

EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

REPORT No. 34 ON THE

REVIEW OF AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT 2: 2013-14 SUPPLY OF SPECIALIST SUBJECT TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION

On 30 May 2014, the Education and Innovation Committee tabled Report No.34 in relation to the Review of Auditor-General's Report 2: 2013-14 *Supply of specialist subject teachers in secondary schools*.

The Queensland Government response to recommendations made by the Committee is provided below.

CONTEXT

Ensuring quality teachers are available to Queensland schools is a matter of high importance to the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) and the specific challenges in relation to specialist secondary teachers make these priority teaching areas.

The review of the Auditor-General's Report 2: 2013-14 Supply of specialist subject teachers in secondary schools by the Committee recommended an update of the progress towards the five recommendations. DETE is implementing a targeted plan that addresses the five recommendations outlined below. However, it is important to note that this plan fits within broader activities aimed at boosting teaching quality as described within the *Great teachers = Great results* direct action plan.

The inter-related nature of the response to the recommendations should also be noted. While some actions are specific and relate to a single recommendation, others (e.g. implementation of a Talent Management Framework) support the addressing of multiple recommendations.

While DETE is on track to meet the timeframes set for response by the Queensland Audit Office (QAO), work will not conclude when these timeframes pass. Some actions, such as the development of comprehensive professional development modules for teachers working out of field, will take time to develop, pilot and roll-out. Further, the challenges in relation to specialist secondary teachers are likely to persist over time, especially given that many are national in nature.

For these reasons, DETE will continue to work with industry stakeholders and apply the necessary resources to boost the supply of specialist subject teachers to Queensland secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the House notes the contents of this report.

Response

The Queensland Government thanks the Committee for consideration of the report.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommended that the Minister for Education, Training and Employment tables a report in the Parliament on the Department's progress towards meeting the Auditor-General's five recommendations contained in his Report to Parliament 2 for 2013-14, *Supply of specialist subject teachers in secondary schools*, by March 2015.

Response

On behalf of the Queensland Government, DETE has confirmed its commitment to work closely with the Education and Innovation Committee, the QAO and industry partners to address the recommendations contained within the Auditor-General's Report 2: 2013-14 Supply of specialist subject teachers in secondary schools. The Queensland Government Response to the QAO are outlined below.

QOA Report Recommendation 1 – Improve the quality of information on teacher subject capability and competence available to staffing officers and principals to improve placement of teachers at schools and on school timetables by December 2014.

Response

At the commencement of 2014, DETE's Teacher Applicant Pool comprised of approximately 16,000 aspirant teachers; however, as indicated by the QAO, the data available was at times incomplete and out-of-date.

To address this, a data cleanse of the Teacher Applicant Pool was conducted in late 2013 to improve data quality on teacher subject capability and competency. This involved all active applicants for teacher employment being contacted regarding currency of their application details. Applicants were requested to review all of their qualification and teaching area preferences to confirm currency of information. Where applicants sought to add additional teaching areas, they were required to provide documentary evidence with respect to qualifications or capabilities. The outcome of this action will support general recruitment processes as well as preparation for transitioning Year 7 to junior secondary settings in 2015.

Workforce management during this significant structural reform is also being supported through establishment of a Register of Interest developed for applicants seeking to teach in a junior secondary setting. The data fields required within the Register provide clear

information regarding qualifications, relevant teaching competencies and availability, and access has been provided to schools and regional human resources staff to assist in effective staffing decisions for the transition of Year 7 to secondary settings.

While these initial actions have already in part addressed the issues raised by the QAO, further work is underway to provide enhancements to the existing human resource information systems through analysis, extraction and amalgamation of existing human resource - related data relevant to teaching staff and teacher applicants from the range of DETE systems (including the TSS payroll system, Recruit and OneSchool). The intention is to develop an information system with the capacity to search, aggregate and display data from the various standalone systems to establish a holistic data repository of relevant teacher information and attributes to assist schools in shortlisting suitable teaching applicants. This information will include qualifications and teaching experience, as well as supplementary data collections not captured in existing information systems to improve placement of teachers at schools and on school timetables.

