



PORTFOLIO REPORTS - STATE COUNCIL

SPECIFIC EDUCATION REPORT

Jane Cunningham – Portfolio Holder, March 2024

At the 2023 ICPA (WA) State Conference four motions were presented that related to the need for increased health services and support for children with specific needs. Although we did not receive any favourable news in the area when corresponding with the Minister for Education, Hon. Dr Tony Buti and Minister for Health, Ms. Amber-Jade Sanderson, opportunities did arise during the year where we could advocate for our members.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH STANDING COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO SUPPORT FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS

An inquiry commenced on 18th May, 2023 with submissions closing on 13th July, 2023. The areas covered by the terms of reference were:

1. The prevalence of autism in WA and projected demand for support in schools.
2. Current support available for autistic students in WA schools. (A focus on regional, rural and remote at this point.)
3. Strategies in other jurisdictions that support systems to respond to the needs of autistic students, and the applicability of those strategies to WA.

ICPA (WA) presented a submission and was invited to attend a public hearing in October 2023. I attended the hearing and spoke with Chris Tallentire Member for Thornlie, Lisa Bake Member for Maylands, Lisa Munday Member for Dawesville, Caitlin Collins Member for Hillarys, Catie Parsons Principal Research Officer and Sylvia Wolf Research Officer.

The information relating to our rural and remote children with autism was very well received by the Committee.

SELECT COMMITTEE INTO CHILD DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

ICPA (WA) wrote a submission and Kym Ross and I gave evidence at a hearing in Albany in March 2023. On 28th November, 2023, the Select Committee tabled its first report, 'Child Development Services in Western Australia: Valuing our Children and their Needs'.

A copy of the report can be found at: [Committee Details - Inquiry \(\[parliament.wa.gov.au\]\(http://parliament.wa.gov.au\)\)](http://Committee%20Details%20-%20Inquiry%20(parliament.wa.gov.au))

The members conducting the inquiry were Hon. Dr Sally Talbot MLC, Hon. Donna Faragher MLC and Hon. Samantha Rowe MLC.

EDUCATION REVIEW TO SERVE AND SAFEGUARD STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY ANNOUNCED

On 4th December, 2023, the Minister of Education, Hon. Dr Tony Buti, announced a review of the 'School Education Act 1999' to better safeguard students with disability and to strengthen access, inclusion and services across the public education system.

Telethon Kids Institute autism researcher Professor Andrew Whitehouse will provide expert input and strategic guidance during the review process.



As a supplement to this long-term transformation, a \$2.26 million trial of 16 Complex Behaviour Support Coordinators will help school leaders develop tailored and inclusive approaches that suit the specific needs of students with disability.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST FTE 2024

Jim Bell, Deputy Director of Student Achievement, shared the following information in relation to school Psychologist Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for 2024.

In 2021, the State Government committed to an additional one hundred full-time equivalent (FTE) school psychologists for public schools, as well as additional supervising and lead school psychologists. Part of a \$104 million boost for student support and wellbeing, the initiative commenced in 2022, and in 2024 (the third year of the election commitment), more FTE will be directed to schools and regions. The trajectory is outlined below.

	2022	2023	2024	2025
<i>School psychologist FTE</i>	40	20	20	20
<i>Supervision (school psychologist) FTE</i>	4	2	2	2
<i>Lead school psychologist FTE</i>	3	1	1	2

For 2024, additional FTE has also been provided in response to actual and estimated enrolment growth, bringing the total budgeted school psychologist FTE to **397.00**.