

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

Specific Education Needs Report

Jane Cunningham – Portfolio Holder, March 2022

There were no Specific Education Needs motions raised at the 2021 ICPA (WA) State Conference. However, as always, the area of Specific Education Needs remains of great importance to ICPA (WA) and its members.

At field days during the year, several parents raised issues related to students with special needs including the following:

- How do families receive help in identifying their student as having special needs (many do not understand the procedures and/or know where to start in seeking help)?
- One with a student that had been identified as likely being on the autism spectrum was then struggling with obtaining a formal diagnosis due to the lack of paediatric services in their community (Lake Grace)

The 2021/2022 year continued to be ruled by the threat of COVID-19, and as I write this report the Department of Health Western Australia has moved to the alert level of “Amber”. This level of alert prevents hospital-based therapists such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dieticians, and speech pathologists from visiting school sites to work with children.

The Department of Education continues to use the Student-Centered Funding Model (SCFM) to allocate additional funds for children with a disability, though there has been frustration with the long waits for paediatric service reports that are often required for schools to apply for these funds. Schools may seek specialist help from the following services within the Education Department of Western Australia:

- School of Special Educational Needs: Disability
- School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health
- School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory (Vision and Hearing)
- Statewide School Psychology Service
- Statewide Speech and Language Service.

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Children with exceptional abilities from country Western Australia have access to the Gifted and Talented Programs.

Children who wish to participate in a Gifted and Talented Academic, Arts or Languages Secondary Selective Programs have access to a range of options:

- participate in the Selective Academic Program Online
- attend Bunbury Senior High School or Albany Senior High School, our regional schools
- study in Perth and board at City Beach Residential College
- study in Albany and board at Albany Residential College (students must live outside Albany).

Students in regional Western Australia are not required to travel to Perth for testing. They will be allocated a testing venue within their education region based on the location of their current school.

Country testing is coordinated by Regional Assessment Coordinators who organise venues based on the location of students in their region. For more information phone the Gifted and Talented Selection Unit on (08) 9264 4307 or email gtsu@education.wa.edu.au.

SELECTIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM ONLINE

If you live in country Western Australia, your child can apply for the Selective Academic Program Online. Using computer links and innovative technology, your child can access the program without moving to Perth.

Each online program is managed by a coordinator from one of the schools. They conduct:

- mathematics and science from Perth Modern School
- humanities (english, society and environment) from Kelmscott Senior High School.

If your child will attend a public secondary school in a regional area, they will be able to access the online program.

Selection into these programs is based on the results of the Academic Selective Entrance Test.

For more information about the Selective Academic Program Online, visit the program's [website](#), email PerthModern.GTOnline@education.wa.edu.au or phone (08) 9392 6818.

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE

Country students offered a Gifted and Talented Secondary Selective Program placement are able to apply to board at [City Beach Residential College](#) or [Albany Residential College](#).

The Gifted and Talented Boarding Allowance is also available to those who do not qualify for:

- the Australian Government Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme
- a State Government Boarding Away from Home allowance

In 2021, the Gifted and Talented Boarding Allowance is valued at up to \$1,634 a year.

To find out more, phone:

City Beach Residential College on (08) 9237 7500, email citybeach.rescol@education.wa.edu.au or visit their [website](#).

Albany Residential College on (08) 9842 1007, email albany.rescol@education.wa.edu.au or visit their [website](#).

THE PRIMARY EXTENSION AND CHALLENGE (PEAC)

The Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) program is a part-time withdrawal program for upper primary school Year 5 and 6 students in public schools.

Identified students are selected to participate in differentiated programs offered in a range of delivery modes.

Delivery modes include:

- regional based PEAC centres providing a series of specialist courses or programs
- co-ordinator/s who establish courses in a range of schools and/or other sites and teachers are released to teach the courses
- allocation to schools and multi-age programs operate within schools

- online delivery of programs.

Programs focus on:

- social interaction with gifted and talented peers
- intellectual rigour and challenge
- pursuit of excellence
- development of higher order process skills
- in-depth investigations of real problems
- open-ended activities which encourage choice and negotiation
- opportunities to interact with practising experts
- students working at their own pace
- self/peer evaluation and reflection of performance.

Blanket testing of all public school Year 4 students occurs each year with individual schools testing their own students. Parents who do not wish for their children to be tested can opt out by contacting their school in writing.

PEAC programs are managed at a regional level. Contact your local Education Regional Office to find out more.