

EDUCATION — STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY — FUNDING

910. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to the witness testimony of the Department of Education's Director, Disability Inclusion at public hearing 24 of the Royal Commission into Violence, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability in relation to the how funding is allocated for students with disabilities and the associated complaints management system, and I ask:

- (a) how does the Department of Education ensure adequate funding is appropriately allocated so as to improve education outcomes for students with disabilities;
- (b) how is the budgeting and expenditure of this funding at the student, school and Departmental level:
 - (i) reported on;
 - (ii) monitored; and
 - (iii) linked to the educational outcomes for the relevant student;
- (c) are the parents and guardians of students who receive individual funding allocations able to easily access information regarding how that allocation is spent and linked to the student's educational outcomes; and
- (d) will the Department establish an independent complaints body to handle disputes and complaints between the Department and parents or guardians to replace existing, non-independent and wholly internally run complaints management system?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (a) Through the Student-Centred Funding Model, schools are provided with supplementary funding for students with disability, which includes the Individual Disability Allocation (IDA) and an Educational Adjustment Allocation.

The IDA provides funding to schools to support students who meet specific eligibility criteria and require high levels of adjustments. Eligibility for an IDA is based on verification of a diagnosed disability. The allocated level of funding is based on the severity of diagnosis and the level of teaching and learning adjustments.

The Educational Adjustment Allocation is flexible funding that is automatically provided to every mainstream school to enable targeted interventions for students needing additional support, such as students with dyspraxia, asthma, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and students with undiagnosed disabilities. As part of the 2022-23 State Budget the McGowan Government is expanding the Educational Adjustment Allocation to support more students with additional learning needs. Commencing in 2023, this will provide public schools with an additional \$31.9 million funding over the next four years.

- (b) (i)–(iii) The Department's Annual Report includes details of the number of students eligible for an IDA.

The Department's Funding Agreement for Schools documents accountability mechanisms for principals in managing their school budgets to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of students. In addition, the Department has a number of mechanisms through which policy compliance and school processes are monitored, including public school reviews, which provide feedback for principals, school staff and the school community to help improve school performance, as well as the school financial compliance program. The Director General may commission a review into any element of school operations at any time.

The principal reviews and evaluates the impact of teaching and learning adjustments at the whole school and individual student level. Teachers use the Reporting to Parents, Special Educational Needs (RTP SEN) platform to plan, monitor and report on the achievement of students with disability who require a differentiated or alternative modified curriculum.

RTP SEN supports teachers to track the progress of individual students against the Western Australian Curriculum, as well as at a goal level personalised to the student. Where students require extensive or substantial adjustments, teachers can utilise the Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia (ABLEWA) and associated assessment tool to assess students with disability, collect data and effectively plan for individualised adjustments.

- (c) Schools are required to engage parents in developing and reviewing documented plans and the impact of planned adjustments on their child's educational outcomes.

- (d) The Department has a complaints advice line (1800 655 985) advertised on its public-facing website. Parents, guardians, caregivers and members of the community can use this service to find out how the Department can best support and progress a complaint.

A person making a complaint or notification to the Department can request an internal review of the resolution process if they are not satisfied with how their complaint or notification was managed or resolved.

The Parent Liaison Office provides support by acting as a liaison point between schools, education regional offices, central services, parents, carers and members of the school community. It has a particular focus on supporting parents and families from a diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds, and those with complex needs, and is able to broker specialist advice in assisting with complex matters.

People making complaints or notifications can elect to report the matter to another relevant agency at any time, including the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA, the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Ombudsman Western Australia.
