

## 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. They 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 FTE enrolments increasing by 27.2% or 635.2 FTE students from 2020 to 2021. In 2021 there were 2,970.6 FTE enrolments at SAS schools. Five years earlier, in 2016, enrolments were in the order of 1,246 FTE students.

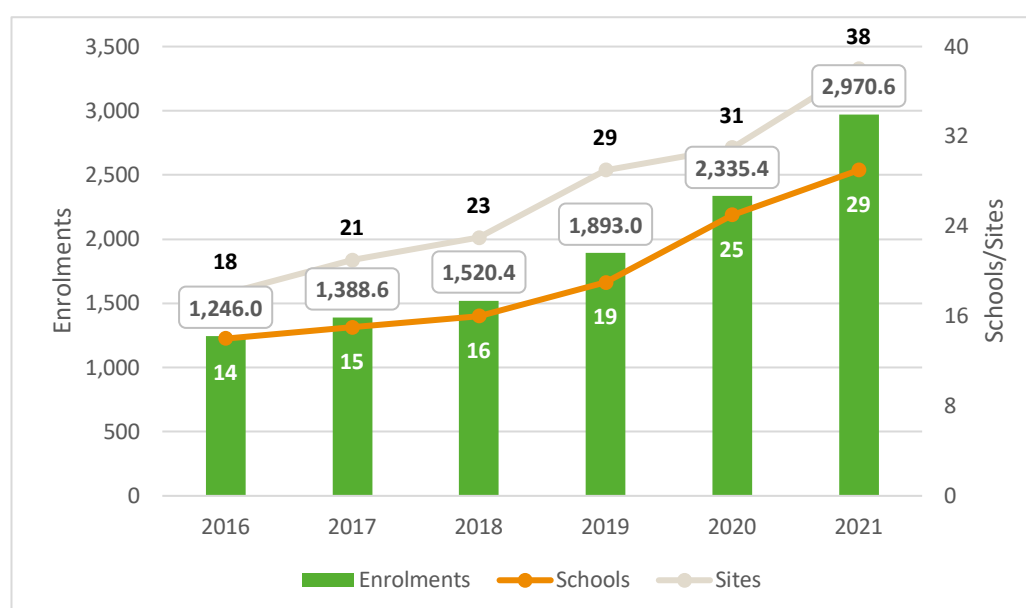
Commensurate with enrolment growth, the number of schools catering for SAS enrolments continues to increase, with the number of schools and sites both more than doubling in the five-year period from 2016 to 2021; with the number of schools increasing from 14 schools in 2016 to 29 schools in 2021 and the number of sites increasing from 18 to 38 in the same period.

Independent schools have been the major provider of education at Special Assistance Schools in the non-government sector since 2016 when 54.5% of FTE enrolments attended independent schools. This proportion has subsequently increased to just over 70% in 2021.

### Enrolments

In 2020 the independent school sector catered for 2,970.6 FTE enrolments in SAS schools, a significant increase from 2,335.4 FTE enrolments in 2020. This increase of 635.2 FTE enrolments is equivalent to an 27.2% increase in enrolments from 2020 to 2021 (refer Figure 1).

**Figure 1: SAS FTE Enrolments & Number of Schools Attended, 2016-21**



Similarly high rates of increase have been experienced in the last five years, from 2016 to 2020. Over this five-year period, full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments increased by 1,724.6 enrolments, which represents a 138% increase in the number of FTE enrolments and a 19% average annual growth rate.

Annual rates of increase in excess of 20% each year in the last three-year periods from 2018 to 2019 through to 2020 to 2021, with the highest rate of growth experienced from 2020 to 2021, with SAS enrolments increasing by 27.2%.

The number of SAS independent schools has also increased over time, with the number of SAS schools increasing from 14 schools in 2015 to 29 schools in 2021 (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 18 in 2016 to 38 sites in 2021.

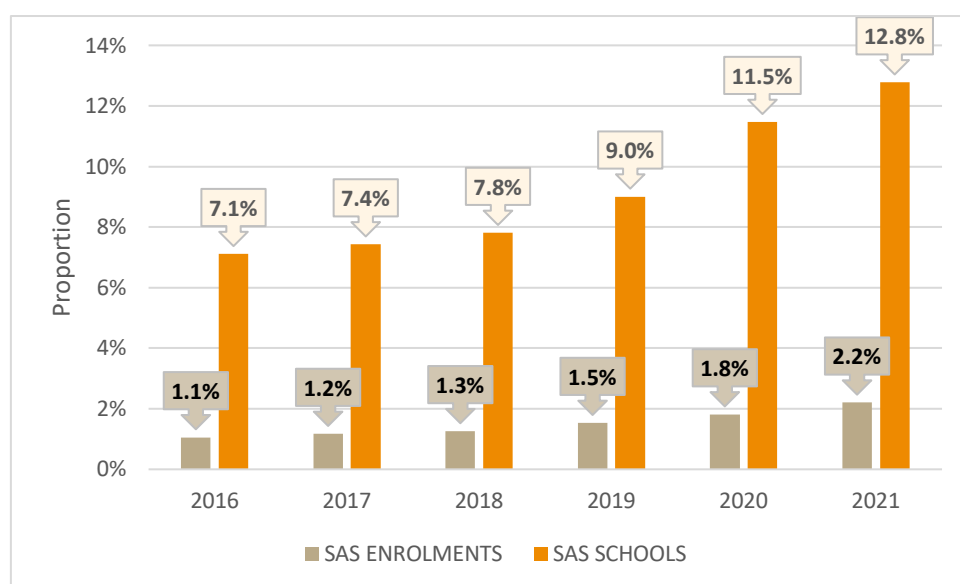
It is of interest to note that from 2020 to 2021, the number of schools increased by four, while the number of SAS sites increased by seven.

