

Question on Notice

No. 129

Asked on 25 February 2021

DR A MACMAHON ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to the \$91.8m departmental revenue for Student Resource Scheme fees outlined in the Department of Education's annual report 2019-2020 financial statements—

Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the total Student Resource Scheme fees received in 2019-2020 for each state school in Queensland?

ANSWER:

Education is a partnership between schools and parents or caregivers. Schools are funded by the State to provide students with instruction, facilities and administration. Parents are responsible for providing textbooks and other resources to enhance students' learning.

State schools can charge fees, including for a Student Resource Scheme (SRS) to provide access to textbooks, consumables and equipment, either outright or for hire, and for extra or non-curricular activities such as camps, excursions, performances, formals and sporting events.

The SRS is a cost recovery scheme which provides parents with a convenient and cost-effective alternative to individually sourcing the necessary items. The revenue generated from the scheme is used to purchase the resources for the participants.

Schools provide parents with the details of SRS inclusions and associated fees to enable them to decide whether they wish to participate in the scheme. The school must ensure a student's education is not disadvantaged, regardless of participation.

To assist families in meeting the cost of resources, the Queensland Government provides each eligible student with a Textbook and Resource Allowance (TRA). The TRA is provided to schools based on annual enrolment data, to be passed on to parents directly or as an offset to the cost of participating in the SRS. The TRA is provided annually direct to schools.

In 2019–20, the TRA concession paid to parents of state school students totalled \$40.8 million. For the current year, rates are: Years 7 to 10 \$130 per student per annum and Years 11 to 12 \$281 per student per annum. School principals also work with families to ensure their children are not disadvantaged by financial hardship with respect to access to textbooks and resources.

For some schools, the TRA concession received per student covers all of the resources required in that school's SRS scheme while other schools, in consultation with their school communities, may choose to expand the scheme (with parents contributing the difference) to include other resources and experiences, as outlined above. The SRS is a voluntary scheme.

Comparing the data at school level for a SRS does not provide informative information and may lead to incorrect conclusions due to the following factors:

- SRS inclusions can vary from school to school and student to student;
- number of students per school participating in the scheme;
- each school, in consultation with its Parents and Citizens' Association and within parameters set by the Department of Education, determines the resources that will be included and the fees that will be charged;
- the fees are based upon the value of the items provided through the scheme;

- fees may vary between schools, year levels, or for individual students based on their subject choices; and
- the content and associated costs of resource materials provided under student resource schemes will vary according to the needs of each school's student cohort.

Some of the information listed above can only be sourced directly from the individual school and therefore, I am unable to provide the Member with a breakdown of SRS fees.