

PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

SPECIFIC EDUCATION REPORT

Jane Cunningham – Portfolio Holder, March 2023

2022 continued to bring COVID-19 related issues for those requiring specific needs education. Many services and programs had been cancelled or were only accessible online. One major area which has been impacted is the continued restrictions from WA Health on therapists visiting schools and conducting programs. For much of the year outside therapists were not allowed to attend school sites to work with students, rather they were stuck in hospital settings swabbing for COVID-19.

EXPANSION OF AUTISM SPECIALIST LEARNING PROGRAM

In 2022 an additional 6 Autism Specialist Learning Programs (SLP) have been set up in schools. There are currently 24 schools. None of these schools would be classed as regional or remote. At a regional, hard-to-staff school of 42 pupils that I am familiar with, there are 4 students with autism that require significant support.

Expanding the use of the SLP is mentioned specifically in point 5 of the 'Focus 2023'. I wonder how this will extend to be implemented in regional and remote WA in 2023?

SPECIFIC EDUCATION NEEDS STATE COUNCIL CATCH UP

In October, a Specific Education Needs ICPA Joint State and Federal catch-up was held via Zoom. There was much discussion about different States and their Patient Assisted Travel Scheme's (PATS) and what appointments they do and do not cover for specialist services for children with special needs. I would be interested to hear of any cases where appointments are not covered, and you believe they should.