

Queensland's Education Future: Continuing the Reform Agenda



Issues Paper
June 2017



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Our Schools – Our Future

Our Schools – Our Future is an Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) research-based initiative designed to promote informed public policy debate about schooling. Through commissioned and internal research, Our Schools – Our Future explores trends and issues in key areas which determine the nature and performance of our school education systems. While the initiative has a particular focus on the contribution of independent schools to our education provision and outcomes, it examines a range of issues and trends relevant to the development and implementation of effective public policy for schooling. All research reports are available to members on the Independent Schools Queensland website.
www.isq.qld.edu.au

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Foreword



There is no silver bullet for school education reform. However, it is incumbent on everyone working in education in Queensland to strive for continuous improvement. There is no reason why students in Queensland should not achieve educational outcomes to a similar level to students in other states and territories. Currently, this is not the case. We can and must do better.

This issues paper follows three earlier reports commissioned by Independent Schools Queensland. All previous issues papers highlighted that education is a complex area of public policy which makes achieving change and long-term reform challenging (Independent Schools Queensland, 2013).

Just because education reform is challenging, does not mean it should not be done. Change is always hard, but when a better future for our children is at stake, we cannot afford to let the reform agenda slide.

For more than 150 years independent schools have been providing high quality educational services to a wide range of students. The independent schooling sector is an important part of our vibrant education sector in

Queensland. Independent schools will continue to work in partnership with the Queensland Government and our non-state schooling colleagues in the Catholic sector, to deliver the best possible education for all students, regardless of which school they attend.

The research in this issues paper was undertaken by Independent Schools Queensland as part of the Our Schools – Our Future flagship program to promote informed public policy debate about schooling.

I commend *Queensland's Education Future: Continuing the Reform Agenda* to public policy makers, independent school educators and all people who have an interest in, and commitment to, school education.

DAVID ROBERTSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS QUEENSLAND

Executive Summary



There is vast research telling educators and funders “what works”; why then can’t we just replicate best practice across every school in the state? If only systemic change was that simple. Evidence shows that autonomy combined with strong leadership produces better outcomes for students, and each school’s particular circumstances must be taken into account to achieve improvement (Independent Schools Queensland, 2017). One size definitely does not fit all.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) stated in its *Submission to the Queensland Education Accord* that while the options for reform are many, an emphasis on quality will make the most significant impacts on overall education performance in our classrooms (Independent Schools Queensland, 2014).

There are nine areas put forward in this paper to continue the school education reform agenda. Each area is divided into: evidence; examples of what is happening in the independent schooling sector; current priorities; and future focus.

Whatever areas are pursued, they will need to be undertaken collaboratively with all schooling sectors. Independent schools make a major contribution to education in this state and have much to offer in the complex area of continuing school education reform. For the sake of our children, it is now up to all parties to work together to achieve continuous improvement at the school and system level.



Key Actions for Continuing the Reform Agenda

1 Choice and Diversity

2 Demand for New Schools

3 School Improvement

4 Teacher Quality

5 Early Learning

6 Student Outcomes and Personalised Learning

7 Internationalisation and Global Citizenship

8 21st Century Skills and Technologies

9 Rigorous Curriculum and Assessment

Introduction



Community confidence in, and demand for, independent schooling remains strong in Queensland with enrolments rising to 120,000 students at 202 schools in 2017. Independent schools educate approximately 20 percent of all secondary students and 15 percent of the state's total school-age population. State and Catholic schools educate the balance of students.

Over the past 10 years, the number of independent schools operating across the state has continued to rise with the support of significant private and community investment. Independent school numbers have grown from 181 in 2007 to 202 in 2017. Over the same period student enrolments have risen by 21 percent (see Figure 1).

This growth confirms the value parents place on an independent education and the financial investment they are prepared to make from their after-tax incomes in their child's schooling. Parents meet on average approximately 50 percent of the running costs of Queensland independent schools and about 75 percent of the building and maintenance costs.

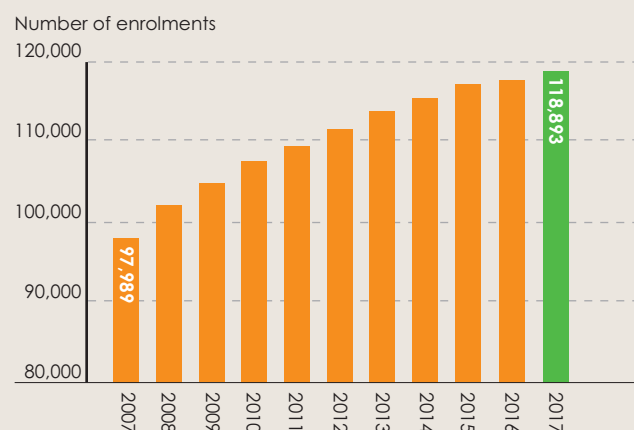


Figure 1: Student Enrolments at Queensland Independent Schools 2007-2017
Source: 2017 Non-state School Census (State), February Collection

