

Ms Ficarra to the Attorney General, Minister for Industrial Relations representing the Minister for Education and Training, and Minister for Women—

1. How many specialised teachers are employed in New South Wales to teach deaf children five to 18 years?
2. How many Learning Support Officers are employed in New South Wales to assist with the teaching of deaf children five to 18 years?
3.
 - a. How many specialised facilities in New South Wales Schools are there for the teaching of deaf children?
 - b. Where are they?
4. How many general schools have teachers qualified to teach deaf children in the use of Auslan and English?
5. The failure to use Auslan in Schools is hindering deaf children's access to the curriculum and adversely impacting on their determination and ability to complete secondary and tertiary education, what strategy has been put in place to ensure that deaf children are not disadvantaged?
6.
 - a. Do deaf children have rights to access their language of choice in New South Wales Schools?
 - b. If not, why not?
7. What qualifications are required for teachers to teach deaf children?
8.
 - a. Are teachers required to be accredited in Auslan?
 - b. If not, why not?
 - c. Will the Department of Education ensure that teachers with the responsibility of teaching deaf children have at the very least, a minimum level of proficiency in Auslan?
 - d. If no, why not?
9.
 - a. Will the Department of Education ensure that teachers and Learning Support Officers who are teaching deaf children achieve the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Paraprofessional Interpreter level in Auslan/English?
 - b. If not, why not?
10. Are there any benchmarks or performance review criteria for Teachers teaching deaf children?
11. What training and support programs are provided by the Department of Education to teachers who are teaching deaf children?

12. Are current Principals of Schools, who are not necessarily themselves competent in Auslan, making decisions about employing staff to work with deaf children?
13.
 - a. Will the Department of Education explicitly state in their Special Education policy that Auslan is the language of the deaf community and that instruction be provided in this for deaf children along with English?
 - b. If not, why not?

Answers—

1. There are over 280 specialist teachers employed in New South Wales to teach students who are deaf or hearing impaired.
2. Over 400 School Learning Support Officers assist students who are deaf or hearing impaired and their teachers across New South Wales.
3.
 - a. There are 41 specialist classes in New South Wales government schools.
 - b. These specialist classes are located in the following government schools:
 - i. Arthur Phillip High School.
 - ii. Burwood Public School.
 - iii. Camden Public School.
 - iv. Chatswood Public School.
 - v. Chertsey Primary School.
 - vi. Endeavour Sports High School.
 - vii. Kincumber High School.
 - viii. Kogarah High School.
 - ix. Kotara High School.
 - x. Kotara South Public School.
 - xi. Lismore Public School.
 - xii. Lurnea High School.
 - xiii. Lurnea Public School.
 - xiv. Nepean High School.
 - xv. Nuwarra Public School.
 - xvi. Penrith Public School.
 - xvii. Penshurst Public School.
 - xviii. Robert Townson High School.
 - xix. St Ives High School.

- xx. Strathfield South High School.
 - xxi. Toongabbie West Public School.
 - xxii. William Rose School.
 - xxiii. Wollongong High School.
4. Over 240 specialist teachers support more than 1,400 students who are deaf or hearing impaired and their teachers in regular schools across New South Wales.
 5. There are a range of communication and educational options in place to support the education and training of students who are deaf or hearing impaired. Approximately 87% of the students who are hearing impaired in NSW government schools currently use an oral/aural means of communication. This approach does not use any sign component and promotes the acquisition of spoken language using residual hearing and appropriate amplification. Another 7% of the students who are hearing impaired use Total Communication. Total Communication is a combination of oral communication and the use of signs and finger spelling. A further 3% of students (approximately 45 students) use Auslan. Another 3% of students use other means of communication including augmentative communication. Students using this form of communication generally have an intellectual and a hearing impairment. The Department of Education and Training provides a range of services to support students who are deaf or hearing impaired including special classes and specialist itinerant support teachers for children in regular classes. The Department acknowledges the important relationship that parents and school personnel have in identifying the learning needs and supports required for students to access and participate in the school's learning programs. The Learning Support Team in each school plays an important role in identifying and coordinating the supports needed to assist students who are deaf or hearing impaired and their teachers. Annually the Department runs a graduate program for teachers to become trained in teaching students who are deaf or hearing impaired. This training covers all modes of communication including oral/aural, total communication and sign language.
 6. Yes.
 7. The Department requires that teachers who teach students who are deaf or hearing impaired have teaching qualifications with post graduate studies in sensory impairment. This training program reflects the diverse communication and learning needs of these students.
 8.
 - a. No.
 - b. In 2008 the Department supported over 1,800 students who were deaf or hearing impaired. Three per cent of these students in NSW public schools who are deaf or hearing impaired use Auslan. These students are taught in their preferred communication mode.

- c. c & d The Department is committed to supporting all students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment. Most students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment do not use Auslan as their communication mode. The Department recognises that it is important for teachers of the deaf and hearing impaired to have training in a broad range of areas. Where a student uses Auslan their support needs are managed on a case by case basis so that the best available support is provided.
9. The Department is currently exploring with training institutions and peak interest groups a number of ways to strengthen its support services for students who are deaf or hearing impaired which reflects their specific learning needs.
 10. The review of the performance and development of teachers is by means of a Teacher Assessment and Review Schedule which is based on that described in Clause 7.1 of the Crown Employees (Teachers in Schools and TAFE and Related Employees) Salaries and Conditions Award 2006. The teacher's principal, supervisor or nominee is responsible for annually reviewing the performance and development of the teacher undertaking their work.
 11. The Department sponsors teachers to retrain as special education teachers through the Special Education Retraining Program and offers cadetships for teachers to become specialist hearing teachers. Through schools every teacher is able to access training and development relevant to their position and to the specific needs of the students they teach.
 12. The Agreement between the NSW Department of Education and Training and the NSW Teachers Federation on the Staffing of NSW Public Schools 2009-2012 is used when filling vacant classroom teacher, executive staff and principal positions. Where a position is to be filled through open advertisement, the employment list pool or service transfer pool, the school principal forms a selection panel which has the task of selecting a suitable person for the position following the Selection Panel Procedures for School Teachers 2009. The Director, Staffing Services (or nominee) may approve the inclusion of an additional panel member where there are specific needs relevant to the position or where the position is for a special education teacher or a school counsellor.
 13. The Department is committed to supporting the communication needs of all students and its policy reflects this. This includes the different approaches used in teaching students who are deaf or hearing impaired such as aural/oral, total communication, Auslan, sign language and augmentative systems.