northern Territory. This strategy encompasses all education sectors — school, tertiary, and vocational education and training.

The Department of Education has recently drafted an International School Education Plan 2018–2022 that focuses on internationalising Northern Territory Government schools. Under this plan, the Northern Territory will be promoted overseas as a high-quality international school education provider. The first scheduled project to attract international students to the Northern Territory is the development of a promotional website targeting prospective and current international school students and their families. This project is underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2018.

13. A number of factors impact the use of fixed term employment contracts such as federal funding, budget variations and backfilling employee absences as outlined below.
 - Federal funding and budget variations can occur year to year so workplaces try to maintain some flexibility within their staffing.
 - Federally funded positions are recruited to on a fixed term basis for the duration of the funding.
 - Where ongoing employees accept fixed period promotional positions or access leave such as parental leave, long service leave, personal leave, leave without pay and special remote study leave, replacement employees are arranged on fixed term contracts to accommodate the return of the permanent employee.
 - The introduction of the school autonomy initiative allows schools to choose their workforce, this appears to have also been a contributing factor to the increase in fixed period contracts.

The Department of Education recognises the need to increase the number of ongoing (permanent) employees to the workforce while ensuring schools continue to work autonomously.

To address the levels of fixed term period employment arrangements, on 25 October 2017, stage one of the teacher permanency strategy was launched. This enables principals to select eligible fixed term classroom teachers for ongoing appointment within their school. The strategy is based on an agreement with the Commissioner for Public Employment and is active until the end of the 2018 school year.

A longer term permanency strategy is currently being formulated to continue to increase the number of ongoing teachers in the Department of Education.

14. Of the 18 graduate teachers from Charles Darwin University that accepted permanent employment offers to teach in Northern Territory government schools, two graduates withdrew prior to the commencement of the program and of the remaining 16, none have separated since commencement.
15. In 2016–17, 521 incidents related to safety were reported by employees, an increase of 76 incidents on 2015–16. This reflects the department's promotion of the online incident reporting system and encouraging employees to report all incidents, including those that do not result in an injury (Department of Education Annual Report 2016-17, page 107 refers).

The number of reported incidents is likely to continue to increase as the Department of Education proactively encourages employees to report all incidents including those that do not result in an injury. This allows the department to investigate and develop mitigating strategies to minimise the risk to injury to employees.

16. There are ten Northern Territory Government schools in Palmerston; enrolment numbers and capacity for each of these schools are provided in the table below.

School name	Total enrolments ¹	2017 Enrolment capacity ²	Utilisation (%)
Bakewell Primary School	853	853	100
Driver Primary School	525	599	87
Durack Primary School	510	596	85
Forrest Parade School	65	72 ³	90 ⁴
Gray Primary School	398	467	85
Moulden Primary School	336	626	53
Rosebery Primary School	615	646	95
Woodroffe Primary School	438	663	66
Rosebery Middle School	615	765	80
Palmerston Senior College	441	888	49

The Department of Education does not centrally retain information about enrolments that have been declined.

Schools abide by the department's Enrolment Management and Priority Enrolment guidelines, which can be found on the Department of Education website:

https://education.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/282066/enrolment-management-and-priority-enrolment-guidelines.pdf.

17. As published in Northern Territory Government's 10 Year Infrastructure Plan, \$9 million has been committed in 2017-18 and \$6 million in 2018-19 to progress new infrastructure to support educational programs and services in Zuccoli.

¹ Data current as at Term 3 2017. Figures include preschool enrolments.

² Figures are estimates only and include preschool capacities.

³ Capacity for Forrest Parade is between 72 - 80 students, depending on the special needs of the student cohort. Lower capacity utilised for this calculation.

⁴ Percentage utilisation based on enrolment capacity of 72 students. See above footnote.

RESOURCES – BEHAVIOUR FOR LEARNING FRAMEWORK

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Research used to inform the Supporting Students in Transition review

Prepared by Professor Helen Cahill, Catherine Smith, Dr. Jessica Crofts and Anne Farrelly

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