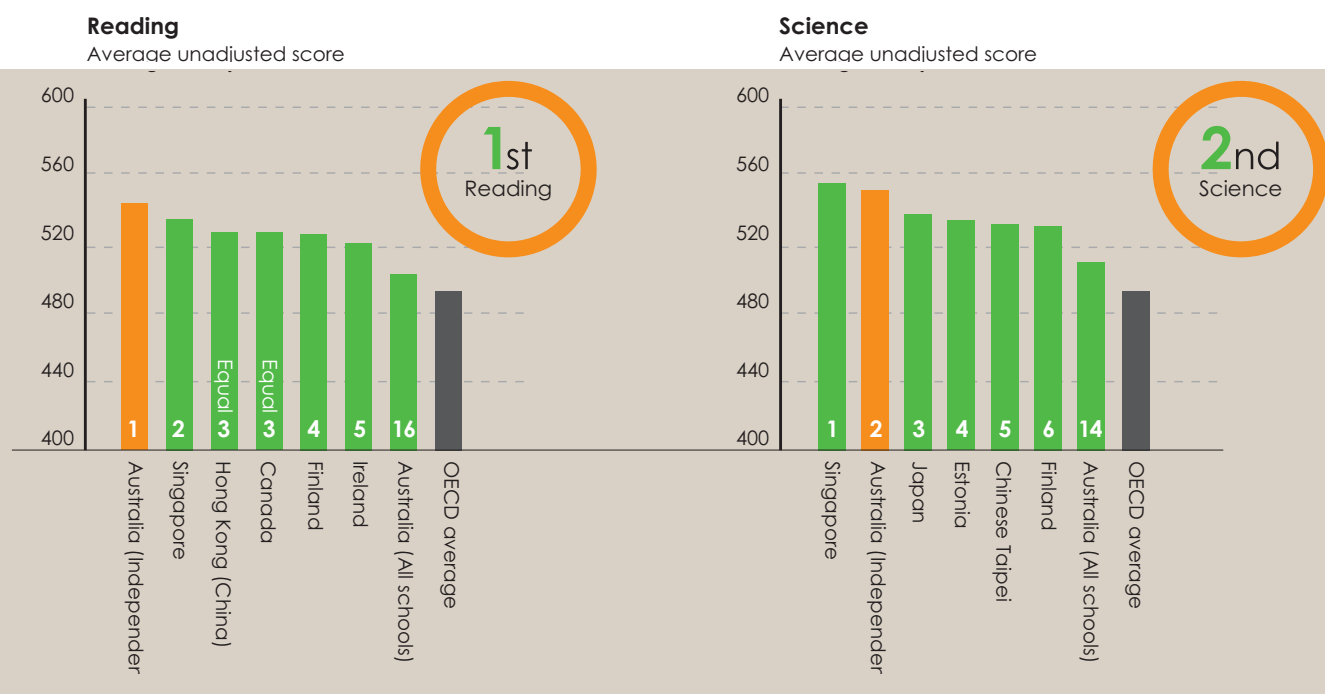


Figure 2: 2015 PISA Results in Reading and Science
Source: PISA 2015: Reporting Australia's Results, ACER, 2017

Queensland independent schools are a reflection of the diverse communities they serve, catering for students with a mix of abilities from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. Of Queensland's 202 independent schools: 183 educate children with disability; 109 cater for students for whom English is a second language or dialect; 184 enrol Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; 72 offer international education programs; 33 provide boarding services; and 17 cater specifically for students who have disengaged from mainstream education.

Common to all independent schools is their commitment to strong student outcomes, high standards of behaviour, and the welfare and wellbeing of students.

Independent schools make an important contribution to the education landscape as well as the social and economic wellbeing of the state. When all sectors of education are performing well, all Queenslanders benefit.

Independent Schools Deliver Outcomes

Recent reports and public commentary have pointed to little improvement in the academic performance of Australian students in national and international testing programs.

However, unpacking the data shows Queensland students as a whole have made positive gains over the past eight years in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), while at the national level independent school students continue to perform exceptionally well in the premier Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Analysis of latest publicly available NAPLAN data from 2016 shows Queensland students recorded some of the greatest gains since 2008. The most notable improvements have been in Years 3 and 5. Approximately 96 percent of Year 3 students now meet national minimum benchmarks in reading and numeracy – up from 87 percent and 92 percent

respectively. Year 5 students achieved similar percentage gains in the same testing areas.

On the international stage, Australian independent high school students rank among the world's best. Analysis of the latest publicly available PISA data from 2015 reveals Australian independent school students outperformed every country in Reading and ranked second only to Singapore in Science, based on a comparison of unadjusted raw scores.

These results demonstrate that Queensland independent schools are well positioned to not only respond to national and state education reform agendas, but to also lead innovation and collaborate with governments and the state and Catholic schooling sectors for continued improvement.

Significance of Independent Schools to the Queensland Economy



An in-depth economic analysis that calculated for the first time the value independent schools add to the state and local economies was released by ISQ in 2016 as part of the flagship *Our Schools – Our Future* research program.

The report, *Economic Significance of Independent Schools to the Queensland Economy*, by global consultancy firm AEC Group (2016), revealed that in 2014 independent schools contributed: \$4.1 billion to the Queensland economy; added \$2.4 billion in employee wages and salaries; and supported 31,000 full-time jobs, which equates to one full-time job for every 3.7 students enrolled at independent schools.

The report also quantified the significant annual recurrent and capital savings – \$1 billion – independent schools provide to governments as well as the economic benefits that flow to the state – \$263 million – from the enhanced academic performance of independent school students.

The seminal report and regional modelling added a new dimension to the dedicated advocacy work ISQ undertook on behalf of independent schools at the local, state and national levels. Queensland Education Minister Kate Jones acknowledged the contribution of independent schools by providing a quote for the ISQ media release launching the AEC Report (Independent Schools Queensland, 2016a).

“This report confirms that independent schools are not only key institutions of learning, but also important generators of economic activity and employment at a state and local level.” Kate Jones, Queensland Education Minister.



\$4.1 billion = direct + indirect
\$1.9bn \$2.2bn

Independent schools total annual contribution to the Queensland economy

\$1.9bn =

direct to GSP*



Queensland accommodation industry

Independent schools support jobs



31,000
full-time jobs



Every 3.7 students
support 1 full-time job



\$2.4 billion
in wages and salaries

Independent schools provide savings

\$1.02 billion

in savings to
governments and
taxpayers



\$218 million

capital savings
from parent
contributions



7
new primary schools

\$804 million

recurrent
savings



11,300
beginning teachers

Economic modelling undertaken by AEC Group for Independent Schools Queensland using 2014 school data and financial year ABS and other agency data to produce an indicative annual profile of contributions to the Queensland economy and *Gross State Product (GSP) for 2013-14.

Past Reforms and their Impact



Queensland's school education system has been the subject of significant reform over the past decade. The reforms have resulted in major structural shifts including extending the length of compulsory education, lifting curriculum and assessment standards and enshrining higher expectations about the quality and level of education children are entitled to.

While change has been a constant companion throughout Queensland's education history, the most significant blueprint for major reform of the state's education system was the release of the *Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper* in 2002. The paper outlined extensive changes across the full breadth of schooling – from the introduction of a new full-time Prep Year to a fundamental reshaping of the senior years that enshrined the requirement for students to be “learning or earning”.

Many of these reforms sought to bring Queensland into line with other states and territories and to lift student participation and achievement in schooling. Successive Queensland Governments have continued to build on these foundational reforms.

