

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 continue to increase, along with the number of schools that cater for these students. In the past decade SWD enrolments have increased at a rate of 10% per annum. In 2021, independent schools catered for 4,838.4 FTE students with disability, compared with 1,866 FTE students in 2011.

In the same period students with disability, as a proportion of all students attending independent schools, increased each year until 2020 before decreasing slightly in 2021. In 2011, students with disability represented 1.7% of all students attending independent schools. By 2020, this proportion had increased to 3.7% and reduced to 3.6% in 2021.

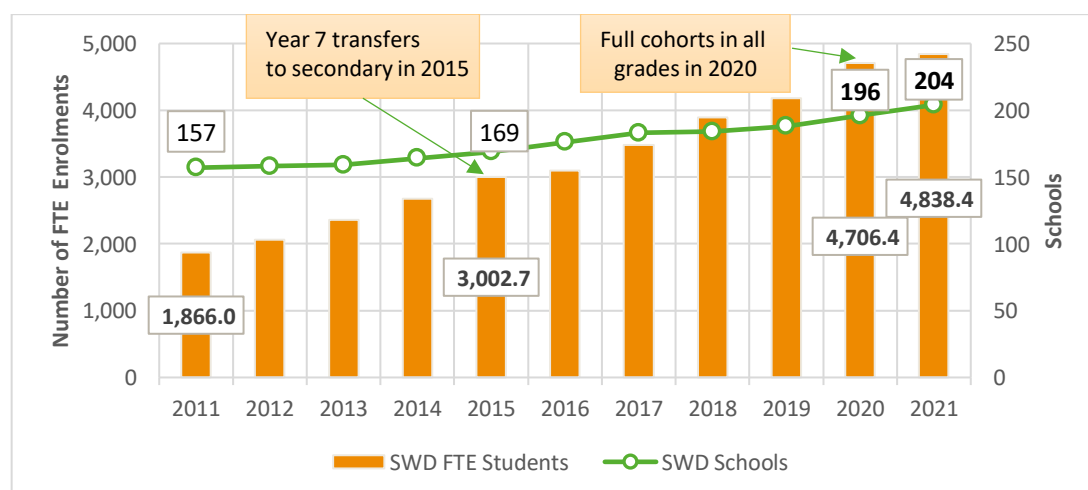
The number of schools catering for students with disability has also increased over time, with 204 independent schools catering for students with disability in 2021 compared with 157 schools in 2011 (90% and 86% of independent schools, respectively).

The highest numbers of students with disability had an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) impairment, representing 66.9% of all impairments.

Enrolments

In 2021, the independent school sector catered for 4,838.4 SWD full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments, an increase of 132.0 FTE enrolments from 2020 when 4,706.4 FTE SWD enrolments were evidenced in independent schools. This is a 2.8% increase in enrolments in the past year, significantly lower than the 12.6% increase from 2019 to 2020 (refer Figure 1).

Figure 1: SWD Enrolments & Number of Schools Attended, 2011-2021

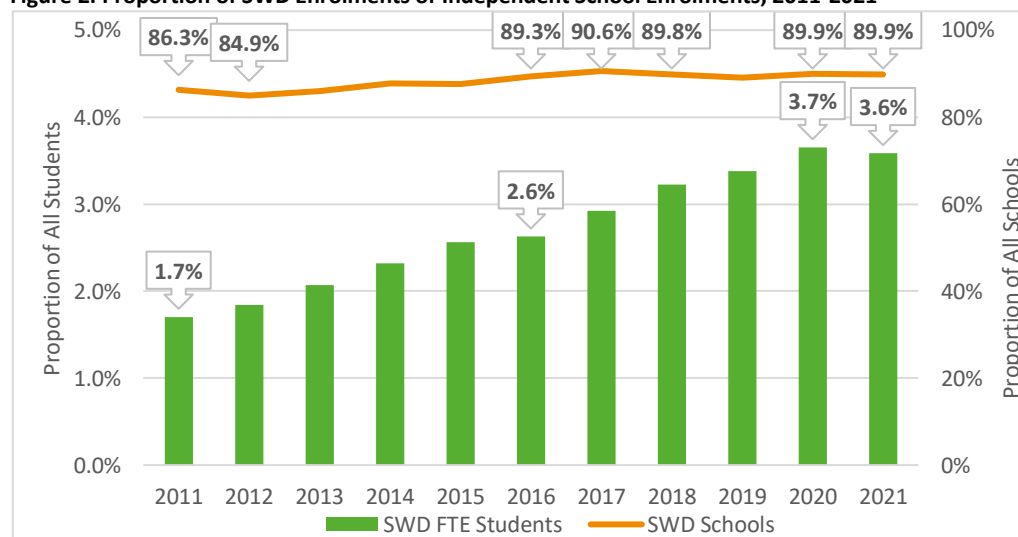


The increase in SWD enrolments in 2021 continues a pattern of consistent growth, with the number of students with disability increasing each year. Over the past decade, from 2011 to 2021, SWD enrolments have increased by 2,972.4 enrolments; increasing from 1,866 FTE enrolments in 2011 to 4,838.4 FTE enrolments in 2021. This is equivalent to an average increase of 10.0% per annum.

