

Question on notice no:	1
PAEC Transcript page reference:	p.11

QUESTION

Please advise how the Department monitors school councils, as opposed to school principals.

RESPONSE

The Department has a range of legislative and policy frameworks relating to school councils. This includes the establishment of a school council through a Ministerial Order made under section 2.3.2 of the *Education Training and Reform Act 2006*. This Order constitutes a school council as a body corporate, specifies the council's membership size and configuration, functions and accountabilities and the role of its executive officer who is the principal. School council elections are held each year and the Department monitors the completion and declaration of school council membership for all school councils.

School councils have a key role in working with the school leadership on strategic planning as part of the school's improvement cycle and ensure that these reflect the Departmental guidelines and community expectations. All schools must provide the Department with Annual Reports that have been endorsed by school councils. These reports enable schools to meet legislative and regulatory requirements under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and the National Education Agreement 2008. School councils also participate in a range of audits and reviews conducted by the Department including the School Council Financial Audit Program and School Internal Audits.

Resources to support school councils

The Department provides advice and support materials for school councils to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities as well as to build capacity. This information is publicly available. See: [School Councils](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx) (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx>)

In addition to the information currently available, the Department is developing a suite of further support materials, specifically related to skills and expertise on councils. This includes the recently developed *School Council Skills and Expertise Guide* which is available online and can be accessed from the Department's School Council website, see: [School Councils](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx) (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx>). The *School Council Skills and Expertise Guide* outlines the desired skills and expertise required for effective governance. It has been developed to assist school councils to identify the skills and expertise that will contribute to an effective school council as well as determining the desired skills and expertise that will be used to inform co-opting a community member to council.

Training

To further support school councillors in understanding their roles and responsibilities, the Department makes available a School Council Training Program for government school councils and

has greater oversight over school council training. Training is delivered in governance, president induction, strategic planning and finance.

Attendees at training sessions receive a participant's handbook i.e. *Improving School Governance* material. This material is available online on the Department's school council website as a reference, see: [School Councils](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx) (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx>). This site also provides access to the *Improving School Governance* online training which is available for self-paced learning.

From Term 3, 2015 to Term 1, 2016 training across the four *Improving School Governance* modules has been delivered to 2,670 school councillors representing 652 schools.

These initiatives have been made available through a State/Commonwealth *Independent Public Schools Initiative* agreement to build capacity of school councils.

Question on notice no:	2
PAEC Transcript page reference:	p.14

QUESTION

Please provide a list of the members of the Department of Education and Training's IBAC integrity committee.

RESPONSE

The Department of Education and Training's redesigned committee structure provides an enhanced foundation for good governance. This structure brings stronger leadership, more efficient and effective decision-making and greater accountability and transparency to the Department.

The Integrity Committee supports the Secretary in providing oversight and assurance that the actions and activities undertaken by employees are conducted with integrity. The Committee supports staff in Department offices and schools to understand and uphold the highest standards of integrity and public trust, and to resist corruption.

The names of the members of the Integrity Committee (as at 19 May 2016) are:

Position	Member
Secretary (Chair)	Ms Gill Callister
Deputy Secretary, People and Executive Services Group	Ms Kate Rattigan (Acting)
Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Finance Services Group	Ms Jenny Atta
Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group	Mr Bruce Armstrong
Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and School Education Group	Ms Katy Haire
Assistant Deputy Secretary, VET Reform	Ms Lee Watts
Executive Director, Organisation Reform	Mr Alex Kamenev
Executive Director, Integrity and Assurance Division (Chief Audit Executive)	Ms Melissa Dwyer (Acting)
Director, Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority	Ms Lynn Glover
Regional Director, South-Eastern Victoria	Mr Steve Gneil
Chair, Portfolio Audit and Risk Committee (independent member)	Ms Fiona Bennett
Independent member with integrity expertise	Mr Neville Tiffen (formerly Rio Tinto, Transparency International Australia)
Independent member with integrity expertise	Holly Lindsay (formerly BHP Billiton, Transparency International Australia)
	Vacant position as of 19 May 2016

Question on notice no:	3
PAEC Transcript page reference:	p.23

QUESTION

Regarding the new governance model for training of school councils:

- a. How does the turnover of councils affect the regularity of training?
- b. Please provide further information about how support and training for school councils and others was addressed in the Bracks review.

RESPONSE

Part A: Turnover of School Councils and Regularity of Training

A Ministerial Order made under section 2.3.2 of *the Education Training and Reform Act 2006* constitutes a school council as a body corporate and specifies the council's membership size and configuration, the functions of the council and the powers it requires to perform its functions.

