

Special Assistance School Enrolments

Special Assistance Schools are accredited non-state schools that cater specifically for children and young people who have disengaged from mainstream education and are not participating in vocational education and training or employment. Special Assistance Schools do not charge tuition fees and generally attract a higher level of funding per student than other schools.

Key Points

Special Assistance School (SAS) enrolments at independent schools continue to increase, with enrolments increasing by 23.4% or 442 students from 2019 to 2020. In 2020 there were 2,335.4 FTE enrolments at SAS schools. Five years earlier, in 2015, enrolments were in the order of 921 FTE students.

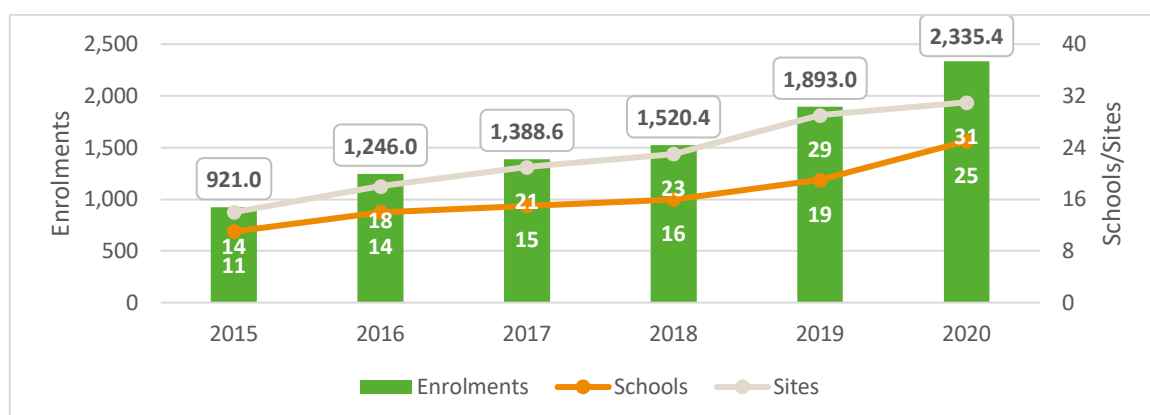
Commensurate with enrolment growth the number of schools catering for SAS enrolments continues to increase, with the number of schools more than doubling in the five-year period from 2015 to 2020; increasing from eleven (11) schools in 2015 to 25 schools in 2020.

Independent schools have been the major provider of education at Special Assistance Schools in the non-government sector since 2016. In 2020 two-thirds of SAS enrolments attended independent schools.

Enrolments

In 2020 the independent school sector catered for 2,335.4 FTE enrolments in SAS schools, a significant increase from 1,893.0 FTE enrolments in 2019. This 442.4 FTE enrolment increase is equivalent to a 23.4% increase (refer Figure 1). A similarly high rate of increase has been experienced in the last five-year period from 2015 to 2020 when FTE enrolments increased by 1,414.4 or 154% with a 20.5% average annual growth rate.

Figure 1: SAS FTE Enrolments & Number of Schools Attended, 2015-20



Number of Independent Schools

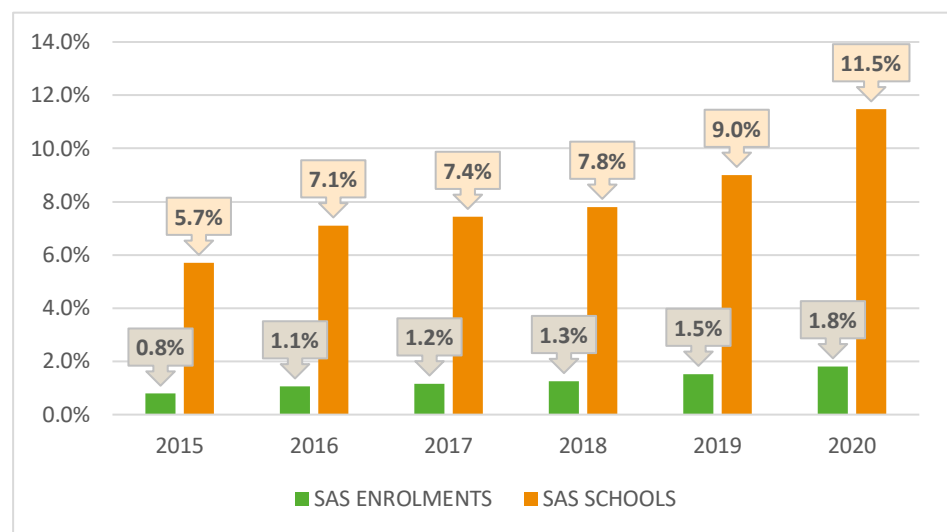
The number of SAS independent schools has also increased over time, from 11 schools in 2015 to 25 schools in 2020 (refer Figure 1). A number of SAS schools however operate from a number of sites, when sites are considered, the number of SAS sites increased from 14 in 2015 to 31 sites in 2020.