TABLE 1: Summary of Significant School Education Reforms in Queensland

2002	Release of <i>Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper</i>
2006	Laws commence requiring Queensland teenagers to be “learning or earning” until 17 years of age
2006	Queensland College of Teachers commences with increased enforcement and investigative powers to maintain quality teaching standards
2007	Voluntary Prep Year commences
2008	Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) issued to Year 12s for the first time.
2008	School starting age increases by 6 months
2008	National agreement delivers 15 hours of Kindergarten to all children
2011	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers released
2012	Queensland commences rolling out the P-10 Australian Curriculum
2015	Year 7 moves to high school
2017	Prep becomes first year of compulsory schooling
2020	First time Year 12s will graduate with an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) instead of an Overall Position (OP)

Other Queensland Government policies have prioritised particular learning areas such as languages, coding or Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) or sought to enhance and build on improvements for students with disability and Indigenous education.

Enhancing teacher quality and standards, of both preservice and existing teachers, has also been an ongoing state and national priority. At the state level, the Queensland College of Teachers replaced the Board of Teacher Registration in 2006 with a charter to strengthen teaching standards and community confidence in the profession. At the national level, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is responsible for promoting excellence in teaching and developing and maintaining national professional standards for teaching and school leadership.

While it is difficult to attribute specific gains in student achievement to different reforms, it is clear that Queensland has made recognisable improvements in a number of areas.

While Queensland has improved, the state still trails behind its southern counterparts in many areas of student achievement; a position we should and must continue to strive to improve.

Summary of Queensland Improvements

Kindergarten

95%

Participation now exceeds 95 percent – **up from 29 percent in 2008.**

Year 10-12 Retention



Rates have improved from 81.8 percent in 2011 to 87.3 percent in 2016.

Qualifications UP

The percentage of Queenslanders aged 20-24 years with a non-school qualification (including university degrees and VET) has increased from 46.4 percent in 2005 to 52.4 percent in 2016.

NAPLAN



Queensland, along with Western Australia, **has recorded the greatest gains in student achievement since testing began in 2008**, with students in Years 3 and 5 making the biggest leaps.

Post-school



The proportion of Year 12 school leavers undertaking a Bachelor degree within six months of finishing school **rose from 36.6 percent in 2005 to 39.7 percent in 2016.**



FUTURE FOCUS: Choice and Diversity



Choice and diversity in schooling ensures a flexible and vibrant education sector in Queensland. Having three schooling sectors – state, Catholic and independent – allows parents to exercise their fundamental right to choose where to educate their children.

The Evidence

The world's most influential assessment of education performance found that school choice matters. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tested 15-year-old students in 72 countries and economies in 2015 and Australia's independent school students rank among the world's best – first in Reading, second in Science and fifth in Maths. The triennial global assessment program and survey is administered by Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) in Australia with funding from the Australian and state and territory governments. According to ACER, schools have an impact on student outcomes, confirming "there were differences between schools that could have important implications for parents in terms of which school to send their child to" (ACER, 2017, p. 220).

Kevin Donnelly, author and senior research fellow at the Australian Catholic University, wrote in *The Australian* newspaper that school autonomy and choice in education led to more flexibility and greater outcomes for students and believes that competition, diversity and choice are beneficial (Donnelly, 2017). He cites Eric Hanushek and Ludger Woessmann in their book *The Knowledge Capital of Nations* as concluding "students in countries with larger shares of privately managed schools perform better on average, and recent evidence corroborates the conclusion that this is due to a causal effect of private sector competition" (para. 17).



The Independent Schooling Sector

Choice and diversity are the hallmarks of the independent schooling sector. Independent schools enable families to select schools that best serve their child's needs and enable families to choose a school that best promotes the values they believe are important.

Independent schools are therefore a diverse group of schools and include: non-denominational schools; faith-based schools such as Anglican, Baptist, Islamic, Jewish and Lutheran; schools following a philosophy such as Montessori and Steiner schools; schools supporting students with disability; special assistance schools for students at risk; schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; schools with programs for gifted and talented students; schools that offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma; schools that cater for international students; schools that offer vocational education and training (VET) and schools that offer a particular area of focus in addition to the Australian Curriculum.

Current Priorities

Queensland's Minister for Education, Kate Jones, introduced into Queensland Parliament on 9 May 2017, the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Bill 2017 which, if passed, will streamline the accreditation processes and reduce red tape. The Bill will enshrine in legislation the role of government in recognising and supporting choice in schooling. One of the key objectives of the Bill is "to foster educational choices in the State."

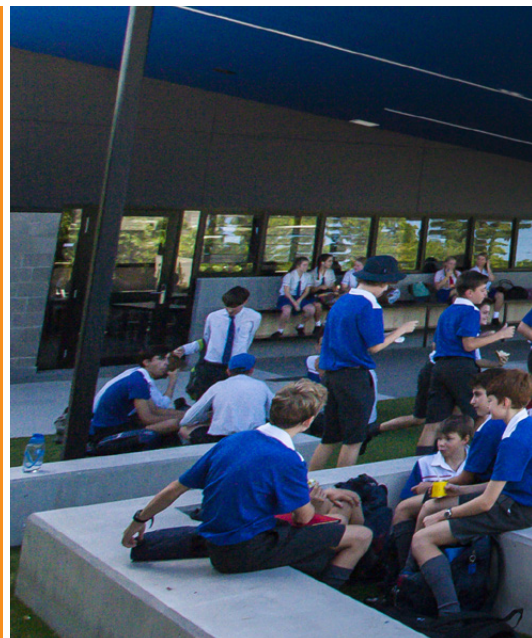
Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) has been strongly advocating for a review of the current *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001*. ISQ will continue to advocate for the sector and will be involved in any further public submissions and addresses to Committee Hearings throughout the Parliamentary process.

Future Focus

- Continued cross-sector support for choice and diversity in school education to provide equity, enhance competition, promote innovation and lead to better student outcomes.
- Streamlined accreditation processes are needed to remove barriers for non-state schools.
- Queensland Government recurrent funding to the non-state schooling sector needs to be maintained and increase in line with growth and indexation, through a fair and equitable process that acknowledges the contribution of the independent schooling sector to education in Queensland, and parents' right to choose.

2

FUTURE FOCUS: Demand for New Schools



Projections for school-aged population point to continued strong demand for new schools. If the level of choice in schooling expected by the community is unable to be maintained, there will be significant implications for the Queensland Government, including a greater supply burden.

The Evidence

The number of school-aged children in Queensland has been forecast to increase from around 800,000 in 2016 to nearly 1.1 million in 2036 (Queensland Government Statistician's Office, 2016). Capacity will need to be increased to cater for an estimated additional 263,000 students over this 20-year period (32 percent increase), or some 13,000 extra students each year.