School council elections must be completed by 31 March each year. The term of office for school councillors is 2 years. 50% of each membership category turns over annually, members at the end of their 2 year term retire or stand for re-election.

School councillors are volunteers and generously make themselves available usually after hours to actively contribute to and participate in their school community. School councillors bring a range of knowledge, experience, skills and expertise to council.

The Department provides advice and support materials for school councils to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities as well as to build capacity. This information is publicly available. See: [School Councils](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx) (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx>)

To further support school councillors in understanding their roles and responsibilities, the Department makes available a School Council Training Program for government school councils and has greater oversight over school council training. Two training providers coordinate and deliver face-to-face training to government school council members and school councils across the State. The Department's school council training package *Improving School Governance* material is used for training. Training is delivered in governance, president induction, strategic planning and finance. Each module is a 2 hour training session. This material also provides further references to key Departmental policy advice and guidance. The Department's website also provides public access to the *Improving School Governance* online training for self-paced learning.

Training is offered at no cost to schools. Schools and school councils are encouraged by the Department to contact the training providers and organise training to meet their needs at a convenient location. This can occur at any time and all school councillors, regardless of how long they have served on school, are encouraged to undertake training each school year.

Part B: Support and Training for School Councils in Bracks Review

The Bracks Review makes three recommendations in relation to school councils: broadening of school council membership to provide greater community oversight (Rec 17); greater support to school councils, through improved information and training, and the appointment of members with strategic management expertise (Rec 25); and enhanced support and advice to school councils by Regional Area Directors (Rec 20).

The Department is currently developing a response to these recommendations, building on extensive work already underway in relation to information, training and supports for school councils about their role and responsibilities and support effective school governance.

It is anticipated that the Government's formal response to the Bracks Review will be released in mid-2016.

Question on notice no:	4
PAEC Transcript page reference:	p.26

QUESTION

With regard to immunisations, please advise:

- a. Whether employees of the Department working in Victorian Government schools are required to be immunised; and
- b. Numbers of non-immunised people working in schools by region.

RESPONSE

Part A: Immunisation of Department employees working in Government schools

There is no requirement for **teachers** to be immunised as part of their registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

There are no provisions requiring Victorian **employees** to be immunised in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. There is also no requirement for **Victorian government school teachers** to be immunised as a condition of their employment contained in Ministerial Order 199 of the *Education Training and Reform Act 2006* or the *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2013*.

Government immunisation requirements are focussed on getting children immunised according to the childhood immunisation schedule and protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Young children are more susceptible to some of the most virulent vaccine-preventable diseases and are most at risk of hospitalisation, serious illness, disability or death if they contract these diseases. This is why most vaccinations are given in the first two years of life.

If children are up-to-date with their vaccinations, it minimises the risk of them catching and spreading these diseases no matter where they go in the community. According to the Chief Health Officer, 'this is the best way to protect everyone in the community'. Childhood immunisation programs are proven to be one of the most successful and effective public health interventions.

However, the Government encourages all adults to take advantage of appropriate vaccinations and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) encourage all people working with children to consider being immunised, in particular against:

- Pertussis (whooping cough);
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella;
- Chicken pox;
- Seasonal Influenza;
- Hepatitis A; and
- Hepatitis B.

DET has procedures in place to support immunisation of teachers, including reimbursement from the Employee Safety and Wellbeing Unit for Hepatitis A and B immunisations for eligible employees. Eligible staff are certified first aid officers with current Level II certificates who are in specialist settings or employees who work in rural and remote Indigenous communities.

Where a school believes that other categories of employees should be immunised, the school council may decide to fund employee immunisation as part of a local workplace health and wellbeing program.

Individual Victorian government schools are expected to undertake a range of activities to support preventive health approaches including minimising risks of contracting infectious diseases, which may include immunisation of staff.

Exclusion in the case of infectious disease outbreak

Workplaces are legislatively bound by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* which requires them to comply with the directions of the Chief Health Officer or Public Health Authorised Officers in the event of a public health risk such as an infectious disease outbreak.

In the event of an outbreak of measles or influenza (where the Secretary of DHHS deems it necessary), staff who are not vaccinated may be excluded from the workplace for:

- Measles - excluded until 14 days after the 1st day of rash in the infected person they have been in contact with.
- Influenza - not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary for Health (such as occurred during the Swine Flu epidemic of 2009).

The Chief Health Officer of DHHS may recommend exclusion for other communicable diseases based on an assessment of public health risk.

The *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2013* contains a provision for paid leave where an employee's duties expose him or her to the risk of contracting an infectious disease and a medical practitioner approved by the Employer certifies that by reason of contact with a person suffering from an infectious disease and through the operation of restrictions imposed by law in respect of such disease, an employee is unable to attend work.

