

## Question on Notice

No. 1696

Asked on 12 November 2008

Mrs Cunningham asked the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) —

### QUESTION:

With reference to staffing for prep year—

- (1) Will he give immediate assurance to the parents of prep children in 2009 that prep teacher aide hours will not be cut?
- (2) Will he provide an assurance to all parents of students in state primary schools that the allocation of teacher aide hours in years 1 to 7 will not be cut to fund prep teacher aides?
- (3) Will he fund a safety net, so that schools may be reimbursed for teacher aide time used in supporting children with physical and intellectual impairments who are awaiting ascertainment?
- (4) Will he conduct and publish an independent review of teacher and teacher aide work loads since the introduction of prep?
- (5) Will he fund full-time teacher aids in prep classrooms?

### ANSWER:

In 2009 schools will continue to receive up to 15 hours of teacher aide time, based on Prep Year enrolment numbers. The additional 10 000 teacher aide hours per week allocated to all schools with a minimum of 3.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher positions in the P–3 year, will also continue. These teacher aide hours are specifically dedicated to the Prep Year and are additional to the general teacher aide allocation to support teaching and learning. Principals will continue to have the discretion to assign their teacher aide hours for Years 1-7 students across the school to wherever the hours are needed most.

As the Honourable Member should be aware, Ascertainment is no longer used as a method for determining the needs of students with disabilities (SWD).

Prep implementation has been monitored closely during 2007 and 2008 through a number of mechanisms, including surveys, routine departmental activities and meetings with key stakeholders. Parents and school staff were surveyed during 2007 to capture perceptions of prep implementation, identify challenges and inform school planning processes to support implementation of a full cohort.

My department will continue to work with associated unions and other interest groups to ensure teacher aide hour allocations are appropriate for prep. The findings of the prep monitoring program suggest that the teacher aide allocations strike a good balance between the allocation that was previously made to pre-school where the children were younger, and allocations for Year 1 students. Prep children are, on average, 6 months older than the previous pre-school age group.