

Question on Notice
No. 1442
Asked on 15 November 2023

MS S BOLTON ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to recommendations from the Inquiry into the national trend of School Refusal and related matters—

Will the Minister outline what additional or expanded screening programs are being considered in Queensland to improve early identification of autism, ADHD, specific learning and anxiety disorders, in order to provide necessary classroom, teacher and parental support?

ANSWER:

During 2022–23, the Department of Education commenced an \$80.6 million, two-year transition to a new funding model for students with disability.

The new Students with Disability – Reasonable Adjustments Resourcing (RAR) model provides additional teachers and teacher aides to state schools based on the adjustments being made, and for the first time, the model recognises all disabilities. This includes students with autism, ADHD and specific learning and anxiety disorders.

Schools cannot diagnose a disability, but under RAR, schools are able to impute a disability if they believe a student has a disability and have consulted with the student and/or parent/carer. A school can impute a disability if they have reasonable grounds, and evidence demonstrating that the student's need for adjustment(s) has been identified and arises from characteristics of disability.

This year, approximately 300 more teachers and 230 more teacher aides have been allocated directly to schools, immediately boosting support for around 78,000 state school students with disability. In real terms, this means an extra 40,000 students are getting practical assistance in the classroom than previously available under the old model.

Queensland schools make reasonable adjustments to enable students with disability to access and participate in education, the curriculum and school activities on the same basis as other students without disability.

A range of specialist support staff, including speech language pathologists, guidance officers, psychologists and occupational therapists, are available to provide support for students in Queensland state schools.

While it is not the role of school staff to screen or diagnose students, some psychologists and guidance officers working in schools hold additional qualifications for specific assessments, including cognitive assessments, screening assessments for ADHD, screening assessments for social impairment within the autism spectrum and anxiety screeners. Wellbeing professionals are well placed to conduct these assessments and provide appropriate support to students, parents, carers, school staff and other stakeholders. Wellbeing professionals may also work with parents to refer students to external support services where appropriate.