

Students with Disability

Students with disability (SWD) are verified under an Education Adjustment Program (EAP) and eligible for financial assistance.

Key Points

SWD enrolments in Queensland independent schools continues to increase, along with the number of schools that cater for these students. In the last decade SWD enrolments have increased at a rate of 10.7% per annum. In 2020 independent schools catered for 4,706.4 FTE students, compared to 1,701 FTE students in 2010.

In the same period students with disability, as a proportion of all students attending independent schools, increased each year. In 2010, students with disability represented 1.6% of all students attending independent schools. By 2020 this proportion had increased to 3.7%.

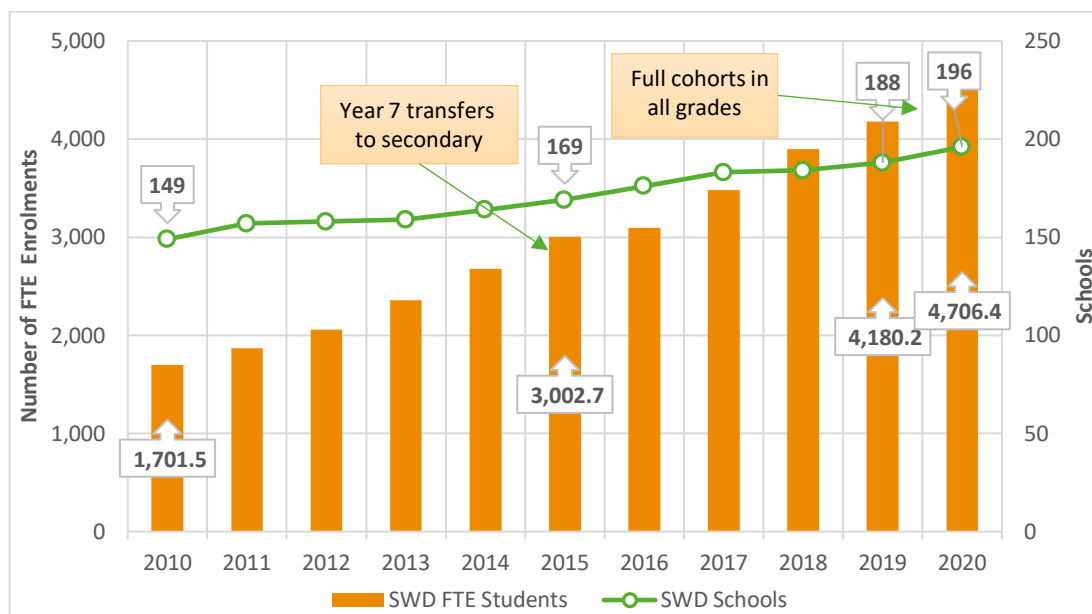
The number of schools catering for students with disability has also increased over time, with 196 independent schools catering for students with disability in 2020 compared with 149 schools in 2010 (90% and 83% of independent schools, respectively).

Highest numbers of SWD had an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) impairment, representing 64.7% of all impairments.

Enrolments

In 2020 the independent school sector catered for 4,706.4 SWD full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments, an increase of 526.2 FTE enrolments from 2019 when 4,180.2 FTE SWD enrolments were evidenced in independent schools. This is a 12.6% increase in enrolments in the past year (refer Figure 1).

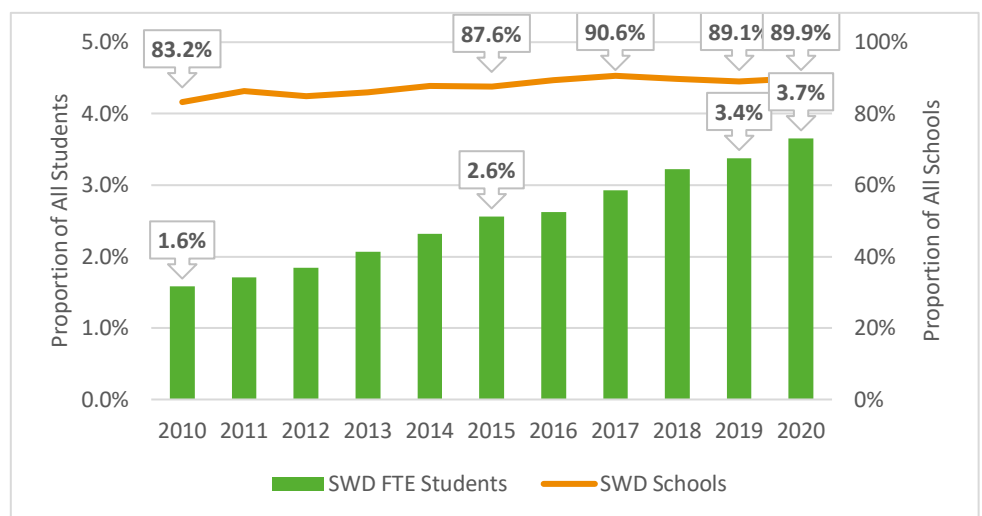
Figure 1: SWD Enrolments & Number of Schools Attended, 2014-19



