



The Honourable Rod Welford MP



**Queensland
Government**

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

9 NOV 2007

Minister for Education and Training
Minister for the Arts

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 11 October 2007 regarding petition 913-07 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly concerning the allocation of teachers to one-teacher schools.

One-teacher schools are generally resourced with teachers and teacher aides at a level that is more generous than larger schools in recognition of their multi-age context. For example, one-teacher schools are staffed at an overall ratio of one teacher for every 25 students, which is a more generous ratio than for larger primary schools.

I note that the petitioners also express concern that the new Prep Year would consume additional teacher time.

Prior to the introduction of the Prep Year in 2007, the department spent four years conducting trials and phase-ins of prep students in a number of schools. During this time, the needs of prep students were examined to establish the level of support to be provided to students of this age. Small schools comprised approximately 15 per cent of the schools in these trials.

During the trials, the department worked with small schools to develop curriculum and planning strategies. Additionally, a principal from a small school was engaged to work with other principals to ensure Prep planning, curriculum design and management activities were able to be successfully implemented in small schools.

Teacher aides provide in-class support to teachers to maximise teaching and learning. During the Prep trials, appropriate levels of teacher aide time to assist teachers involved with prep students were determined. The prep teacher aide allocation model that is now in place was agreed to by the unions representing teachers and teacher aides, and guarantees smaller schools at least five additional hours of teacher aide time per week for a minimum of one prep student.

The prep teacher aide allocation is in addition to the general primary teacher aide allocation, which is also weighted so that smaller schools receive, on average, more hours of teacher aide time per week per classroom teacher than in larger primary schools.

In summary, the current approach to allocating both teachers and teacher aides takes due consideration of the particular needs of students in small schools and has been appropriately adjusted with the commencement of the Prep Year in 2007.

I trust this information provides answers to the concerns outlined in the petition.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

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