The Independent Schooling Sector

Queensland's economic downturn has been challenging for the independent schooling sector evidenced by the lack of large independent schools being built. The typical Prep to Year 12 (P-12) school model makes up most of the independent schooling sector in Queensland yet the new independent schools currently being established are small or niche schools such as; special assistance schools catering to disengaged young people, or schools for students with disability. This lack of large mainstream schools being built is a reflection on the expense, processes and barriers to private sector investment. If this situation continues there is a risk that school choice would be eroded in identified areas of need due to the inability of the independent sector to build new schools.

Independent schools annually provide \$1.02 billion in savings to governments and taxpayers – \$804 million recurrent savings and \$218 million capital savings from parent contributions (AEC Group).

ISQ is currently conducting research into the schools planning environment in Queensland, this Our Schools – Our Future research will be published later this year.

Current Priorities

In 2016, the Palaszczuk Government established the Queensland Schools Planning Reference Committee (QSPRC) to continue with the demand mapping activity established by the former Queensland Schools Planning Commission (QSPC) and to consider other matters related to the planning of schools in Queensland. The QSPC was established in 2012 to streamline and coordinate the processes for the planning, establishment and expansion of state and non-state schools across Queensland to address areas of future demand.

An online interactive school mapping tool was developed by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office as part of the demand mapping work and has recently been upgraded to improve its usefulness.



The Queensland Government has responded to calls for a level playing field for all school sectors in terms of planning. Under the *Planning Act 2016* to be implemented from July 2017, non-state schools that obtain planning approval through Ministerial designation will be exempt from trunk infrastructure charges, as is the case in the state school sector. Non-state schools may seek Ministerial designation for developments rather than the usual local council development assessment processes.

Future Focus

- Timely and cost-effective school provision in areas of demand regardless of sector. The Queensland Government has a universal service obligation to ensure all school-aged children have access to quality education services however, that does not mean the State must be the only provider. Strong productive partnerships with the non-state school sectors will ensure demand is met.
- All providers to investigate innovative and alternative funding options for new schools. Queensland Government to streamline the regulatory framework to ensure all sectors contribute to future schooling provision to meet the projected 32 percent growth in the school-aged population over the next 20 years.
- Continue addressing barriers that restrict the non-state schooling sector from delivering its share of future school infrastructure. When legislating, Queensland Government to ensure a level playing field for all sectors i.e. a sector blind planning regime that treats all schools equally in terms of planning (like NSW's recently announced proposals).
- Innovate procurement approaches would ensure the non-state school sector can participate effectively in the delivery of new schools in high growth areas. This might involve new partnerships not previously considered such as; innovative project financing and capital funding to ensure all school sectors contribute to meeting the demand.
- Parental investment in their children's education at independent schools to be acknowledged. Currently, independent school parents contribute around 80 percent of total capital investment in school facilities, this investment should be encouraged and leveraged to maximise Queensland's limited financial resources.
- Education spending reached a record \$12.9 billion in the Queensland Budget 2016-17. With the next Queensland Budget due to be handed down on 13 June 2017 the question must be asked can the record spending continue in the current fiscally challenging environment? A public discussion is warranted in relation to not only how we can fund schooling at record levels, a key debate might be about how we can increase and maximise private investment in schooling across all three sectors.



FUTURE FOCUS: School Improvement



Systems around the world are focusing on continuous school improvement to improve outcomes for students in achievement, wellbeing and engagement. Schools everywhere are using evidence-based learning to improve school performance.

The Evidence

Robert J. Marzano's book *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action* represented a summary of 35 years of research literature and presented the key factors of improvement at three levels: school-level, teacher-level, and student-level, that were thought to be important to successful schools and student success (2003).

Vic Zbar argues in *We need to talk about change: No prescription without diagnosis* that a "diagnosis" is needed at the school level otherwise we risk getting the prescription wrong for system-led change. However, he adds there are some broad stages of development schools need to go through, so there are some "general prescriptions" that do work in a variety of contexts and meet the needs of a range of diagnosis. A substantial range of school experience suggests a progression of sustained school improvement underpinned by quality leadership (Zbar, 2016).

School improvement research shows that building capacity at the school level will lift the system as a whole. However, with all the data out there where do schools start? John Hattie's *Visible Learning* identifies what impacts student outcomes in order of importance. Hattie's research involves many millions of students and represents the largest ever evidence-based research into what actually works in schools to improve learning. Areas covered include the influence of the student, home, school, curricula, teacher, and teaching strategies. A model of teaching and learning is developed based on the notion of visible teaching and visible learning (Hattie, n.d.).

Evidence for Learning through its *Teaching and Learning Toolkit* develops online summaries of global evidence for 34 education approaches and localises the *Toolkit* with reference to Australian research and evidence (Evidence for Learning, n.d.).

The Independent Schooling Sector

Improvement is a fundamental principle underpinning schooling. As an example, ISQ's Self-Improving Schools (SIS) flagship program supports schools to develop and implement evidence-based strategies for improvement, embed continuous learning into the culture of the school and to focus on improvement in performance that leads to improved student outcomes.

SIS is based on processes identified in international and national research and a continuum matrix derived from the work of McKinsey & Company, the Grattan Institute, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals, and the Queensland Department of Education and Training's Teaching and Learning School Improvement Framework.

More than half of Queensland independent schools (104) have partnered with ISQ in the SIS program to improve school performance, teacher practice and student outcomes. Schools receive tailored, one-on-one support to conduct rigorous self-assessments, identify priorities for change and implement clear action plans for improvement.



ISQ developed the SIS Matrix specifically for Queensland independent schools based on three domains identified in research as consistently applying to “great” schools: Leadership and Management; Teaching and Learning; and Community.

Independent extended evaluation of the ISQ SIS program since it started in 2013 has demonstrated that many schools have been supported to improve their practice in the identified areas and schools that are engaged for longer generally report more impact (Education Transformations, Dec 2013, Nov 2014, Feb 2016, Dec 2016).

ISQ's flagship Governance Services offers tailored services and professional development to support independent school boards and leadership teams to govern effectively and confidently, leading school improvement from the top.

Current Priorities

The Queensland Government expectations of independent schools are legislated through the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001*. Each non-state school must demonstrate an improvement agenda at cyclical review (every five years).

