



The following information has been prepared by AISV to assist Member Schools to understand the Australian Government's accountability requirements as set down in the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together - Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004* and associated regulations. The information contained represents AISV's understanding of the legislative requirements and may be subject to change, particularly with respect to target dates. AISV will update this document as further information and advice becomes available.

Background

Independent schools receive funding from the Australian Government under the [Schools Assistance \(Learning Together – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity\) Act 2004](#) subject to conditions which are set out in the Act. To receive funding, the school must sign a funding agreement with DEST covering the 2005-2008 quadrennium. Please note that in some cases, the Funding Agreement is between DEST and the school system authority. The Funding Agreement encompasses both financial and educational accountability.

The following is a detailed summary of the requirements related to Student Reporting as set out in the Act, associated regulations and communications with the Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training. in the funding agreement.

Student reports

Under the *Australian Government Programmes for Schools Quadrennial Administrative Guidelines 2005 to 2008*, all education authorities are required to make a commitment to ensure that in 2006 each school gives the parents or guardians of each child undertaking Years 1 to 10 student reports on the child that:

- (a) use plain language and are able to be readily understood by the parents, guardians or other persons who have care and control of the child;
- (b) are timely and given at least twice in any programme year;
- (c) give an accurate and objective assessment of the child's progress and achievement, including an assessment of the child's achievement:
 - (i) against national standards, if such standards are available; and
 - (ii) relative to the performance of the child's peer group at the school;
- (d) are confidential and deal with the child's academic and non-academic learning;
- (e) are followed by an opportunity for the child and the parents or guardians of the child to meet with the child's teachers to discuss all aspects of the report, and for the school to give constructive advice about supporting the child's further progress at school.

Further detail pertaining to the use of **grades** and **quartile bands** has been made available under recently promulgated regulation.

Grades - reports are required to provide an assessment against achievement levels or bands that must be labelled as A, B, C, D, E or an equivalent and should be clearly defined against specific learning standards for all subjects studied.

Comparative Reporting – In meeting its requirements under the Regulations, a school must use one of the following approaches to report student achievement relative to the child's peer group:

- a report that includes a child's achievement relative to the achievement of the child's peer group at the school by at least quartile bands. The peer group in a school is all children undertaking the same year level as the child, or;

- include a clear statement similar to the following
'You can ask the school to provide you with written information that clearly shows your child's achievement in the subjects studied in comparison to that of other children in the child's peer group at the school. This information will show you which 25 percent of his/her peer group your child is performing', or;
- written information on the student reports that shows the number of students achieving grades A-E, or;
- include a clear statement similar to the following
'You can ask the school to provide you with written information that clearly shows your child's achievement in the subjects studied in comparison to that of other children in the child's peer group at the school. This information will show you the number of students in each of the achievement levels A-E', or;
- in the case of students with disabilities, parents may be provided with a report of their child's progress against their individual learning programme (or equivalent).

The Minister has advised that where parents have philosophical objections to comparisons being made between their child and others in the child's peer group at the school, individual parents may notify the school in writing of their wish to withdraw their child from comparative reporting.

In relation to reporting in small classes, it is expected that information will be presented in a way that does not interfere with the privacy of that child or of other children in the class or school.

Further information

Schools Assistance (Learning Together - Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004, available at:

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au>

Schools Assistance Regulations 2005, available at:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/Schools_Assistance_Regulations_2005.htm

Australian Government Programmes for Schools Quadrennial Administrative Guidelines 2005 to 2008, available at:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/quadrennial_administrative_guidelines_2005_2008.htm