In 2021, these students were catered for by 204 schools, eight more than the number of schools that catered for SWD enrolments in 2020 and 47 more schools than the number of schools that catered for SWD enrolments in 2011 (refer Figure 1 above). The number of schools catering for SWD enrolments in 2021 represents 89.9% of all independent schools in 2021. In preceding years, from 2011 to 2020, the number of schools catering for SWD students increased from 157 to 196, with the proportion of independent schools catering for SWD enrolments ranging from 84.9% of all independent schools catering for SWDs in 2012 to 90.6% of all independent schools enrolling SWD in 2017 (refer Figure 1 above and Figure 2 below).

The proportion of independent school enrolments represented by SWDs has also increased over the past decade. From 2011 to 2020, the proportion of SWD enrolments at independent schools more than doubled; increasing from 1.7% to 3.7% (refer Figure 2). This proportion decreased slightly to 3.6% in 2021.

Figure 2: Proportion of SWD Enrolments of Independent School Enrolments, 2011-2021



Of SWD enrolments in 2021, more SWD enrolments were in secondary than in primary, with primary student enrolments representing 41.0% of SWD enrolments and secondary students representing 59.0% of SWD. This distribution of SWDs across primary and secondary differs slightly from the total number of primary students and secondary students attending independent schools (refer

Figure 3: Comparison of Primary and Secondary Students, 2021

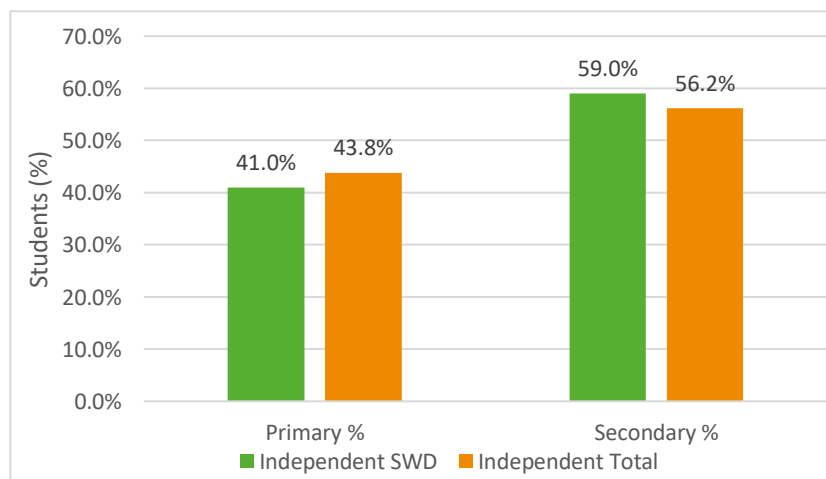


Figure 3). As such there is a slightly higher prevalence of SWDs in secondary than in primary, with secondary SWD enrolments representing 3.8% of all secondary students and primary SWD enrolments representing 3.4% of all primary students.

Size of Enrolments

Of the 204 independent schools catering for SWD in 2021, four schools catered solely for SWD (refer Table 1). These four schools catered for 8% of total SWD enrolments.

For most schools catering for SWD, the SWD proportion represented less than 5% of the schools' total enrolment (146 of 204 schools or 72% of schools catering for SWD). These schools catered for 58% of total SWD enrolments.