The increase in SWD enrolments in 2020 continues a pattern of consistent growth, with the number of students with disability increasing each year. Over the last decade, from 2010 to 2020, SWD enrolments have almost tripled; increasing from 1,701.5 FTE enrolments in 2010 to 4,706.4 FTE enrolments in 2020 (+3,005.9 enrolments). This is equivalent to an average increase of 10.7% per annum.

In 2020 these students were catered for by 196 schools, eight more than the number of schools that catered for SWD enrolments in 2019 and 47 more schools than the number that catered for SWD enrolments in 2010 (refer Figure 1 above). This number of schools that have catered for SWD enrolments in 2020 represented 89.9% of all independent schools in 2020. In preceding years, from 2010 to 2019, the number of schools catering for SWD increased from 149 to 188. The proportion of independent schools catering for SWD enrolments ranged from 83.2% of all independent schools catering for SWDs in 2010 to 90.6% of all independent schools in 2017 (refer Figure 1 above and Figure 2 below).

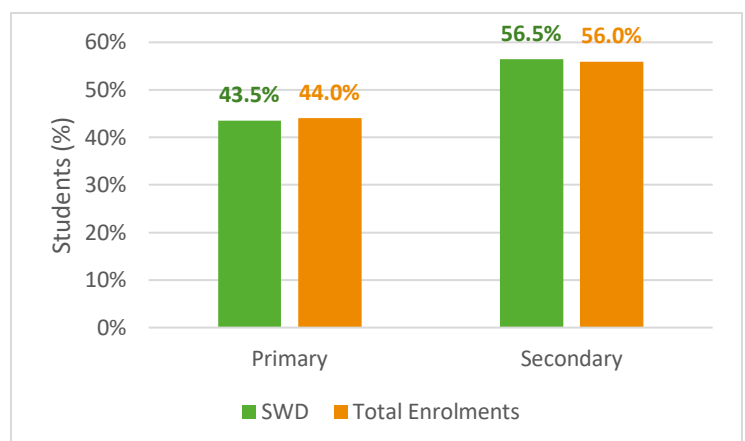
Figure 2: Proportion of SWD Enrolments of Independent School Enrolments, 2010-2020



The proportion of independent school enrolments represented by SWDs has also increased consistently over the last decade. In 2020 SWD enrolments represented 3.7% of all FTE enrolments, more than double the proportion represented by SWD enrolments in 2010 (1.6%) (refer Figure 2).

In 2020, more SWD enrolments were in secondary than in primary; with primary student enrolments representing 43.5% of SWD enrolments and secondary students representing 56.5% of SWD. This distribution of SWDs across primary and secondary is in accord with the number of primary students and secondary students attending independent schools (refer Figure 3). As such there is not a higher prevalence of SWDs in primary than in secondary, with primary SWD enrolments representing 3.6% of all primary students and secondary SWD enrolments representing 3.7% of all secondary students.

Figure 3: Comparison of Primary and Secondary Students, 2020



Size of Enrolments

Of the 196 independent schools catering for SWD in 2020, four schools had SWD proportions in excess of 95% with three of these schools catering solely for SWD (refer Table 1). These four schools collectively catered for 7% of total SWD enrolments.

For most schools catering for SWD, the SWD proportion represented less than 5% of the schools' total enrolment (129 of 196 schools or two-thirds of schools catering for SWD). These schools catered for 56% of total SWD enrolments.

Table 1: SWDs as a Proportion of Total School Enrolments, 2020

SWD as a Proportion of All School Students	Number of Schools	Percentage of SWD Enrolments
None	22	
<1%	15	1%
1%-<2%	43	13%
2%-<5%	71	39%
5%-<10%	43	24%
10%-<20%	12	10%
20%-<50%	8	6%
50%-<95%	0	0%
95%-100%	4	7%
Total	218	100%

Table 2: Size of SWD Enrolments at Independent Schools catering for SWD, 2020

SWD as a Proportion of All School Students	Number of Schools	SWD Enrolments	Percentage of SWD Enrolments
None	22	0	0%
<5 Students	36	84	2%
5-<10 Students	26	163.6	3%
10-<20 Students	40	576.6	12%
20-<30 Students	38	952.2	20%
30-<50 Students	33	1,227.6	26%
50-<100 Students	20	1,380.4	29%
100+ Students	3	322	7%
Total	218	4,706.4	100%

Over half (52%) of those schools that catered for SWDs in 2020 enrolled less than 20 SWDs, with 102 schools catering for less than 20 SWDs. These schools catered for 17% of SWDs enrolled in independent schools (refer Table 2). Another 46% of SWDs were catered for by 71 schools which contained from 20 to <50 SWDs, while another 20 schools each catered for 50 to <100 SWDs, together accounting for 29% of SWD enrolments. The balance of 3 schools each catered for at least 100 SWDs, together accounting for only 7% of SWDs.

