

# OUR PURPOSE AND GOALS

School level	Year level	Average age
Preschool	P	5
	1	6
	2	7
Primary	3	8
	4	9
	5	10
	6	11
	7	12
	8	13
Secondary	9	14
	10	15
	11	16
	12	17

## The Queensland Government's priorities of:

- Skilling Queensland — the Smart State
- more jobs for Queenslanders
- building Queensland's regions
- safer and more supportive communities
- better quality of life ...

## ... determine Education Queensland's purpose:

- to achieve the best educational outcomes for every student in our schools<sup>1</sup> ...

## ... from which are derived our seven goals:

- improved learning outcomes for all students (which is the result of the other goals)
- quality curriculum programs for all students
- effective teaching
- adoption of technology to enhance teaching, learning and management
- a safe, supportive and productive learning environment
- a skilled, confident and responsible workforce
- confidence in public education.

<sup>1</sup> A major review of Education Queensland's purpose began during the year. For more details, see page 14.

# WHO WE ARE, AND WHAT WE DO

## Overview

Education Queensland was established in 1860, the year after the creation of the State of Queensland.

Education Queensland provides instruction to all students in years 1 to 12 who attend Queensland government schools. School attendance is compulsory from ages six to fifteen, and 72 per cent of secondary students continue until the age of seventeen (year 12).

There are 1307 government schools in Queensland, all of which enrol boys and girls. Most students attend a school in their local area, but parents may send their children to a school outside their area, if places are available. Most schools are either primary (years 1 to 7) or secondary (years 8 to 12). Some country schools teach from the primary up to the middle or senior secondary levels.

Most primary schools also run preschool sessions for four- and five-year-olds. About half of these now offer full-day, preschool programs. Fifty-one special schools cater for students with severe disabilities.

Seven schools of distance education provide teaching for isolated students and students in other special circumstances, from the preschool to secondary levels. Distance education also allows students enrolled at other schools to supplement their selection of subjects.

The number of students at each school varies across the State, from a few to just over 2000 students. The average number of students in a state primary school is 250; the average number in a state secondary school is 800. While smaller schools provide a more intimate environment, larger schools can offer a wider variety of curriculum and extracurricular activities.

The number of students in a class is usually less than twenty-five students in years 1 to 3, thirty in years 4 to 10 and twenty-five in years 11 and 12.

## Facilities

Schools provide classrooms, resource centres, laboratories, assembly halls, tuckshops, playgrounds, and music and sporting facilities, while many have swimming pools. All schools in northern Queensland have some airconditioned rooms. This program will soon be expanded to include north-central Queensland schools.



Twenty-two environmental education centres and three outdoor education centres provide opportunities for students to study environmental and outdoor education topics in depth.

## Hours

Most schools schedule classes from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. (9.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m. in some secondary schools). A small number of schools are trialling different hours.

Students attend school for approximately 200 days each year, beginning in the last week of January and finishing in early December (late November for students in some secondary years and in remote locations). The school year is divided into two semesters, each of two terms.

## Organisation

Each school is led by a principal, who is assisted by one or more deputy principals in larger schools, as well as by heads of departments in secondary schools. Some schools have established school councils, which involve parents in establishing their school's strategic direction, and most have a Parents and Citizens' Association. Neighbouring schools often share specialist services.

## WHO WE ARE, AND WHAT WE DO (*continued*)

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Schools are supported by thirty-six district offices, which provide curriculum and administrative support and quality assurance services. The department's central office manages school funding, statewide teacher transfer, payroll, accounting and computer network services and provides educational leadership.

### Students

There are 465 000 students enrolled in government schools. About 28 000 (6%) of school students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, of whom 60 per cent live in the north of the State.

Approximately 8900 students (2%) have a physical, intellectual, hearing, or visual disability and require special support. Of these, 2600 attend special schools, while the others attend primary or secondary schools, studying alongside other children. Building modifications and specialist staff enable these students to succeed in mainstream schools.

Five per cent of students live in families in which a language other than English is spoken at home. The most commonly spoken languages other than English are Torres Strait Creole, an Aboriginal English, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Samoan.

Three hundred and seventeen fee-paying students from overseas, mostly from Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China, attended selected secondary schools. Another 4500 overseas students, mostly from Japan, visit schools each year on two-week or three-week study tours.

### Curriculum

Students in each primary school study a common curriculum adapted to local needs. Every student in years 6 and 7 studies a language other than English. Instrumental music is taught in all schools with more than 200 students, and in many smaller schools as well.

By belonging to a large system, schools are able to share resource materials and the latest information about teaching practices. Some schools specialise in particular subjects or sports, such as instrumental music, computerised design, or gymnastics. Some offer an immersion program, in which students can take most lessons in a language other than English.

In year 9, the second year of high school, students start to choose which subjects they will study. Most students in years 11 and 12 study six subjects from the range of subjects offered by their school.

### Teaching

Primary students usually have the same teacher for most subjects, with specialist teachers for music, instrumental music, languages other than English, and health and physical education. Most schools group students in classes according to year level, although some prefer multi-age classes. In secondary schools, students have different teachers for most subjects.

Students are encouraged to think creatively, to ask questions, and to work with other students on tasks. Excursions and camps are a regular part of school life.



## Assessment

Parents receive regular reports on their children's progress. Statewide assessments are made in years 2, 5, 7, 10 and 12. Extra support is provided to students identified as requiring assistance. Year 10 Certificates are awarded at the end of year 10.

Schools assess students throughout years 11 and 12, with the results reviewed by statewide panels. The Senior Certificate records these results showing levels of achievement or competency in each subject. A Tertiary Entrance Statement (used for selection into university) provides an overall position score for each eligible student.

## Support services

Specialist visiting teachers for students with disabilities, behaviour management advisers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, guidance officers, psychologists, parent liaison officers and school nurses provide support to school students.

After-school (as well as school holiday) child-care programs at many primary schools provide supervised activities for children and support for working parents.

## Student conduct

Students are expected to behave responsibly, in accordance with their school's code of conduct. If behaviour is disruptive, a student may be counselled, reprimanded, suspended, or placed in an alternative learning program.

Students may also be excluded or, if over the age of fifteen, have their enrolment cancelled.

Most schools expect students to wear uniforms.

## What other education organisations do

Technical and further education institutes (TAFE) provide vocational subjects for school students and others.

The Queensland School Curriculum Council develops syllabuses and coordinates approved statewide assessment of students from preschool to year 10. The Board of Senior Secondary School Studies fulfils a similar function for students in years 11 and 12.

The Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority ranks students for university entrance. The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre coordinates the selection of students into Queensland universities and TAFE institutes.

The Board of Teacher Registration registers teachers.

Queensland Health provides nurses in selected secondary schools and dentists and doctors who visit primary schools. Queensland Police Service provides police in some secondary schools.

Queensland Transport manages subsidies to railway, boat and private bus operators who transport students to and from school, and special provisions for eligible students with disabilities.

Education Queensland regulates and administers grants to non-state schools. The department also administers some grants to universities and supports the development of this sector.

Figure 1: Enrolments at Queensland government schools, February 1999

