

SPECIFIC NEEDS

A 37. KINDON BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education for improved support for Rural and Remote students with disabilities, in particular, students with behavioural disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).”

Explanation:

The current model for support for students with disabilities is calculated on the number of children with a verified disability in the school. With this analysis it means that 2 children with a disability in a single class school (in an 8 student school is equivalent to 25% of the class) which are entitled to receive a visit from an SEP teacher being two times a term. This model does not provide enough support for students with additional learning needs, particularly children that have behavioural support requirements. The Department of Education need to evaluate the current model and incorporate support for all students that require additional learning needs.

CARRIED

A 38. SOUTHERN DOWNS BRANCH

“That ICPA Qld lobby the Department of Education to liaise with Queensland Health to extend the services of School-Based Youth Health Nurses (SBYHN) to primary school students in rural and remote areas to assist in supporting the mental health and wellness needs of all students at the earliest possible stage of learning.”

Explanation:

SBYHN currently work with secondary students in every state secondary school in Queensland. They are paid by the Department of Health, but work with the Department of Education through an existing MOU. SBYHN’s support students in many areas of social, emotional, and physical health. Often in rural and remote schools, they are the only health professional students can regularly access for support. School-Based Youth Health Nurses would be more effective in their roles if they were able to work with primary aged students in an early intervention/support capacity. Individual health consultations with a SBYHN could support student outcomes in any of the following areas

Healthy eating and exercise

Relationships

Personal and family problems

Feeling sad, worried and angry

Sexual health

Smoking, alcohol and other drugs

Growth and development

Promoting health and wellbeing with a “whole school approach” to support the development of healthy school environments.

Making recommendations on health resources to support curriculum, teaching and learning activities in schools.

This would lead to:

A significant health and wellbeing gains for students as they progress through their primary years, mitigating some need for support in Secondary.

Targeted help in addressing the reported increased need for support in Primary age students.

CARRIED

A 39. MOUNT ISA BRANCH OF THE AIR

“That ICPA Qld lobby relevant government departments for the provision of fiscal support to private organisations that provide allied health to rural and remote students with specific learning needs where there are insufficient or non-existent government supplied service providers to enable regularised student support to improve learning outcomes.”

Explanation:

There is a shortage of specialists to deliver services such as Speech Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy and other learning support for students in many rural and remote areas of Queensland. In Northwest Qld, some of the gap in support services has recently been filled by groups such as Outback Futures (<https://outbackfutures.org.au/>).

Families in our branch have commented that the Outback Futures program has been working very well for their situations in remote areas, where previously there was only one Speech Language Pathologist available to service the entire area (including mainstream schools), and families were unable to access the assistance they needed for their children on a regular basis (if at all). Where the Department of Education is unable to provide enough specialists who are willing to travel and offer these services regularly and effectively to all children requiring them, support should be available for programs such as Outback Futures to continue their work in addressing the learning support needs of rural and remote students.

Private organizations don't always have sufficient funding to extend their services to all areas where they are needed. At other times these groups have to reduce services due to lack of funding and no longer see students they were already seeing, which is devastating for these families. Families in our area (Mount Isa School of the Air) that have worked with programs such as Outback Futures say it has made a tremendous difference in helping their students, but now due to a lack of funding, the program is limited in the areas it is able to cover, and students in some communities who were receiving learning support are now missing out on assistance once again. It is imperative that in situations where there are insufficient numbers of government supplied service providers to address specific learning needs in rural and remote areas, that fiscal support be available to private organisations to fill the gap of learning support in these communities.

CARRIED