## Proportion of Independent Schools

**Figure 2: SAS Student Share of Independent School Enrolments and Schools, 2016-2021**

Five years ago in 2016, the 14 independent SAS schools represented 7.1% of the 197 independent schools in Queensland. In 2021, the number of SAS independent schools represented 12.8% of 227 independent schools in Queensland (refer Figure 2).

SAS student enrolments, as a proportion of independent school enrolments, has also increased. In 2021, SAS enrolments represented 2.2% of all FTE enrolments at independent SAS schools, up from 1.8% in 2020 (refer Figure 2).



## Year Level Structure

Most students attending SAS schools are enrolled in secondary year levels. In 2021, 98.5% of SAS students were enrolled in secondary year levels, a similar percentage to the previous year. Only 46 FTE students were enrolled in primary year levels in 2021.

Highest SAS enrolment levels were in Year 11 in 2021, with 788 students enrolled in 2021 (refer Table 1). In previous periods, with the exception of 2020 and 2018 when largest numbers were enrolled in Year 10, largest number of SAS students have been in Year 11.

**Table 1: SAS Enrolments by Grade, 2016-21**

**Data source: 2021 Non-State School Census (State) February Collection**  
Enrolment data refers to full-time equivalent (FTE) students.

Year	P	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Ungr.	TOTAL
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
2021	0	0	0	1	10	12	23	192	270	437	610	788	554	74	2,971

Note: FTE enrolments rounded.

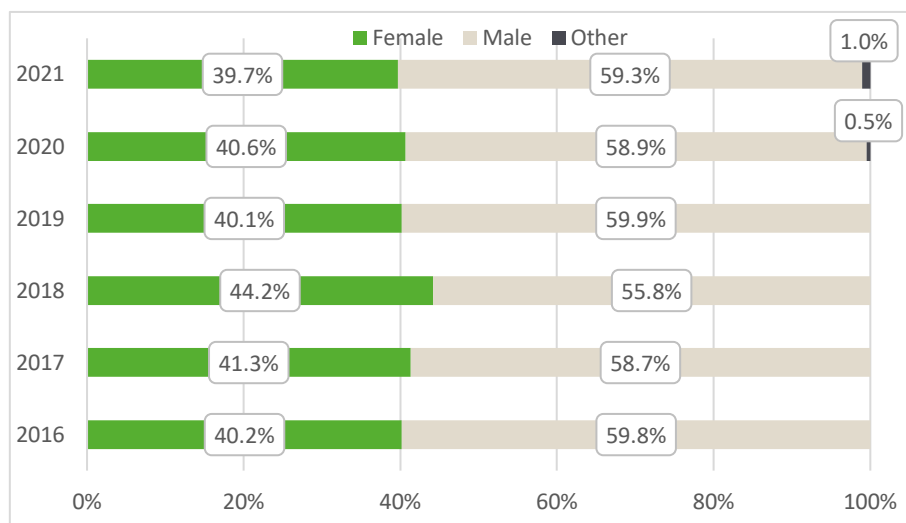
## Gender

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

In 2021, males represented 59.3% of SAS students attending independent schools, while females represented 39.7%. These proportions are not dissimilar to proportions reported in most years from 2016 to 2021 (with the exception of 2018 when a higher proportion of students were females).

In addition, 1.0% of students were not categorised as males or females, up from 0.5% in 2020 when gender data commenced being collected according to three categories; males, females and others.

Figure 3: SAS Enrolments by Gender, 2016-2021



## Size of Sites

Most SAS sites cater for relatively small numbers of students, with half of sites (19) catering for greater than 50 but less than 150 students (refer Table 2). These sites cater for nearly 60% of students.

Table 2: SAS Sites by Size - 2021

ENROLMENT SIZE	SAS SITES		FTE ENROLMENTS	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
>0-10	3	8%	21	1%
>10-25	7	18%	122	4%
>25-50	6	16%	226	8%
>50-100	10	26%	741	25%
>100-150	9	24%	1,017.6	34%
>150	3	8%	843	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2970.6</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Sector Share

Since 2016, the proportion of SAS students attending independent schools has increased significantly (refer Figure 4).

In 2021, of students attending SAS schools, 71.4% of these students attending independent schools, with the balance of 28.6% attending Catholic schools. Five years earlier, in 2016, just over 50% of SAS students attended independent schools (54.5%) with 45.5% of these students attending Catholic schools (refer Figure 4).

**Figure 4: SAS Enrolments by Sector, 2021**

