

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **GRANT AIDED SCHOOLS: GRANTS (P.72/2011) – AMENDMENT (P.72/2011 Amd.) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 7th June 2011  
by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

Firstly, I would like to advise members that I cannot support Senator Shenton's proposition as it is flawed, and I will be urging members to reject it. A more detailed comment on Senator Shenton's proposition has already been published, and I will confine these comments to the amendment that has been brought by Deputy de Sousa. One of the main virtues of Deputy de Sousa's amendment is that it does not seek to distinguish between the fee-paying and non-fee-paying sectors.

I fully support the aim of this amendment and the sentiments expressed by Deputy De Sousa, who has recognised the extremely valuable range of services provided by the non-fee-paying sector. These operate on the principle of inclusion across the ability range, and make full provision for students with Special Needs. As Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, I have an obligation under the Education (Jersey) Law 1999 to *'ensure that there is available to every child of compulsory school age a full time education appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude'*.

Senator Shenton's proposition, if adopted, would effectively increase the pressure on our States schools to deliver reductions in expenditure, whilst the fee-paying sector would be exempt from savings. This would only serve to heighten the division between the 2 sectors.

I believe that it is unfair to target one school group or sector in this way, and would place me in conflict with my duty to provide a good standard of education to all children of school age, and not just to those in the fee-paying sector.

Account also needs to be given to the context in which the current spending proposals have been advanced. The non-fee-paying sector has been the subject of significant spending reductions over the last 10 years, and over the coming years it will be required to make further savings of approximately 10%.

The fee-paying sector, in contrast, has not been asked to make major savings over the same period, and it is only fair that it should also be expected to play its part. Education, Sport and Culture is required to make £11.1 million in savings across its services, and I do not believe the fee-paying sector should be exempt from this process.

In recent months, there has been a divisive debate about fee-paying and non-fee-paying education, with ill-founded statements being made about examination results in our 11–16 schools, drawing from narrow measures of assessment that do not properly reflect the context in which our Island schools are operating.

Following further discussions with the Council of Ministers, an extended period of 5 years has been agreed for both the fee-paying and non-fee-paying schools.

The States schools have, over many years, demonstrated their willingness to participate in expenditure reductions where appropriate. It is now time for the fee-paying schools to play their part.

Deputy De Sousa's amendment will provide a degree of fairness and equity to the debate. It is absolutely right that we take this opportunity to give a clear signal to our States schools that their contribution to the Island's education is equally as important as fee-paying schools and is valued by this Assembly.

**Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]**

Due to the need to discuss the amendment with other parties, the comment was not approved by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture until Monday morning.