

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Parliamentary Inquiry into Victorian Auditor-General's Report No. 253: Managing School Infrastructure (2017)

QUESTION ON NOTICE:

Mr D O'BRIEN: A very quick one. Is there empirical evidence of better infrastructure better education? I would be happy for you to take it on notice.

Ms ATTA: There have been a range of studies that have looked at that to see to what degree or how better designed infrastructure can support learning outcomes. Can you say a little bit to that?

Mr KEATING: Yes. We can certainly provide some academic research that does that long-term analysis, but it does. Condition is part of it, but a big part of it is really understanding the way that teachers teach and what the most effective teaching practices are. So having a very strong connection to pedagogy and making sure the architects understand what cutting-edge educational practice looks like. That at times is challenging with communities, because you see more team teaching and more collective work being done by teachers. That means you have more open spaces and for a lot of parents when they come into schools the schools do not look the way they did when they went to school. So there is a lot of work we do with communities to explain—

Mr D O'BRIEN: Fashion is big in education. Things change in fashion and—

Ms ATTA: We all know good teaching can happen in a shed, but if you have a well-designed facility that the people want to be in that takes account of modern teaching practices, that is welcoming for the school community beyond just students et cetera, that has competition-grade sporting facilities, has performing arts facilities wherever possible, certainly the qualitative feedback from school communities is resounding on the difference that that can make.

Mr KEATING: We did a major body of work with Melbourne University about two and a half years ago to look at all the spaces that we provide for, looking at the current Victorian curriculum, looking at international best practice to really shape all of our space-to-student ratios and design standards, so we have got a very current kind of basis on which we design our schools.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Just an extension of that, I guess, in recent years there has been a lot of extra stuff placed on schools, so breakfast in schools, lunch in schools, doctors in schools, mental health in schools, dentists in schools, all those sorts of things. Has that had an impact on the infrastructure needs? Or has it largely been accommodated within existing facilities?

Mr KEATING: It has. For a number of those programs where schools have not had the right types of spaces, particularly for mental health in schools for students—having discrete, soundproofed areas where kids can go and do consultations—we have then worked with schools to put in purpose-built facilities for them, so there are some adjustments for some schools.

Mr D O'BRIEN: Has there been a dollar figure quantified on that?

Mr KEATING: There has. I think for all of those programs there has been a capital component, which we provide afterwards. I think for every single one of those there was a level of infrastructure building support.

Mr D O'BRIEN: If we could have that on notice, that would be great.

REPLY:

Link between infrastructure and student outcomes

The literature consistently shows that design principles have an impact on a student's ability to learn. Design factors around sound, thermal comfort, illumination all have a direct impact on student outcomes. The literature also identifies that teachers have stronger student engagement when facilities are well designed.

Please find below a list of literature that explores the link between school infrastructure and student outcomes.

Building Educational Success Together (BEST) (2006), "Growth and Disparity: A Decade of U.S. Public School Construction", BEST.

Maxwell, L.E. (1999), "School Building Renovation and Student Performance: One District's Experience", Council of Educational Facility Planners, Scottsdale.

Phillips, R. (1997), "Educational Facility Age and the Academic Achievement of Upper Elementary School Students", PhD dissertation, University of Georgia.

Kolber, Steven. (2019). Teachers' career intentions, school facilities and resources. Graduate Certification, ResearchGate

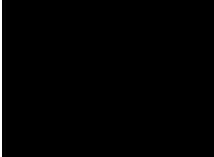
Jago, E. and K. Tanner (1999), "Influence of the School Facility on Student Achievement: Lighting; Color", Department of Educational Leadership, University of Georgia.

Doctors in schools and Essential facilities for Mental Health in schools

In relation to the *Doctors in Schools* and *Essential facilities for Mental Health in schools*, the Department can confirm that both programs had a capital component.

In 2016-17 the Government allocated \$18 million in the State Budget for the Doctors in Schools program to build consultation rooms for up to 100 secondary schools. ***Doctors in Schools (State-Wide) - \$18 million (Page 30, 2016-17 Budget Paper 4)***

In 2019-20 the Government allocated \$3 million in the State Budget for the Essential facilities for Mental Health in schools program to provide private and dedicated spaces for the rollout of new mental health counselling services for secondary students. ***Essential facilities for Mental Health in schools (State-Wide) - \$3 million (Page 28, 2019-20 Budget Paper 4)***



Chris Keating
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian School Building Authority
Department of Education and Training