

Question on Notice

No. 526

Asked on 3 May 2018

MR S KNUTH ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to the ready reading program—

Will the Minister advise why teacher aide funding has been cut to special needs students in state schools, particularly to students with autism at Atherton State High School?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to lifting educational outcomes so every student, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, are succeeding.

There has been no cut in additional targeted teacher aide funding to Atherton State High School for students with disability. In 2018, Atherton State High School received an increase of four hours per week in its allocated teacher aide time for students with disability compared to 2017.

Queensland state schools support students with disability through reasonable adjustments and tailored support to meet students' individual learning needs. Reasonable adjustments are developed in consultation with the student, where possible, and their parents or carers.

To assist schools to address the diverse learning needs of their students, additional targeted resourcing is provided either directly to schools or to the region. These resources are in addition to the classroom teachers and general teacher aide time already allocated to schools. Schools are allocated targeted resources from day one of the school year based on the indicative forecast of enrolment numbers. Enrolment numbers are confirmed on day eight, and targeted resourcing allocations are adjusted.

Targeted resourcing is not allocated directly to students; it is allocated to schools with principals being responsible for the effective use of the resourcing to support students.

In 2017, Atherton State High School received further teacher aide resourcing in addition to the targeted resourcing, due to the complexity of student needs. The principal at Atherton State High School has noted that an application for further resourcing was not made in 2018, given a reduction of the number of students with high needs. Atherton State High School may still apply for this funding if the number of enrolled students with high needs increases during the year.

The Queensland Ready Reading volunteer program is a reintroduction of the Queensland Ready Reader program, which was implemented between 2010 and 2012. It is part of a suite of initiatives to support Queensland students' reading improvement, including Closing the Gap on Year 3 reading.

Ready Reading volunteers will not take the place of trained teachers and teacher-aides. The additional support volunteers will offer, especially in the early years, will complement the focused work of teachers and teacher-aides to help make a difference in children's reading progress.