The Queensland Government uses the national school improvement tool to direct the improvement agenda for state schools which includes school reviews to inform improvement plans.

Advancing Education – an action plan for education in Queensland is driving innovation in state schools through the Collaboration and Innovation Fund developing a Queensland evidence hub to share best practice and research about school improvement (Queensland Government, 2015a).

- Cross sector collaboration, evidence sharing, and school autonomy combined with strong leadership will produce better outcomes for all students.
- Queensland Government to allow non-state schools to contribute to the Queensland evidence base hub and share best practice and research about school improvement so that all schools benefit.
- Data literacy in schools must be advanced to achieve school improvement. Professional development training needs to be supported.
- NAPLAN data to continue to be used to support school improvement. The *National Education Evidence Base Inquiry Report* (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2016), released on 24 May, made a recommendation to “make greater use of existing mechanisms available to share personal information to facilitate education research.”

Future Focus

- Building capacity at the school level, by providing support for tailored evidence-based strategies, will lead to improvement at the system level. Recognition that school leaders are best placed to know what is needed locally, taking into consideration school characteristics and circumstances.



FUTURE FOCUS: Teacher Quality



Extensive research confirms that quality teaching is the single most powerful in-school influence on student achievement.

The Evidence

More than 50 years ago the release of *Equality of Educational Opportunity* in the United States – widely known as the Coleman Report – made a key conclusion that the quality of teachers shows a stronger relationship [than school facilities and curricula] to pupil achievement. Furthermore, it is progressively greater at higher grades, indicating a cumulative impact of the qualities of teachers in a school on the pupil's achievements (Coleman, 1966). The finding that “teacher quality is one of the few school characteristics that significantly affects student performance” is consistent with longitudinal studies and more recent research.

The Independent Schooling Sector

The Queensland Government's Teaching and School Leadership program provides funding support for ISQ's Great Teachers in Independent Schools (GTIS) program (the Australian Government's Students First Support Fund also provides funding for GTIS). Through GTIS, all eligible independent schools receive a biannual payment to implement agreed activities that support teacher quality, and can participate in services and programs offered by ISQ.

ISQ has developed a suite of services to assist all independent schools to establish and grow effective performance and development cultures and systems underpinned by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. ISQ offers three programs for school leaders to develop the knowledge and practices they need to lead people to improve their performance. Each program includes professional learning opportunities, resources and services designed to support school leaders. The three programs focus on strategic performance and development, mentoring and middle leadership

program. GTIS suite of services and programs are supported through external evaluations with academic partners including Professor Helen Timperley, Professor of Education at the University of Auckland who has recently worked with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Sweden. Since 2015, 80 schools and 4,200 teachers have participated in GTIS programs and services and 81 percent of participants reported seeing evidence of an improvement in the teacher performance and development culture.

The ISQ Teaching and Learning Academy flagship program also supports teacher growth and development through Research in Schools and Coaching Partnerships both of which are based on evidence from international experts such as Robert J. Marzano and Jim Knight. Principals were asked to report on the impact of the Coaching Partnerships program at their school, 75 percent said coaching is changing practice at the department or whole-of-school level. While 76 percent of participating principals reported the research undertaken during the Research in Schools program being used as a strategy for improvement at the department or whole-of-school level.



Current Priorities

Advancing Education – an action plan for education in Queensland is improving the preparation of preservice teachers and mentoring beginning teachers, provides professional development using coaching and Master Teachers, establishing a new classification system for teachers that reward their expertise, identifying and mentoring emerging leaders, lifting school leader professional practice through coaching and mentoring and implementing strategies that respond to feedback to create working environments that promote health, safety and wellbeing in state schools.

The Teaching and School Leadership program aims to improve and promote professional excellence in teaching with some funding available for non-state schools. This funding is currently enabling ISQ to support member schools to address issues identified in the Advancing Education Action Plan.

Future Focus

- Raising the status of teaching as a career choice will attract the most suitable school leavers and career change professionals into teaching and they will be retained through appropriate career paths and professional learning opportunities.
- Queensland Government to continue the Teaching and School Leadership program funding to build on the work of Great Teachers in Independent Schools. A continued investment in teacher professional learning and development by all sectors is needed to ensure teacher quality.
- Cross sector sharing of case studies and evaluation of what works and what does not should be encouraged. All schools having access to the evidence hub as a valuable resource.
- Cross sector consultation and collaboration to be strengthened for the implementation of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher certification in Queensland.



FUTURE FOCUS: Early Learning



Prep is now the first compulsory year of schooling in Queensland. The Queensland Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2014–2018 identifies the importance of children making successful transitions to school as a core outcome of its strategy for the early years.

The Evidence

Effective Early Educational Experiences, or E4Kids, is the most extensive longitudinal study ever conducted into the impact and effectiveness of early childhood education and care in Australia, as well as outcomes for children who do not attend programs. Over five years, the study followed almost 2,500 children in Queensland and Victoria, measuring their progress as they participate in childcare, preschool and family day care programs. The research examined the contributions made by different programs to children's learning and development over time, featuring children in both home-based and centre-based environments as part of the study. The E4Kids study provides strong evidence that the quality of educator-child interactions makes a real difference to child outcomes (The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, 2016).

Research using Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data has provided insight into the association between preschool attendance in the year prior to starting school, and children's developmental outcomes in the first year of full time school. Children's development in the early years has been shown to be related to their success throughout school and into adulthood.

"Preschool had a positive effect on children from both advantaged and disadvantaged communities." "Attendance in preschool is associated with stronger developmental outcomes when children start school" (Australian Government, 2014).

Two international longitudinal studies are also worthy of mention. The US longitudinal study, the *HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*, found that adults at age 40 who underwent the preschool program had higher earnings, committed fewer crimes, were more likely to hold a job, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have a preschool education (HighScope, 2005).

The UK Effective Provision of Pre-School Education project found an earlier start being related to better intellectual development and improved independence, concentration and sociability. "Disadvantaged children in particular can benefit significantly from good quality pre-school experiences, especially if they attend centres that cater for a mixture of children from different social backgrounds" (Sylva, et al., 2003).



The Independent Schooling Sector

More than half of all independent schools in Queensland (114) are either operating, or co-located and affiliated with, an early childhood service, and 98 percent of these are delivering an approved kindergarten program. This provides a smooth transition for those children moving on to Prep at the same school including: sense of community; strong relationships between kindergarten and Prep teachers; familiarity and confidence with surroundings, which all serve to give a child further opportunity for a successful transition. Independent schools also provide their kindergarten services with access to specialist teachers.