Table 1: SWDs as a Proportion of Total School Enrolments, 2021

SWD as a Proportion of All School Students	Number of Schools	Percentage of SWD Enrolments
None	23	0%
<1%	16	1%
1%-<2%	42	12%
2%-<5%	88	45%
5%-<10%	36	21%
10%-<20%	10	7%
20%-<50%	8	6%
100%	4	8%
Total	227	100%

Table 2: Size of SWD Enrolments at Independent Schools catering for SWD, 2021

SWD as a Proportion of All School Students	Number of Schools	SWD Enrolments	Percentage of SWD Enrolments
None	23	0	0%
<5 Students	44	98.5	2%
5-<10 Students	28	180.0	4%
10-<20 Students	38	533.9	11%
20-<30 Students	38	926.4	19%
30-<50 Students	33	1,248.4	26%
50-<100 Students	18	1,252.0	26%
100+ Students	5	599.2	12%
Total	227	4,838.4	100%

More than half (54%) of those schools that catered for SWDs in 2021 enrolled less than 20 SWDs, with 110 schools catering for less than 20 SWDs. These schools catered for 17% of SWDs enrolled in independent schools (refer Table 2). Another 45% of SWDs were catered for by 71 schools which contained from 20 to <50 SWDs, while another 18 schools each catered for 50 to <100 SWDs, together accounting for 26% of SWD enrolments. The balance of five schools each catered for at least 100 SWDs, together accounting for 12% of SWDs.

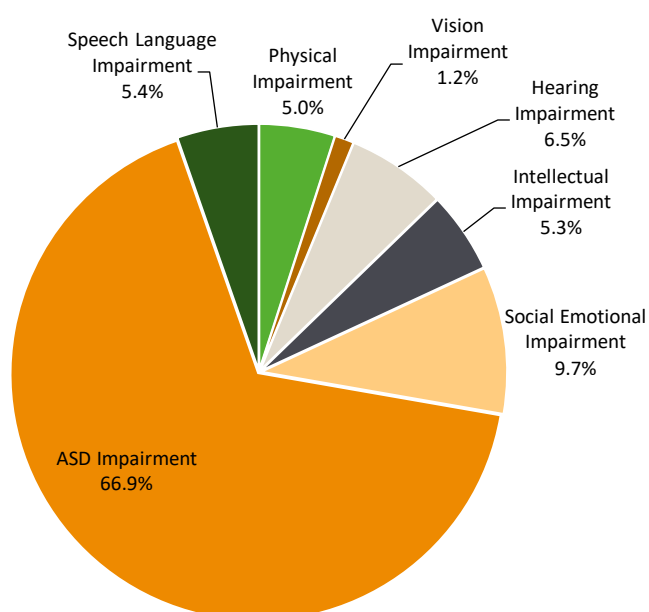
Impairment Types

A total of 4,901 students with disability attended independent schools in 2021 (as opposed to 4,838.4 FTE enrolments). Most of these students had one disability (98.7%). A further 1.3% of students had two disabilities, with only 0.06% of students having more than two disabilities. In total, these 4,901 students evidenced 4,970 cases of various impairments.

Figure 4: Impairments, 2021 (%)

The most common verified impairment type reported was Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (refer Figure 4). In 2021, this disability represented 66.9% of all impairments. Five years earlier, in 2015, ASD impairment represented 57% of all impairments.

The next most common verified disability was Social Emotional Impairment (9.7%), followed by Hearing Impairment (6.5%), Speech Language Impairment (5.4%), Intellectual Impairment (5.3%) and Physical Impairment (5.0%). Only 1.2% of verified disabilities referred to Vision Impairment.



A comparison of data for 2016 and 2021 indicates instances of impairment catered for by independent schools increased by 55% 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 138% from 2016 to 2021 (an increase from 202 cases in 2016 to 480 cases in 2021). However, in numerical terms, highest growth occurred with ASD, with instances increasing by 1,495 (an 82% increase).

Vision Impairment instances had the second highest increase from 2016 to 2021 (a 114% increase, reflecting an additional 33 cases) followed by Physical Impairment (a 43% increase reflecting 74 additional cases). Hearing Impairment instances increased by 14% within the same timeframe with cases increasing by 40. Instances of Speech Language Impairment and Intellectual Impairment both declined in the five-year period, by 34% and 7% respectively.

Table 3: Growth in Disability Impairment Types, 2016-2021

IMPAIRMENT	2016-2021					
	Number		Percentage		Number	Percentage Growth
	2016	2021	2016	2021		
Physical Impairment	173	247	5%	5%	74	43%
Vision Impairment	29	62	1%	1%	33	114%
Hearing Impairment	285	325	9%	7%	40	14%
Intellectual Impairment	286	265	9%	5%	-21	-7%
Social Emotional Impairment	202	480	6%	10%	278	138%
ASD Impairment	1,830	3,325	57%	67%	1,495	82%
Speech Language Impairment	400	266	12%	5%	-134	-34%
Total Impairments	3,205	4,970	100%	100%	1,765	55%
Students with Impairments	3,162	4,901				
Total FTE SWD students	3,094.6	4,838.44				