It is of interest to note that from 2019 to 2020, the number of schools increased by six, the highest increase in school numbers experienced in any year from 2015, while the number of SAS sites increased by only two. This pattern reflects a number of SAS sites which were previously campuses of a SAS school being re-designated as separate schools in 2020.

Proportion of Independent Schools

Five years ago, in 2015, the 11 SAS schools represented 5.7% of the 183 independent schools in Queensland. In 2020 the number of SAS independent schools represented 11.5% of 218 independent schools in Queensland (refer Figure 2).

Figure 2: SAS Student Share of Independent School Enrolments and Schools, 2015-2020



SAS student enrolments, as a proportion of independent school enrolments, has also increased, with rates of increase exceeding 20% each year in the 2015 to 2020 period.

In 2020 SAS enrolments represented 1.8% of all FTE enrolments at independent schools, up from 0.8% in 2015 (refer Figure 2).

Year Level Structure

Most students attending SAS schools were enrolled in secondary year levels, almost 98% in 2020, a similar percentage as previous years.

Only 38 FTE students were enrolled in primary year levels in 2020.

Highest SAS enrolment levels in 2020 were in Year 10 with 546 students (refer Table 1). This has been the case for all years since 2018. Prior to 2018 the largest number of SAS students were in Year 11.

Table 1: SAS Enrolments by Year Level, 2015-20

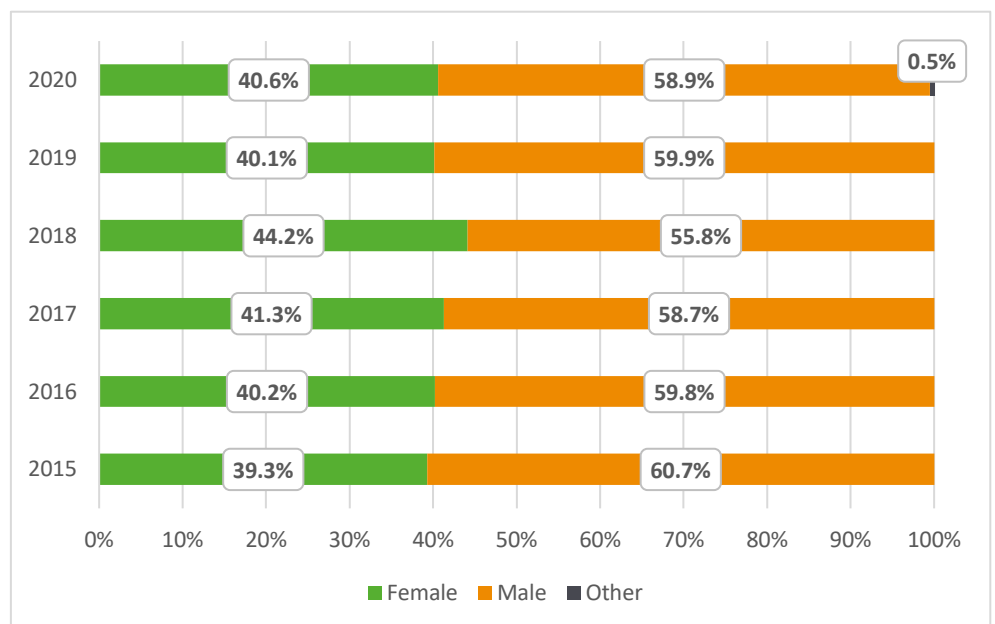
Year	Prep	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Ungr.	TOTAL
2015	0	0	0	0	2	4	10	22	35	80	219	301	212	36	921
2016	0	0	0	0	2	3	13	35	90	148	275	369	269	42	1,246
2017	0	0	1	0	4	3	14	60	118	236	231	383	299	40	1,389
2018	0	0	0	1	6	10	14	70	174	251	344	301	304	45	1,520
2019	0	0	0	0	7	15	18	120	200	319	406	469	290	49	1,893
2020	0	0	0	1	3	11	23	124	279	384	546	502	409	53	2,335

Gender

As indicated in Figure 3, there are gender differences in SAS student enrolment patterns, with male students over-represented.

In 2020 gender data was collected according to three categories; males, females and others. Males represented 40.6% of SAS students attending independent schools while females represented 58.9%. These proportions are similar in the period from 2015 to 2019. In addition, 0.5% of students were not categorised as males or females.

Figure 3: SAS Enrolments by Gender, 2015-2020



Sector Share

Since 2015 the proportion of SAS students attending independent schools has increased significantly, from a low of 47.6% in 2015 to 54.5% in 2016; becoming the major SAS provider in the non-government sector.

In 2020 independent schools catered for two-thirds (66.6%) of SAS students enrolled in the non-government sector. The balance of 33.4%, attended Catholic schools (refer Figure 4).

Figure 4: SAS Enrolments by Sector, 2020