Eight Independent Schools participated in the Queensland Government's Age Appropriate Pedagogies (AAP) program in 2016. Researchers from the Griffith Institute for Educational Research designed the AAP program and implemented it with the support of ISQ. The program involved schools in professional learning and action research projects, along with "wrap-around" research conducted by the research team.

Current Priorities

The Queensland Government is focused on promoting stronger partnerships between families, early childhood education and care services and schools through its state-wide Transition to School program. The role of schools is to plan and enact transition strategies that will effectively support each child in meeting their individual needs.

The Supporting Successful Transitions: School Decision-making Tool was developed to support schools to identify, plan and implement transition strategies and practices that meet the needs of their community.

The Age Appropriate Pedagogies program is an initiative of the Queensland Department of Education and Training, aligned with the *Strategic Plan 2016-2020: Advancing Education* priority that children be engaged in quality early years' programs and make positive transitions to school.

Future Focus

- A long-term cross-sector commitment to early education is needed to get the foundation right for all Queensland children.
- Queensland Government to provide further opportunities for all schools to access the Age Appropriate Pedagogies program due to the growing need for schools to create developmental experiences for children.
- Greater alignment between the Queensland legislation that applies to schools and the national legislation that applies to early childhood education and care would reduce red tape and ensure an even smoother transition.
- Queensland Government to advocate for the continuation of Australian Government funding (National Partnership Universal Access) to support the delivery of funded kindergarten programs throughout the state. The 2017-18 Australian Budget has extended this program only until 2018.



FUTURE FOCUS: Student Outcomes and Personalised Learning



Maximising the learning outcomes and wellbeing of all students and providing access to a high-quality education that is free from discrimination is the responsibility of all schools. Personalised learning and targeted support responds to every student's unique characteristics, strengths and learning needs.

The Evidence

The Queensland Government's Department of Education and Training learning and wellbeing framework says: "students with high levels of wellbeing make better learners – they demonstrate more effective academic, personal and social functioning and generally engage in more appropriate behaviour at school."

Williams (2013) synthesised a body of work associated with a personalised learning approach to identify six key themes that were essential for an effective learning environment: a learner-centred approach; personalised learning requiring educators to know the attainment and progress of each student; student engagement; collaboration; effective use of technology; and classroom culture – being aware of students interests and learning styles which creates challenges for large classes

but generates opportunities to use educational technologies and learning analytics to support the educator.

In *Personalised learning: an overview* Dr Emma Bartle cites Bates: "A personalised learning approach requires educators to know the attainment and progress of each student. Learning analytics can be used to make this scalable for large student populations" (Bartle, 2015).

While schools need to make better use of student outcomes data and know the best data to use to track and measure improvement, Jim Collins in his book *Good to Great* argues "Technology can accelerate a transformation, but technology cannot cause a transformation" (Collins, 2001).

Leadbeater argues "The key issue for this century is whether schools can provide more children with relationships that support learning. What tools, policies, and institutions we use to achieve that goal is secondary." Therefore, the challenge is to use technology as a tool for enhancing relationships and for enhancing the direct learning needs for students (Leadbeater, 2008).

The Independent Schooling Sector

Independent schools have a long and successful history in implementing processes and practices that meet the needs of diverse learners, recognising that all learners, at times, potentially need their learning to be differentiated. To meet the individual needs of students, independent schools identify and select appropriate adjustments, interventions and other supports that will be provided to address the student's identified learning needs and build on their strengths.

Independent schools have a strong commitment to student wellbeing; a focus on support for students at transition points and dedicated staff and processes to support student wellbeing and access to external professional services if required. Independent schools also embrace parents as key partners in their child's education.

For the first time, PISA 2015 took an in-depth look at student wellbeing. Students were asked about a range of issues including their motivation to perform well in school; their relationships with their peers and teachers; and their home life. The PISA wellbeing survey findings support



the strong focus independent schools rightly place on student wellbeing and building positive partnerships with parents. PISA 2015 found students whose parents are interested in their schooling and regularly spend time talking with them achieve better results (OECD, 2017).

Independent school students achieve top marks: three in four met or exceeded PISA 2015 proficiency standards – well above the OECD average; almost one in five achieved the highest marks – twice as many as the OECD average (ACER, 2017).

ISQ's Teaching and Learning Academy is a flagship program that includes Coaching Partnerships and Research in Schools. Coaching Partnerships supports schools across Queensland to develop an onsite coach, or coaches, to work alongside their teachers to deliver quality instruction for improved student outcomes. Research in Schools builds the capacity of teachers to deliver research-based practice in ways that promote data driven instruction, differentiation and learner engagement.

Current Priorities

The Queensland Department of Education and Training (DET) acknowledges that learning and wellbeing are inextricably linked. Students learn best when their wellbeing is optimised, and they develop a strong sense of wellbeing when they experience success in learning. To this end, the DET *Learning and wellbeing framework* has been used in Queensland state schools since 2012. The framework connects the elements of curriculum, environment, policy and community that enhance wellbeing for learning and life (Queensland Government, 2015b).

Advancing Education states: "We know that the best outcomes can be achieved through learner-centred approaches that respond to individual and group differences, promote collaborative learning and harness students' interests. A learner-centred approach challenges each student to reach their potential. The wellbeing of each student is essential in getting them ready to learn."

Future Focus

- All schools need to ensure that every learners' needs are met to maximise student outcomes. Continued support must be provided for those students with the highest support needs, as currently provided through the Education Adjustment Program.
- Further collaboration with relevant Queensland Government agencies (such as Health and Education) to promote consistent, evidence-based practices to enhance student wellbeing in schools and reduce the impact of mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.
- Increased access to specialist support services for students with disability, such as therapy-specific expertise and resources. There is an increasing number of students with disability in all schools and current Queensland Government funding has not kept pace with the increasing numbers.



FUTURE FOCUS: Internationalisation and Global Citizenship



The fast pace of technological change is impacting the global and Australian economies and workforce. Young people need a global skill set to be competitive in the global marketplace. Young Queenslanders will require intercultural understandings to work with people from many different cultures. Schools that make internationalisation an integral aspect of their teaching and learning are better placed to provide students with the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to be global citizens.

