



**Queensland
Government**

18 OCT 2005

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

Office of the
**Minister for Education and
Minister for the Arts**

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 25 August forwarding petition No. 520-05 which was lodged on 24 August 2005 by Ms Jan-Maree McGregor representing the concerns of parents in relation to the implementation of the Preparatory Year in Queensland state schools.

The Preparatory Year is a major educational initiative to be provided on a full time basis in all schools from 2007. Prep is not compulsory and parents may choose to send their children to other non-school programs, like child care, prior to attending school if they believe this is the best option for them.

As you may also be aware, I have recently announced a new teacher aide allocation from 2007.

The allocation of additional teacher aide staff is designed specifically to support the Prep Year from 2007 and allocates more teacher aide time than allocated for the Prep Year trial.

This new teacher aide allocation model is based on enrolment. It also allocates hours to the early years (Prep to Year 3) to allow teacher aides to be used flexibly to support prep students, particularly during the early part of the school year.

The prep facilities at Milton State School include a new double space classroom building, which occupies the last remaining building space at the school. Additionally, based on increased enrolments, a single classroom refurbishment will be provided in an adjacent classroom block on the first floor.

Access to the toilets and play areas was considered in siting of the facilities. In view of the enrolment planning issue and space concerns, the prep team senior auditor is planning to visit the school with the Regional Executive Director and Regional Facilities Manager later in the year to discuss these matters.

Schools will also receive an establishment grant to support the acquisition of curriculum resources to support the introduction of prep. The Queensland Association of State School Principals, who represent principals of state schools, were involved in consultations on how we would allocate \$15m for this purpose. A thoroughly researched list of recommended curriculum resources is available to schools to assist them in purchasing appropriate resources and equipment.

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Our government acknowledges that any change to the current education system means a significant adjustment for the community and schools. The aim of the reforms to early childhood education is to improve the opportunities, the learning experiences and the achievements of all Queensland children. I trust this information provides answers to the concerns outlined in petition No 520-05.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

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