Dear Ms Diamond,

I write in response to your letter of 3 May 2012, regarding the Local Schools, Local Decisions education reform.

The Government is committed to an education system that supports schools to respond to the individual learning needs of all NSW students. We have clearly outlined the key features of the future state for our system and will now work with staff to ensure the effective implementation of this reform over the next three to five years.

The Department will work collaboratively with the NSW Teachers Federation and I repeat my previous assurances that decisions about employment matters will only be made following negotiation with the relevant union.

I note the NSW Teachers Federation is represented on the Local Schools, Local Decisions Joint Consultative Committee. In addition, the Federation have the opportunity to discuss industrial matters relating to Local Schools, Local Decisions at regular fortnightly meetings with the Deputy Director-General Workforce Management and Systems Improvement.

You have raised a number of concerns relating to staffing matters and Local Schools, Local Decisions. In my vodcast following the announcement of the reform, I made clear my continuing commitment to a statewide staffing system including retention of incentive transfers and the tenure of teachers when appointed to a permanent position. Further I have provided assurances that the Government’s investment in education would not be reduced. The Director-General restated these commitments in her message to staff of 23 April 2012.

In relation to your specific questions I offer the following comments:

- The Government has already stated that funding to public education will not be reduced.
- Under Local Schools, Local Decisions schools and their communities will have more say over the best staffing mix to meet student needs within an enhanced school budget. The class size policy remains and is included in the current staffing agreement. We have repeatedly told the Executive of the Federation and I am on the record publicly that the class size policy remains the same.
- The Union and other stakeholder advice has been to retain a statewide transfer system. I have listened, nominated transfers and service transfers will remain a key part of future staffing arrangements.
As stated above, *Local Schools, Local Decisions* includes a statewide staffing system covering a range of transfers including incentive, nominated, compassionate and service transfers. The Institute of Teachers determines the qualification requirements of teachers and the Department of Education and Communities will only engage qualified persons as teachers.

- Permanent teachers who are nominated for transfer will be appointed to a suitable vacancy. The proposal under *Local Schools, Local Decisions* is to ensure permanent teachers remain in employment while providing schools the option to select a method of appointment more often than is currently the case.

- The Government’s *Every Student, Every School* initiative will provide support and assistance to every school in an equitable manner. I have previously advised the Executive that there will be in excess of $69m in additional funding allocated directly to schools. Details on this can be found on the DEC website https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/every-student-every-school

- Funding for most programs will be provided directly to schools so that they can make decisions about how to best meet the educational and support needs of their students.

- Mandatory hours of curriculum delivery will not change.

- The Government’s wages policy provides for salary increases of at least 2.5% per year, with additional increases available if employee related cost savings are achieved. The Department will continue to negotiate with the Federation about the increase that may apply from January 2013.

- Under *Local Schools, Local Decisions* the intention is to move to a standards based remuneration structure for classroom teachers. The detail of this will be negotiated with the Federation.

- Promotion position salaries are included in the school teachers award.

- Under LSLD we intend that there will be a new Principal classification structure that recognises school complexity, not just student enrolments.

I am concerned that I have personally raised these issues with the President and Executive of the Federation on numerous occasions and have stated the information above on the public record many times and yet the Federation has chosen to mislead its membership by continuing to raise matters that have already been addressed. Teachers are best served by clear communication about these important reforms and I will continue to use the available communication channels to ensure teachers receive accurate information about the improvements the Government is seeking for the NSW public education system.

I would be grateful if you would make this letter available to all your members.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Piccoli MP
Minister for Education