Question on Notice

No. 339

Asked on 12 March 2008

Mr Wellington asked the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford)

QUESTION:
With respect to State Government school principals and teachers on the Sunshine Coast who perform their duties in an acting capacity and not as a permanent position for more than six months in a year—

(1) How many are currently undertaking teaching duties in an acting capacity?

(2) What efforts are underway to speed up the reduction in teachers needing to act in acting positions and not permanent positions?

ANSWER:

All Education Queensland staff including principals and teachers are able to take parental, long service or sick leave. Permanent vacancies are also kept open on the Sunshine Coast to allow teachers who have worked in regional or remote areas of the state for a period of time to transfer to a preferred location. This creates temporary vacancies which provide opportunities for principals or teachers to act at a higher level.

Whilst I support the opportunity for our school leaders and teachers to access important professional development, we must be careful to ensure that these opportunities do not adversely affect our school communities.

The Member for Nicklin has been a constant advocate for strong leadership in schools in his electorate, and for keeping disruption caused by staff changes to a minimum. I agree with his concerns about the disruption which can be caused to the smooth operation of schools when excessive changes in leadership personnel occur and I had already initiated action to address this issue.

Accordingly, I have asked my Department to introduce a range of procedures to address this matter and a number of measure are already being implemented across the state to reduce unnecessary school disruption.

Principals will now need to be in their permanent position for two years before they are able to apply for another permanent position. Principals will only be able to act for up to 6 months within any 2 year period. The department will attempt to minimise the number of acting principals in place between permanent principal appointments wherever possible. Other than in exceptional circumstances, only one acting principal should be required between permanent appointments.

As of 19 March 2008, 17 principals and 233 teachers have been working in acting positions for more than 6 months on the Sunshine Coast. This represents 15% and 6% of the total principals and teachers in the area. 13 principal vacancies will be filled with permanent appointments at the beginning of Semester 2, 2008.