The Evidence

Internationally, the OECD has identified Global Citizenship as a sustainable development goal for 2030. In 2018, PISA will assess for Global Competency. Schools need to ensure students develop these skills. The so-called soft-skills (critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding and personal and social capability) are in the General Capabilities within the Australian Curriculum. The Mitchell Institute report *Preparing young people for the future of work* calls for the General Capabilities to be assessed and reported on (Torii & O'Connell, 2017).

The Independent Sector

Internationalisation, a response to globalisation, has long been on the radar of independent schools. Independent schools have extensive global relationships and connections through sister school and exchange programs. School groups travel abroad for language, cultural, sporting and service learning programs. They also go on history and music tours.

In response to the policy drivers outlined previously, ISQ has been increasingly supporting schools to consider how their curriculum planning and offerings, and their extra-curricular activities more closely align to develop the General Capabilities identified as attributes of global citizens. ISQ also offers professional learning for language teachers to train other teachers at their schools.

International students enrolled in Queensland independent schools contributed around \$28.5 million to the Queensland economy through expenditure on tuition and boarding fees in 2013-14, and it is estimated that a similar amount was expended on goods and other services in Queensland during this time. ISQ has supported and contributed positively to international education in Queensland since 2003. In 2016, there were 1,716 overseas student enrolments in 75 independent schools (Independent Schools Queensland, 2016b). However, as illustrated above, internationalisation is much more than enrolling overseas students.

Current Priorities

Advancing education – an action plan for education in Queensland says the Queensland Government will increase the number of international students by working collaboratively across education sectors and government agencies to develop products and market Queensland's education services. The action plan also says it will build global citizens through expanding the study of culture and languages, however it only applies to state schools.



Queensland's International Education and Training Strategy – to Advance Queensland 2016-2026 details 36 specific initiatives aimed at boosting Queensland's international education and training sector (Queensland Government, 2016).

ISQ has successfully applied for funding from the Queensland Government's Queensland International Education and Training Partnership Fund, managed by the International Education and Training Unit within Trade and Investment Queensland on behalf of a consortium of independent schools. This funding support is enabling translations of independent school profiles to promote to international markets.

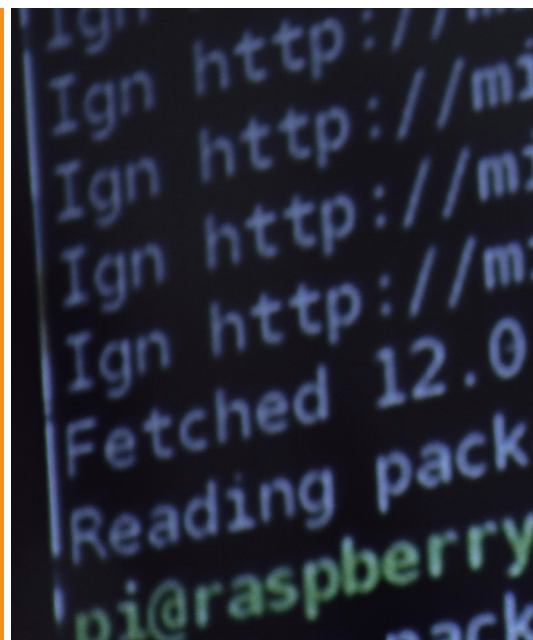
The Queensland Department of Education and Training's support for development of global citizenship in state schools can also be seen in the increasing number of state schools offering International Baccalaureate programmes and becoming accredited international schools by the Council of International Schools.

Future Focus

- If Queensland is to be globally connected, all school sectors must be equally valued and supported in development of strategic relationships and activities at home and abroad. A coordinated and integrated approach to internationalisation is needed to benefit all students.
- High quality international education programs and projects are delivered by public and private providers across all sectors. Queensland Government to be inclusive of all school sectors when identifying, planning for and promoting international opportunities and connections. This could include hosting events, visiting education delegations, sharing resources for developing sister school relationships or planning school trips overseas.
- Growth in Queensland's international education sector can be achieved if there is a genuinely whole of government approach to engage with all stakeholders, public and private, in all regions and internationally, to improve educational outcomes for all students – international and Australian – choosing to be educated by Queensland institutions.



FUTURE FOCUS: 21st Century Skills and Technologies



Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills are recognised globally as a major driver of economic growth. Education systems worldwide have also developed frameworks with an increased emphasis on developing the 21st century skills and attributes students need to prepare them for higher education and work in a complex and rapidly changing world.

The Evidence

In 2015, the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) identified a common skill set for 21st century skills based on national and international research. It defined 21st century skills as: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork, personal and social skills, information and communication technologies (ICT) skills. Along with literacy and numeracy, QCAA added 21st century skills to the Underpinning Principles in the Senior Syllabuses (Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA), 2017).

Digital disruption has spawned world-wide trends in education such as mobile devices allowing for anywhere teaching and learning, video-enabled classrooms, gamification, 3D printing, robotics and the maker movement to enable creation. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has developed two subjects, Design and Technologies and Digital Technologies from Foundation to Year 8. These subjects are optional from Years 9 to 10 (Australian Curriculum, 2017). QCAA is currently going through the endorsement process regarding the Technologies syllabus for 2018 for senior secondary.

The Independent Sector

Independent schools have been recognised for their innovation and leading role in the provision of STEM. ISQ is working with communities of schools grouped in a geographic location, for example Bundaberg and Maryborough, to create STEM partnerships. Schools are being linked with scientists and local groups such as public libraries so community and students are learning together. ISQ has also supported schools to engage in makerspaces through professional learning opportunities and an online community in order to support the learning of 21st century skills.

ISQ supports independent schools to provide an integrated applied approach to STEM education. The nature of STEM is to solve problems and ask questions. This can be empowering for students and supports them to develop 21st century skills.

Independent schools are teaching 21st century skills and technologies in a wide variety of ways including creating partnerships with start-ups, local and national industries to ignite and transform student ideas into real-world enterprises.



Current Priorities

Advance Queensland – an action plan for education in Queensland is fast-tracking the Digital Technologies curriculum in state schools for STEM, coding and robotics, developing virtual STEM academies to deliver programs for the best and brightest in Years 5 to 9, promoting participation and STEM for girls through STEM Girl Power Camp – all for state schools. The STEM Cross Sector Reference Group is a good model of collaboration.

The Queensland Chief Scientist is *Engaging Queenslanders in Science* by promoting STEM, girls in STEM and STEAM through the Queensland Museum's World Science Festival (Queensland Government, 2017a).