Part B: Number of non-immunised people

There is no centralised vaccine register for adults and DET does not currently collect data on the immunisation status of Victorian school staff.

Question on notice no:	5
PAEC Transcript page reference:	p. 26

QUESTION

Please advise:

- a. How many recorded incidents of physical and/or emotional assault are perpetrated against teachers or support staff by their colleagues; and
- b. The cost to the Department in terms of payments to staff for either personal leave, termination payments or other payments, including civil or industrial relations claims.

RESPONSE

Part A: Recorded incidents of physical and/or emotional assault

- There were no recorded incidents of assault by a teacher or school staff member against another teacher or school staff member in the Department’s Incident Reporting Information System.
- The Department’s Security Services Unit (SSU) provides a single reference point for schools to report emergencies and other critical incidents. All incident notifications are held electronically by SSU in the Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS). School staff are required to notify SSU of reportable incidents for entry into IRIS.
- The content of an individual IRIS entry is unconfirmed information provided by a school staff member, and therefore is not conclusive evidence. Subsequent investigation may establish that a notification was unfounded; however, the report of the incident remains on the system.

Part B: Cost to the Department

- In terms of costs to the Department for incidents of assault against a teacher or school staff member, the below table details workers compensation benefits paid to employees (please note these figures are for assault related claims only).

Financial Year	Sum of weekly workers compensation benefits paid on standard claims
2012-13	\$664,962
2013-14	\$736,724
2014-15	\$169,203
2015-16 (as of 30 April 2016)	\$115,210

- The data is as at 30 April 2016 and is sourced from the Victorian Workcover Authority database. It relates to claims data as reported in the Department’s annual report.
- It should be noted that these costs are paid by the Department’s insurer, rather than the Department itself.

- This cost does not include the Department's Workcover premium.
- In terms of legal claims for teacher assault claims, in 2015 and 2016 there have been only two incidents that have incurred costs to the Department, with the total approximate cost of these incidents being \$832,500.
- The Department does not have records of the cost of personal leave or termination payments as a result of incidents of assault against teachers or school staff.

Question on notice no:	6
PAEC Transcript page reference:	p. 38

QUESTION

If available, please provide data for the last year on absenteeism disaggregated on a school, LGA or departmental region level.

RESPONSE

A geospatial representation of the 2015 government school attendance data (extracted 19 May 2016) that identifies levels of student attendance by Local Government Area is provided on the following page. The three LGA's with the highest reported absenteeism in 2015 were Central Goldfields, Northern Grampians and Colac-Otway. It should be noted however that both the number and profile of school types in any LGA can have a significant impact on the average rate of absenteeism, so data for LGA's with small numbers of schools should be interpreted with caution.