DETE is also progressing work under the *A Fresh Start*¹ strategy to develop a Talent Identification Framework, which provides for improved early identification of quality teaching aspirants during their studies, collection of relevant data for input into human resource systems and support of identified candidates into placement in schools where their skills are needed.

OOA Report Recommendation 2 – Provide teachers who are teaching subjects out of their field of expertise with the support and professional development needed to develop the content knowledge and pedagogical skills relevant to the subject being taught by June 2014.

Response –

DETE has undertaken an environmental scan of available professional development programs to support teachers working out of field, as well as further analysis of the teaching areas identified as those in which teachers are most likely to be required to teach outside their field of expertise.

Available programs have been reviewed for utility, currency and appropriateness to enable establishment of an online resource centre, which has been developed to provide an extensive range of professional development activities and resources to support teachers teaching mathematics and science outside their area of expertise.

Professional development modules and programs are in development to assist teachers to develop content knowledge and pedagogical skills relevant to the subject being taught, with initial focus on modules for teaching mathematics and science. These modules seek to provide participants with an opportunity to be coached by experienced educators and support teachers to plan and implement engaging and rigorous science learning programs.

DETE is also currently exploring options for utilising third-parties such as universities and professional associations to deliver targeted professional development programs in areas of high need.

¹ Announced by the Premier and the Minister for Education in July 2013, *A Fresh Start: Improving the preparation and quality of teachers for Queensland schools* contains a suite of interconnected initiatives focused on improving teaching graduate preparation.

This work is complemented by a Junior Secondary Professional Development Framework, which identifies and addresses the professional development needs of junior secondary teachers and their school leadership teams to ensure that staff involved in the transition to junior secondary are equipped with:

- capabilities, knowledge and understanding of adolescent development and effective pedagogical practices; and
- opportunities to work collaboratively with peers to enhance professional growth.

Additionally, under *Great teachers = Great results: A direct action plan for Queensland schools* several actions are aimed at supporting teachers and school leaders to undertake relevant postgraduate study to enhance their performance and skills.

From 2015, up to 200 scholarships will be offered to high performing teachers to undertake a Masters degree in a relevant and high demand education field. Scholarships will also be made available to principals and deputy principals to undertake a graduate certificate in a relevant field negotiated with their employer.

OOA Report Recommendation 3 – Develop and implement a strategy to reduce the imbalance in the supply of the specialist subject teachers with a view to improving participation and achievement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects by June 2014.

Response –

DETE has worked closely with the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association (QSPA) to discuss the issues identified by the QAO and those further identified by the Association, and to respond to these by developing a Secondary Teacher Attraction Plan that contains a range of actions to reduce the imbalance in the supply of specialist subject teachers, with a targeted focus on high priority specialist teaching fields.

Actions contained within the Plan are varied and also align to and integrate with the broader responses to the matters contained within the QAO report.

Key actions include:

- improving marketing of teaching as a career;
- exploring new and improved pathways into teaching;
- investigating options for Training School partnerships that build on the success of the Teacher Education Centres of Excellence, with schools working directly with pre-service teachers, providing access to trained mentors, faculty meetings, and coordination of professional experience;
- improving information available regarding pre-service teacher performance and attributes during professional experience, through implementation of a common professional experience reporting framework for adoption by all higher education providers, so that assessment of performance has greater consistency and provides clear information regarding performance and the context in which the professional experience is undertaken;
- exploring options for innovative models of educational delivery that maximise the capacity of existing teachers, especially in high demand teaching areas, through options such as staff sharing, cluster schools, virtual modes of delivery and intensive learning models;

- improving DETE's capacity to recruit high priority candidates through establishment of a Talent Identification Framework; and
- providing targeted incentives to high priority teaching aspirants through scholarship programs to attract high calibre aspirants.

These actions will complement further strategies to address the imbalance in teacher supply, including establishing professional experience partnership agreements with providers under the *A Fresh Start* strategy. This will support initial teacher education providers to deliver programs to meet the needs of Queensland's three schooling sectors and better align supply of graduate teachers with school demand.

QOA Report Recommendation 4 – Develop forecasts for supply and demand of specialist subject teachers that produce more accurate and comprehensive estimates of need at the state and regional levels and by subject, including junior secondary subjects by June 2014.

