



Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP  
Minister for Education, Training and Employment

30 APR 2014

Mr Neil Laurie  
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition 2220-14 tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Queensland on 1 April 2014 regarding the number of teaching staff in the Nursery Road Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP).

I am aware of the strong community support for the Nursery Road ECDP with 381 people signing the petition and I note their concerns regarding the staffing levels. As the petitioners would be aware, there are two ECDPs currently operating at the Nursery Road Special School campus; these are Nursery Road ECDP and Xavier Special Education Program.

With regard to teacher numbers at the Nursery Road ECDP, the Department of Education, Training and Employment is committed to allocating staffing resources to ensure that all students are supported to achieve quality educational outcomes. As such, I can confirm that the teacher allocation in the *Prior to Prep Program* for Nursery Road ECDP has remained the same from 2013 to 2014, at 2.2 full time equivalent (FTE) teachers.

As part of appropriately allocating teacher and teacher-aide resources my Department also takes into consideration any changes to enrolments and the eligibility criteria per child, based on the age of each child. I understand that all of the Nursery Road ECDP *Prior to Prep Program* students attend the program on a part time basis. For the purposes of calculating resources, student numbers are converted to full time equivalent students (Student FTE).

In light of the lower enrolled Student FTE in the Nursery Road ECDP *Prior to Prep Program* from 25.1 students in 2013 to 21.5 in 2014 and the eligibility of the enrolled students, the Teacher Aide allocation in the Nursery Road ECDP *Prior to Prep Program* has reduced from 52 hours per week in 2013 to 42.2 hours per week in 2014.

With regard to the petitioners' request that funding be allocated to provide the same number of support hours per child in 2014 as was provided in 2013, I understand that Mr Wayne Butler, Assistant Director-General of my Department's State Schools – Operations, met with parents of Nursery Road ECDP on 2 April 2014. In accordance with Mr Butler's advice to parents during the meeting, my Department has further explored funding options in the *Prior to Prep Programs* for students with disabilities.

Funding is available through the Metropolitan Region to support students in their transitioning to Prep Year. I am advised that Ms Shauna St George, Principal of Nursery Road Special School will arrange for parents to be informed of this process and the specific steps she will undertake to access this additional funding for these students. Nursery Road ECDP will also continue to develop and implement transition plans to support students transitioning to Prep Year from the *Prior to Prep* program provided through the ECDP.

I note that the petitioners are also seeking to restore the option for eligible children to have dual access to an ECDP and the Prep year. I would like to reassure you that the Government is committed to providing opportunities for all students with disability to achieve and reach their potential.

The Department funds ECDPs to provide early intervention to help children get ready for their first year of schooling. ECDPs do not provide a Prep program as the Prep Year is now included in the Australian Curriculum, and is recognised as the first year of schooling in Queensland

All students are entitled to 26 semesters of state education – with the first semester commencing when a student enrolls in Prep. It is therefore important for all students, including students with disability, to participate fully in the Prep year alongside their peers.

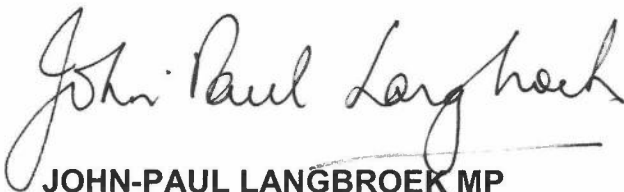
Students with a disability who are enrolled in Prep are able to access an array of support and services within their local school to assist them to access, participate and succeed in their first year of schooling. This may include access to: specialist teachers with disability expertise through either a special education program or advisory visiting teacher service; guidance officers; speech-language pathologists; literacy and numeracy support teachers; and behaviour support teachers.

The support and services assist classroom teachers to develop and deliver the student's educational program and ensure students with disability are able to access and participate in the curriculum on the same basis as their peers.

School principals work in close partnership with parents and specialist staff to address the specific learning needs of students. I encourage parents to talk to the principal of their child's school regarding the support options available and the reasonable adjustments required to ensure their child's educational program is tailored to meet their specific learning needs.

I would like to thank petitioners for raising this matter with me and for their commitment to promoting the interests of children with special needs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John-Paul Langbroek". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**JOHN-PAUL LANGBROEK MP**  
**Minister for Education, Training and Employment**