



PUBLIC



Hon Giz Watson MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations
GPO Box A11
PERTH WA 6837

Dear Ms Watson

I wish to clarify information provided at the Department of Education 2012/13 Budget Estimates hearing held on 5 June 2012.

As you may recall, a quick calculation was done on the day in an attempt to ascertain the number of students who fall into the 'At Risk – Severe' category of attendance. A figure of 11 000 students was provided to the Committee. I have sought further clarification from my Department, and I can now offer the following information, together with an explanation for the disparity.

The total number of students used in the calculation during the hearing was based on a census figure for all students K-12 (i.e. non-compulsory and compulsory years). Attendance data reported by the Department of Education, however:

- relates only to students in Years 1-12 (and does not include students in non-compulsory Kindergarten and Pre Primary);
- does not include students in schools such as Canning and Tuart Colleges, SIDE, Schools of the Air and Hospital School Services; and
- excludes students on the Participation List.

The 'At Risk – Severe' category refers to students with less than 60% attendance, not 50% as stated in the hearing. The percentage of students whose attendance falls within the 'At Risk – Severe' category is 3.41% (not 4.27%). The initial calculation of 4.27% incorrectly included students across the State for whom the Western Australian Institute for Deaf Education (WAIDE) provides services. These students were identified as 0% attendance when, in reality, their attendance is recorded in their home school.

Therefore, the correct number of students in the 'At Risk – Severe' category, as the Semester 1, 2011 Student Attendance Audit, was 7 125.

Please accept my apologies for any confusion caused.

Yours sincerely

SHARYN O'NEILL
DIRECTOR GENERAL

25 JUN 2012