Response –

DETE is currently completing the 2014 Specialist Teacher Supply and Demand Report. This document analyses data from a range of internal and external systems, including:

- OneSchool;
- DETE's TSS payroll system;
- Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI) data;
- university data returns;
- the national Graduate Destinations report compiled by Graduate Careers Australia; and
- pre-service teacher survey.

While DETE has provided similar analyses in the past, a number of actions have been taken to improve reporting processes and to facilitate the development of an annual supply and demand report focussed on specialist subject teachers to allow close monitoring of this area given its potential persistence in the medium term. These include:

- improving the validity and reliability of supplementary data collections, especially those from external sources;
- development of more fine-grained analyses that reflect on local and regional supply and demand pressures in addition to an aggregated state-wide picture;
- working closely with universities and the Queensland College of Teachers through *A Fresh Start* Strategy to establish timely annual data sharing for all three schooling sectors to assist in strategic workforce planning; and
- mapping the developmental processes for the report to provide for annual delivery.

Further planned future enhancements include:

- improving supply-side data by requiring implementation enhancements to DETE human resource information systems through responses to Recommendation 1;
- improving supply-side data by requiring implementation of a common Professional Experience Reporting Framework for all Queensland initial teacher education programs;

- improving demand-side data through improved workforce planning processes in schools by work underway in response to Recommendation 5; and
- exploring additional datasets to determine their utility for supply and demand analysis (e.g. National Teaching Workforce Dataset).

OOA Report Recommendation 5 – Integrate and coordinate approach to workforce plans and initiatives at central regional and school levels by December 2014.

Response –

To improve integration of workforce planning to inform school, regional and state-wide planning, DETE is implementing a new program for schools titled Leading Workforce Success, which encompasses the knowledge and ability required to develop and implement a successful workforce plan in an environment of growing independence and autonomy.

The high level program content is covered within four modules:

- **Introduction to workforce planning:** which introduces school administrators to the workforce planning tools and frameworks and the role played by corporate services to support the development and implementation of a workforce plan and includes essentials for community consultation, workforce engagement and regional endorsement;
- **Resource planning and workforce analytics:** which provides a detailed examination of school resourcing models and other factors influencing student and workforce change and includes essentials for monitoring and managing workforce budgets and for the flexible allocation of school resources;
- **Workforce management for schools:** which provides a detailed examination of workforce design options including the use of salaried employees, fee/contribution based regional (or clustered) services, contract labour or services contracts and includes an exploration of industrial obligations, procurement accountabilities and workforce management solutions; and
- **Managing supply and demand issues:** which provides options for attracting, developing and retaining quality teachers and includes options for participating in pre-service programs to develop and attract aspiring and pre-service teachers, particularly to rural and remote settings and in teaching areas with low supply.

The program will be delivered to up to 900 participants during the first year, targeting principals, deputy principals and business service managers. Once established, the program will be delivered multiple times per year to provide for new principals, deputy principals and business service managers.

In addition to this initiative, DETE has now rolled out the TRACER (Teacher Relief and Contract Employment Register) to encompass every school, and consequently every teacher applicant, providing schools and regions with the ability to conduct an analysis of teacher supply for casual and temporary work. DETE is continuing to work with registered teachers to update and maintain the currency of data in the system and is exploring options to improve the ‘granularity’ of data (e.g. detailed information per teacher per subject per school).

Further, DETE is conducting an evaluation of enhanced recruitment functionality which will allow schools to access information from TSS, TRACER and OneSchool in one place for the purposes of identifying talent. Extended functionality includes the ability to more effectively

manage the talent pipeline to include information about aspiring teachers. DETE is pursuing additional options to engage teachers more effectively to ensure data is current and relevant, and to influence teachers' preferences.

Further considerations

DETE has noted the Committee's on-going concerns in relation to:

- the importance of ensuring the validity of data used in planning the placement of specialist subject teachers, especially teacher qualifications; and
- the absence of evaluation of DETE's scholarship and grants programs.

Further work will be undertaken prior to the next report to the Committee against the QAO recommendations.