

Question on Notice
No. 850
Asked on 18 August 2022

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

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise (a) what are the average annual out-of-pocket expenses and total state school-related fees that parents have to pay in our state education system, (b) what consideration has the government given to lowering out-of-pocket expenses and state school-related school fees in Queensland, (c) when fees are collected in excess of a school's needs, are these held in an individual school's bank account or collectively and (d) what quantum of funds are currently held that meet this description?

ANSWER:

Schools receive funding from the Government to provide instruction, administration and facilities for the education of students. State schools can charge parents for resources and services that enhance learning and/or allow students to engage with the curriculum, which are not funded by the Government.

Fees for each school are set at the discretion of the principal, in consultation with individual schools' Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&Cs), or the School Management Team for schools that do not have a P&C, and within parameters set by the Department of Education. This consultation process includes whether or not a fee will be charged as well as the scope and quantum of such. Therefore, it is not possible to provide an average out-of-pocket expense and total state school related fees.

To assist families in meeting the costs of resources, the Queensland Government provides each eligible student with a Textbook and Resource Allowance. This allowance is either paid directly to the parents or offset against the costs in a Student Resource Scheme (SRS), where the school chooses to run such a scheme. An SRS provides resources needed by students based on the programs offered at the school. By establishing an SRS to purchase the resources in bulk, schools can provide parents with a convenient and cost-effective alternative to individually sourcing the required resources.

Pursuant to the department's published *User charging procedure*, outside of commercial activities such as facilities hire, schools charge fees on a cost recovery basis. School principals are required to review and report on all fees charged annually to the P&C, or the School Management Team for schools that do not have a P&C.

As fees are managed at a school level, all payments and refunds are administered through individual school bank accounts. The department does not require schools to report on the quantum of fees collected by schools as compared to the amount of monies disbursed to cover costs incurred. Schools have processes in place to consider families' financial circumstances and have the ability to waive fees (all or in part) in cases of genuine hardship.