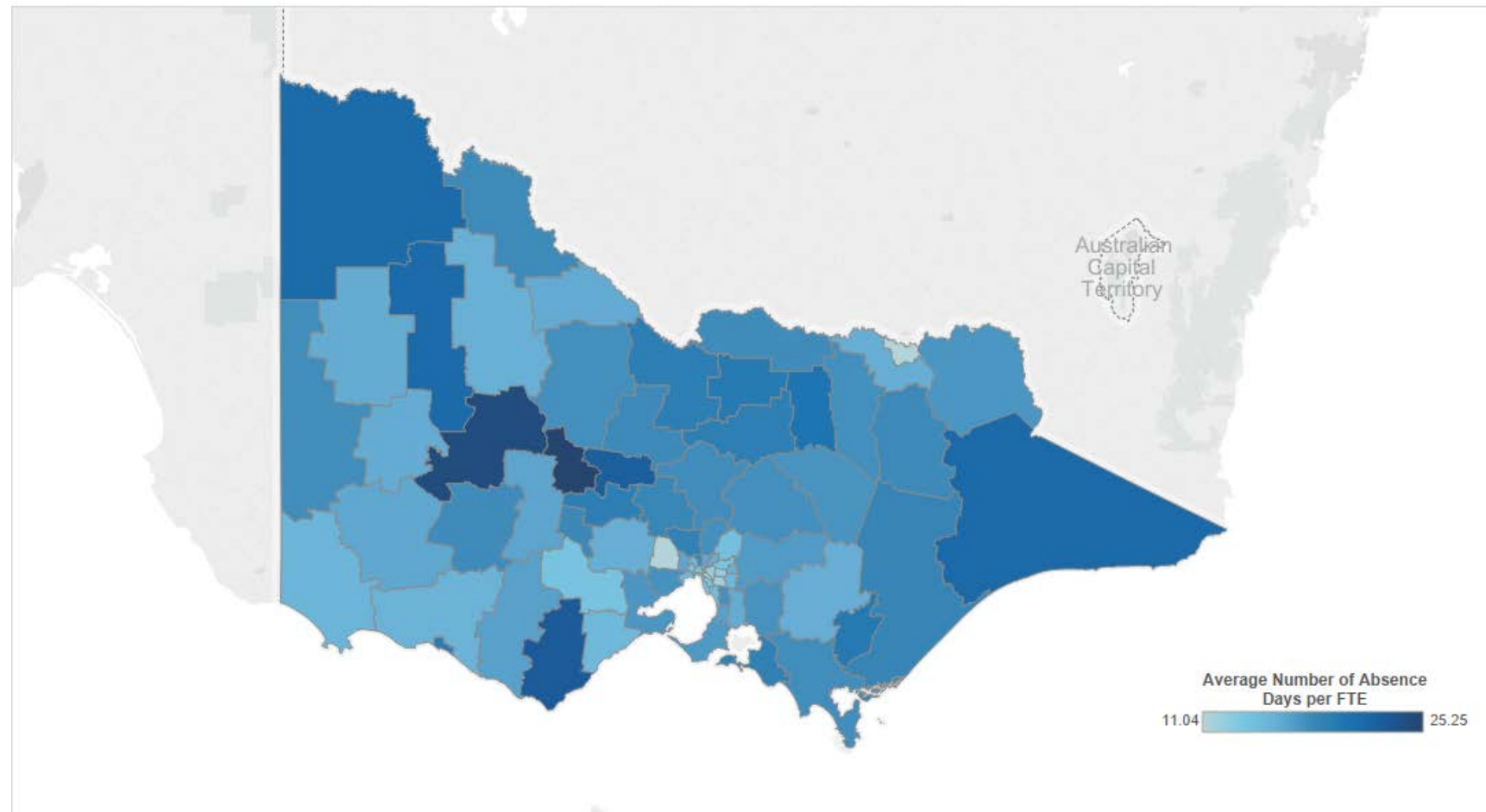
In response to this and other student engagement data, government has invested in a number of initiatives to engage all learners in schooling, including funding to increase the Student Resource Package loadings for disadvantaged students and to deliver on the government's Education State commitments to establish the LOOKOUT Education Support Centres and pilot eight Navigator services to provide assertive outreach, follow-up, advocacy, and pathway planning to support to young people aged 12 to 17 years requiring intensive support to overcome barriers to learning and re-engage with education.

Average Absence Days per FTE by LGA for 2015

Select Calendar Year:
2015

Select LGA:
All

Pre 2012 figures are based on aggregated school-level data submitted to DET (of which State figures were published in the School Level Reports). School data in DataZone reports 'Student Absences – Days per Full-Time Equivalent' and 'Student Absences by Absence Type' are sourced directly from CASES21 and will not sum to the figures shown here. Schools have been advised to refer to their School Level Reports for absence data prior to 2012 for Annual Report and School Review purposes.



Question on notice no:	7
PAEC Transcript page reference:	p.38

QUESTION

Please indicate if the Department is aware of gang culture infiltrating schools in Victoria, together with any action the Department is taking to combat this.

RESPONSE

The Department does not collect data on gang-related violence in schools.

The Department is not aware of any anecdotal data that would suggest gang culture is increasing in schools. The Department has engaged in a number of proactive initiatives to lessen the possibility of such an increase.

Education and community engagement are essential components of a long-term response to the issue of gang violence.

The Victorian Government has committed \$25 million over four years as part of the Social Cohesion and Community Resilience Taskforce to develop a whole-of-community evidence-based approach to enhancing social cohesion and community resilience and to counter all forms of violent extremism.

The Department works closely with key government agencies including the Community Resilience Unit and Victoria Police on issues involving young people and violence.

A number of new Education State initiatives are being implemented that focus on developing social cohesion and supporting at-risk young people.

For example, new subjects have been introduced into the Victorian Curriculum that will encourage healthy and respectful relationships, and foster intercultural understanding through learning about global cultures, ethics and traditions.

Education State programs to support at-risk young people by increasing their engagement in learning and work include:

- The Navigator Service to enable schools and community agencies working in local areas to provide wrap-around support for disengaged school-aged young people;
- Mentoring programs that expand horizons and strengthen students’ connections with the world of work and future study;
- Lookout Centres to address the unique combination of challenges that face children and young people in Out of Home Care in their education and training.

Schools have well-developed and effective processes in place to deal with any inappropriate behaviour by students. If antisocial behaviour escalates, schools can refer incidents to Victoria

Police for action. The Department is working with Victoria Police to implement processes to support schools if any incidents occur.