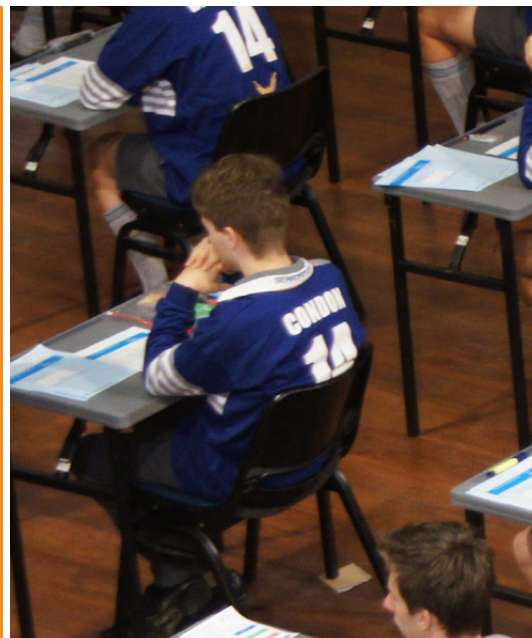
In an Australian first, the Queensland Government has appointed the Queensland Chief Entrepreneur, Mark Sowerby, who plays a vital role in building and promoting the importance and contribution of entrepreneurship and investment in Queensland. He will be involved in helping budding and existing entrepreneurs access the Advance Queensland initiatives, mentors and events. The Queensland Chief Entrepreneur holds this role for 12 months (Queensland Government, 2017b).

Future Focus

- If Queensland is to truly prepare students for technological advancements teacher capability needs to be supported through professional development, particularly for digital technology. Teachers need to move from: knowing how to passively use the technology, to: knowing how to teach creative use of the technology. For example, Year 6 teachers must know binary code before they can teach it. Funding is needed to support teacher release for professional learning to allow this to occur.
- A co-ordinated, cross sector commitment to STEM education in schools is needed with more targeted, ongoing support for teacher upskilling, and long-term industry partnerships instead of short-term projects.
- Queensland Government to facilitate easy and on-going access for non-state school teachers to the Coding Academy and short courses through universities to enable upskilling of teachers.
- Through its *Advance Queensland* action plan, the Queensland Government will improve access to technology for learning through better broadband connectivity for state schools. Reliable, high-speed internet access is needed for all schools. Funding to assist with this, or the Queensland Government to lobby the Australian Government for access to reliable broadband is needed.



FUTURE FOCUS: Rigorous Curriculum and Assessment



Top performing education systems around the world tend to have a curriculum that is rigorous, with a greater focus on depth than breadth, and an alignment of the assessment to the curriculum priorities.

The Evidence

Rigorous curriculum is informed by research. According to Robert J. Marzano in *What Works in Schools*, “The first school-level factor is a ‘guaranteed and viable curriculum.’ I rank this as the first factor, having the most impact on student achievement” (Marzano, 2003).

Masters argues “Ideally, a curriculum would promote both broad and deep learning; in practice, an emphasis on one form of learning often limits opportunities for the other. For example, school curricula are sometimes described as being ‘crowded’ with content that teachers are expected to cover. The attempt to provide students with some knowledge about a wide range of topics can lead to ‘mile-wide, inch-deep’ curricula that result in superficial learning, incomplete understandings of core concepts and limited ability to transfer and apply knowledge to unfamiliar contexts” (Masters, 2016).

The Independent Schooling Sector

Queensland has adopted and implemented the Australian Curriculum without modification. Queensland independent schools which are teaching the full complement of the Australian Curriculum have played a leading role in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

ISQ’s support for independent schools in implementing the Australian Curriculum includes; school and curriculum leaders’ briefings and workshops held each semester throughout the state. Teachers have opportunities to attend social moderation gatherings to discuss student work and develop consistency in the judgements they make about grades. Overall, around 3,000 school leaders and teachers attended ISQ events related to Australian Curriculum in 2016.

ACARA is currently working on a new generation Australian Curriculum for 2020 which sits within the broader OECD plan for 2030 to ensure agreement to common factors of what makes a quality curriculum.

In July 2017, ISQ with the support of ACARA, will bring together policy makers from across the country, curriculum experts and schools to share their thinking at two forums led by Professor Ronald Barnett from the University College London Institute of Education. Professor Barnett is an internationally acclaimed higher education analyst and author who has spent the past 30 years challenging tertiary institutions to re-imagine themselves and is now posing this same question to school educators.



Current Priorities

In response to ongoing concerns about curriculum overcrowding and associated workload issues from all schooling sectors the Queensland Education Minister tasked QCAA to identify a Core P-10 Curriculum for Queensland schools. The QCAA's Core P-10 Australian Curriculum report was released in July 2016 with recommendations reducing duplication and combining some subjects. However, little attention has been given to the General Capabilities and their role for students.

Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) materials have been developed and shared via Scootle (set up via The Learning Federation out of Education Services Australia).

Major reforms to senior schooling and the tertiary entrance system have been announced by the Queensland Education Minister with the new system to start with Year 11s in 2019. The Minister has confirmed the number and type of senior subjects that would contribute to the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) which will replace the Overall Position (OP).

Future Focus

- All Queensland schooling sectors to engage proactively in the creation of the Australian Curriculum 2020 based on observations and learning from implementation of the current curriculum and the new senior syllabuses.
- QCAA to meaningfully demonstrate the importance of the General Capabilities in Years 11 and 12, and provide explicit instruction on what to teach for Creativity as it will be tested via PISA in 2018 for global competence.
- Rigorous and continued monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the new senior secondary assessment is necessary to learn what is not working and address it quickly.

Conclusion

Systemic improvement in school education requires a long-term commitment to continuing the reform agenda. Continuous improvement requires continuous change and change is hard. However, this issues paper argues that all schooling sectors; state, Catholic and independent, must step up to the challenge and work together for the sake of our children's future.

Queensland's school education system has been the subject of significant reform over the past decade. The reforms have resulted in major structural shifts. While it is difficult to attribute specific gains in student achievement to different reforms, it is clear that Queensland has made recognisable improvements in a number of areas.

The challenge for Queensland education now, is to prioritise the hardest work of all – unpacking what a quality, engaging, globally relevant and profoundly impactful education experience is for different groups of students and scaling it up to produce better outcomes for all.



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