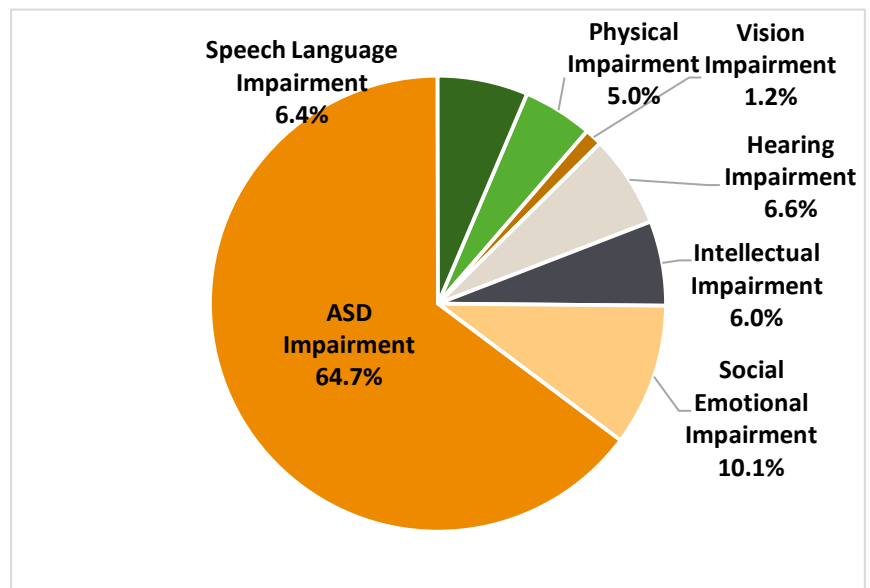
Impairment Types

A total of 4,776 students with disability attended independent schools in 2020 (as opposed to 4,706.4 FTE enrolments). Most of these students had one disability (98.6%). Further 1.3% of students had two disabilities, with only 0.06% of students having more than two disabilities. In total these 4,776 students evidenced 4,847 cases of various impairments.

The most common verified impairment type reported was Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (refer Figure 4). In 2020 this disability represented 64.7% of all impairments. Five years earlier, in 2015, ASD impairment represented as 56% of all impairments.

The next most common verified disability was Social Emotional Impairment (10.1%), followed by Speech Language Impairment (6.4%), followed closely by Hearing Impairment (6.6%) and Intellectual Impairment (both 6.0%) and Physical Impairment (5.0%). Only 1.2% of verified disabilities referred to Vision Impairment.

Figure 4: Impairments, 2020 (%)



A comparison of data for 2015 and 2020 indicates instances of impairment catered for by independent schools increased by 56% in the five-year period. The highest percentage growth by impairment type occurred with respect to Social Emotional Impairment (refer Table 3). Instances of this impairment increased by 200% from 2015 to 2020 (an increase from 163 cases in 2015 to 489 cases in 2020). However, in numerical terms, highest growth occurred with ASD, with instances increasing by 1,397 (an 80% increase).

Vision Impairment instances had the third highest increase from 2015 to 2020 (a 71% increase, reflecting an additional 25 cases) followed by Physical Impairment (a 33% increase reflecting 59 additional cases). Hearing Impairment increased by 16%, within the same timeframe with cases increasing by 43. Instances of Speech Language Impairment and Intellectual Impairment both declined in the five-year period, by 19% and 12% respectively. Refer Table 3 below.



Table 3: Growth in Disability Impairment Types, 2015-20

IMPAIRMENT	2015-2020					
	Number		Percentage		Number	Percentage Growth
	2015	2020	2015	2020		
Physical Impairment	181	240	6%	5%	59	33%
Vision Impairment	35	60	1%	1%	25	71%
Hearing Impairment	275	318	9%	7%	43	16%
Intellectual Impairment	331	291	11%	6%	-40	-12%
Social Emotional Impairment	163	489	5%	10%	326	200%
ASD Impairment	1,741	3,138	56%	65%	1,397	80%
Speech Language Impairment	383	311	12%	6%	-72	-19%
Total Impairments	3,109	4,847	100%	100%	1,738	56%
Students with Impairments	3,053	4,776				
Total FTE SWD students	3,002.7	4,706.4				