



Wyatt concerns on education

• Education

BY HAMISH HASTIE

Member for Victoria Park and shadow treasurer Ben Wyatt said public school principals were coming to him with concerns over the recent State Government education budget changes.

The Department of Education said schools shouldn't be concerned because the changes only ensured resources would be used more effectively.

Mr Wyatt said he had spoken to various principals, who were furious by the decision to reduce funding for school support program resource allocation (SSPRA) fund by 30 per cent.

The fund was used for literacy, numeracy, English as a second language, behaviour management and discipline strategy support programs.

"The principals are still trying to get the details of the funding

but I'm hearing average cuts across my primary schools are in the order of between \$60,000 and \$80,000 both in terms of cash and in terms of loss of staff," Mr Wyatt said.

"Where that will manifest itself I think principals are still trying to work that through."

Mr Wyatt said it would have greatest impact on schools with high numbers of students needing support.

"It's just extraordinary that the Government would cut the funding for such an important program that will affect not just those students that need extra support but it would have an impact on all classrooms," he said.

"This will in the long run have a dramatic impact on the provision of education in Western Australia and also further widen the gap between public schools and private schools."

A Department of Education spokesperson



Member for Victoria Park and shadow treasurer Ben Wyatt shared his concerns with school principals over education budget cuts. Photograph — Matt Devlin.

said the changes they were making in 2014 were part of a transition to a new student-centered funding model in 2015, which was designed to ensure the most effective use of resources for the benefit of students.

She said schools could use their State Government grant payments to ensure support services would not be affected by the cut to the fund.

"The department provides funds to schools annually, the majority of which should be used during that year to meet the educational

needs of students," she said.

"Schools receive SSPRA funding in addition to the school grant to support students in areas such as behaviour, attendance, and literacy and numeracy."

"Schools have the flexibility to purchase additional resources or staff to put in place programs that meet the specific needs of students."

The State School Teachers Union threatened the State Government with industrial action if it did not reverse the cuts.