

Question on Notice

No. 263

Asked on 2 April 2014

Mr Holswich asked the Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek) –

QUESTION: Will the Minister provide an update on the success of the Flying Start Year 7s in High School trial, with specific reference to Bray Park State High School, and also advise what steps the government has taken to ensure schools are prepared for the transition of Year 7 to high school in 2015?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

Bray Park State High School (SHS) is one of 20 state schools piloting the move of Year 7 into high school. The pilot commenced at Bray Park SHS at the start of 2013 and refurbishment of two classroom blocks was completed at the school in 2012 in preparation for the move of Year 7.

My Department has advised that the pilot is progressing well, with three classes of Year 7 students now studying at the school. Bray Park SHS has employed two primary-trained teachers as part of the teaching team for this program. The skill set brought to the school by the incoming teachers transitioning from primary school has contributed to the quality and success of Junior Secondary at the school. Staff and students at the school have reported strong satisfaction with the pilot program and Year 7 students are enjoying a successful transition from primary to secondary schooling.

More broadly, the move of Year 7 into high school is central to the Flying Start education reforms that aim to deliver programs and services to better prepare Queensland children for school, ensure they are supported in the move from primary to secondary, and are taught by well-prepared teachers who hold high expectations for all students.

A capital investment of up to \$328 million is being made in state school infrastructure for the move of Year 7, with \$110 million in capital assistance also being provided for the non-state sector. The investment in state school infrastructure includes new or refurbished classrooms and flexible learning areas as required.

To further underpin the move of Year 7 in state schools, Junior Secondary is being introduced for Years 7, 8 and 9 to support the academic, social and emotional needs of students in the early years of high school. Each state high school can develop its own approach to Junior Secondary, based on six guiding principles – distinct identity, quality teaching, student wellbeing, parent and community involvement, leadership and local decision-making.

Extensive workforce planning has been undertaken to determine the impacts of introducing Junior Secondary in state schools. Approximately 1300 additional teachers will be needed in state secondary schools when Year 7 transitions in 2015, including teachers opting to move from primary to secondary school. A set of Workforce Management Principles is in place to ensure a smooth and timely transition of staff and resources in both primary and secondary schools.

An online register was established in September 2013 for people to indicate their interest in teaching in Junior Secondary. It includes existing primary and temporary teachers as well as pre-service and applicant teachers, and my Department has advised over 4500 have registered to date. Recruitment processes have commenced, with regions and schools focussed on the recruitment of teachers for Junior Secondary in 2015.

Teaching resources and professional development continue to be delivered to build staff capacity around Junior Secondary. An extensive program of professional development is being offered to all state school teachers and school leaders involved with Junior Secondary to broaden their knowledge and understanding of young adolescents. For primary teachers transitioning to secondary, individualised professional development support programs are being made available.

New computing devices are being provided for Year 7 students in high school on a maximum ratio of one per three students, with no loss of devices from primary schools. Schools have some flexibility to choose the most suitable devices for their situation.

Regions and schools, both primary and secondary, are continuing their significant role in student, parent and community engagement to prepare for the move of Year 7. Resources are being provided to guide and support schools in this. State-wide communication about the move of Year 7 will also be occurring to further support students, families and schools as we move towards 2015.