

**2.15 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding reforms to the tertiary sector and the reduction of grants to the fee-paying provided sector:**

Does the Minister's announcement of reforms to the tertiary sector mean that plans to reduce grants to the fee-paying provided sector, proposed by his predecessor, have now been abandoned?

**The Deputy of St. John (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):**

The department has not announced reforms of the tertiary sector. What is taking place is a 2-year review of Highlands and Hautlieu with the aim of achieving closer collaboration for the benefit of students. No outcomes have yet been identified. A statement was issued last week regarding a revised set of C.S.R. savings for E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture) for the period to 2016. The Deputy will have noted that the reduction in States grants to fee-paying schools is no longer included. Besides that the 2 issues are not connected.

**2.15.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

In response to written question 8 earlier, the Minister says that this review of Highlands and Hautlieu is to take advantage of any opportunities to give students a wider choice and better educational outcomes. If he accepts that for Hautlieu and Highlands, does he not equally accept that for the fee-paying sector, and that to make real savings and give a wider choice and better outcomes he would be better off looking at the possibility of provision of a single post-16 centre on this Island?

**The Deputy of St. John:**

I think that was about 3 questions there. Could we take them one at a time? I think the first part was whether the fee-paying sector needs reform, correct? I will address that. The recent consultation exercise that was carried out did not give any clear or definite wish from the public that there would be major changes to our education system in general. The question of grant cuts to fee-paying schools, as the Deputy knows, would have to be brought back to the States Assembly under P.72 in any case. So the question of potential changes to grant cuts is not on the agenda, as far as I am concerned, until 2016. Nevertheless there is no reason why a future Minister or a proposition from a Back-Bench Member of the Assembly could not bring something to the States as a proposal for debate but I am not proposing to do that, certainly at this stage. I think there was a second part to the Deputy's question?

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Minister not consider that the provision of a single post-16 centre would be (a) financially efficient, and (b) provide a better outcome for our students, a single centre, post-16?

**The Deputy of St. John:**

No I do not necessarily think that it will and that is not on the agenda at the moment.

**2.15.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

Would the Minister confirm that if grants to fee-paying schools were reduced by more than a small margin the effect would be that parents of children from the schools would, in fact, be subsidising the non-fee-paying schools?

**The Deputy of St. John:**

I think any grant cuts are synonymous. I have said this in the public domain and I will say it again, in my mind grant cuts are synonymous with fee increases in the fee-paying schools and in my opinion that would hit a sector of the community particularly that has already suffered in terms of personal tax increases through 20 means 20 and other taxation measures.

**2.15.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I hope I am not stretching this too far but if we are avoiding those reductions in grants to the fee-paying schools, does the Minister recall, as I am sure he does, that thanks to former Deputy De Sousa we also agreed there would be no cuts to States schools and is he still committed to that even-handedness, basically can he give me those assurances?

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Yes, I can.

**2.15.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Can the Minister confirm that he has abandoned his initial targets and fallen short from his comprehensive spending review targets by something like £3.5 million? Where is that £3.5 million saving coming from?

**The Deputy of St. John:**

It is not coming from anywhere, and, yes, I have abandoned that £3.5 million.

**2.15.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does he mean to say that we have fallen short of our £65 million target for savings?

**The Deputy of St. John:**

That is a question that needs to be answered by the Minister for Treasury.