

Suspension rate review

Vulnerable students at risk

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A WIDER review into Queensland's high suspension rates may be called following a departmental deep dive into why so many vulnerable kids are being booted from school, Education Minister Grace Grace says.

Ms Grace did not rule out a parliamentary inquiry after The Courier-Mail exposed shock statistics that vulnerable students were up to six times more likely to be suspended and child advocates called for real action to tackle the problem.

The rate for Indigenous children and children with a disability is three times higher than the general population and six times higher for children in care, according to figures released under Right to Information laws.

Advocates including Children's Commissioner Natalie Lewis say more needs to be done to keep vulnerable children in education to combat the state's youth justice problems.

Ms Grace said the issue had been a priority for her for some time, with a review of suspension rates top of mind straight after the 2020 state election.

"We are really looking deeply into

this and we've been working on this for quite some time," she said.

"We will work with the Human Rights Commission and anyone.

"I must admit, I've had concerns about some of the higher suspension rates, particularly in relation to our younger primary school children.

"This has been on my board in the ministerial room for quite some time, we are diving very deeply into this matter and we've started this work well over 12 months ago."

Asked why the government hadn't called a wider review for public debate of the issues and to solicit more public submissions and the stories of parents and students, she said the departmental review was the priority for now.

But she did not rule out expanding the work when it was complete.

"I think at the moment we want to do the deep dive into what exactly is happening in the schools and to really understand the impact and what is occurring before we go wider," she said.

"I think we always consider everything," Ms Grace said when asked of the possibility of a parliamentary inquiry. "At this stage we're not there yet but hopefully we'll be there soon."