

# A Flying Start for Queensland Children

Education Green Paper for public consultation





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## Premier and Minister's message

Every parent wants to see their child succeed in life and every child deserves to be given the chance to do just that.

Our Government has made significant changes to education in Queensland to give our children a better start in life — and it's making a difference.

Queensland children now have access to an entire extra year of schooling through the introduction of Prep. That means they now attend 13 years of school — the same as all children around Australia.

We're leading the way when it comes to providing parents with information and choice about their child's education.

We are the first state to centrally publish school-by-school results focusing on literacy and numeracy so parents can see how their child's school is performing.

Teachers, schools and parents put in a huge effort to prepare children for these national tests, which has seen the results of Queensland children improve in the past year.

We know that to give our children the best chance in life, we have to start at the very beginning.

That's why our Government is building up to 240 new kindergartens and providing funding for long day care centres to employ qualified early childhood teachers, so that every child in Queensland can participate in an extra year of learning with a qualified early education teacher before they even start Prep.

This is about helping to prepare children for school, so they can get a flying start to their education.

There is still much more to be done however.

We must continue to look for new ways to improve performance and to work with the community to give our children a better future.

This is true for all children whether they go to a state, Catholic or independent school. The proposals in this paper apply to all schools and we want to hear back from all parents and schools.

This discussion paper will give Queenslanders the chance to have their say on the next big reforms which will help us shape the future of education in Queensland.

We have put forward major changes that will give children a better chance at success, and ensure Queensland can boast a world-class education system.

We want to hear what changes Queenslanders believe will make a difference to their child's future.

We look forward to hearing the views of parents, carers, grandparents, students, teachers and all members of our community — so we can ensure the next steps we take give Queensland children the flying start they deserve.

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# Tomorrow's Queensland: 2020

## Introduction

Education is first and foremost about preparing our children for success.

It is about developing their potential, and preparing them to be successful as individuals, citizens and lifelong learners.

We have a lot to be proud of in our Queensland schools.

Giving our children a flying start

Queensland has led Australia in bringing in 'earning or learning' reforms for senior schooling and introduced consistent curriculum, assessment and reporting standards for Years 1 to 9.

A full-time Prep Year is now integral to Queensland schooling and we are bringing in a kindy year.

However, we cannot ignore the changes that are around us. We need to lift the performance of our school system so our students can do better.

This paper seeks the views of Queenslanders about how we can best give our children, whether they attend a state, Catholic or independent school, a flying start to prepare them for the transition to primary school and then into secondary school.

The reform journey does not stop here. Over the next year, the Government will be developing initiatives on other important issues, such as how to tackle the scientific challenges that we will face in the future and how to strengthen the relationship between parents and schools to address school discipline.

## Tomorrow's Queensland

A world-class education system for our children is a priority for the Queensland Government.

It's part of the Government's vision for tomorrow's Queensland to be strong, green, smart, healthy and fair.

A smarter Queensland is founded on giving all children access to quality early education and improving Queenslanders' education and skills.

The world is constantly changing and we are committed to ensuring that our children and young people have the preparation required to thrive in tomorrow's Queensland.

Society and the economy are changing

In 2020, the students who started Prep this year will be in high school, starting Year 10.

They will have experienced many changes that can be anticipated, and some that cannot even be imagined.

### The economy

Better educational outcomes lead to increases in both the level and rate of economic growth.

Queensland, along with the rest of the world, faces a challenging and changing future.

This will impact on our education system and on the decisions that young Queenslanders make about their schooling.

### Digital technologies

Expected changes to technology are likely to increase demand for education and have a major impact on the way they are delivered.

Technology is changing

Today's young people are immersed in an online, interactive world. Surveys tell us that nearly all homes with 8 to 17-year-olds have a computer, and more than 90 per cent of them have internet access. An amazing 90 per cent of older teens have access to a mobile phone.

### **Job skills**

While more Queenslanders are finishing Year 12 and gaining vocational and university qualifications than at any time in our history, just under half of Queenslanders aged between 24 and 65 years do not have qualifications at Certificate III or above.

In the 2020 economy, there will be fewer jobs for those without skills and qualifications. Queensland's ageing population will mean increased demand for jobs in health services and aged care.

**Future jobs will require different skills**

To give young Queenslanders the best opportunity for future success, they require a minimum of a Year 12 or equivalent vocational qualification, and a mix of skills that will enable them to adapt to change and participate in further education and training throughout their lives.

Students will also need to be prepared for the jobs of the future as new industries emerge and existing industries are reshaped to reduce their impact on the environment.

### **Improving performance**

While Queensland results compare favourably with other countries in international student tests, the 2008 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results were a warning that Queensland students were not doing well enough, and that our school system must perform better for them.

Queensland students ranked below the other states in both literacy and numeracy across all the year levels, too few Queensland students reached the higher levels of achievement, and too many recorded performances at the lower levels.

**Improvement is needed and achievable**

That's why the Government is committed to lifting the performance of Queensland students and schools in national and international tests and ensuring Queensland is among the top performing states.

Improvements were made across 17 of 20 areas in NAPLAN 2009 thanks to the sustained efforts of students, teachers, schools and parents. However, there are still some weaker areas, and too many students are underachieving.

### **High expectations**

The NAPLAN results are just part of the story.

Research from around the world, and the voices of passionate education advocates such as Professor Geoff Masters, Chief Executive Officer for the Australian Council for Educational Research, and Dr Chris Sarra, Executive Director of the Stronger Smarter Institute, confirm that student success follows when there are high expectations that every child can succeed.

This research, and Queensland's performance in national and international assessments, also suggests that we do not currently encourage students enough to excel and reach their full potential.

In Queensland and the rest of Australia, there continue to be significantly poorer outcomes for some groups of children, such as Indigenous students, students from remote areas and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

The research and test results show we need to raise the bar for students of all ability levels. Overall performance must be lifted, more students must achieve the national minimum standard, and all students must be challenged to excel.

The evidence is that a combination of quality teaching, high expectations and rigorous standards can achieve all these goals.

### **At home**

While schools and teachers make a crucial difference to children's school results, the influence of parents and families still has the greatest effect.

The more children learn at home before they start school, the better equipped they are to make the successful transition to school.

The more parents support their children by being involved in their education, the more they cultivate their child's love of learning and their chances to succeed.

Research shows that children whose families encourage reading at home do better at school, and that parents' and carers' ongoing involvement in their child's schooling through helping with homework and other learning activities is essential for children's success.

### **At school**

Within schools, the quality of teaching is the biggest influence on student achievement.

**Education is a partnership** After teaching quality, the biggest effect on student achievement comes from school leadership — principals, deputy principals and curriculum leaders.

The partnership between parents, families, schools and communities is vital. The most successful schools place a high priority on connecting effectively with the families of their students, and with their communities.

Parents' and carers' contributions to school governance, fundraising and social activities are also important.

### **In the community**

The whole community contributes to the success of a school and its students. That includes not only social groups and services, but individual volunteers, local businesses and employers.

As a community we can do a lot more to support parents and give all children the best chance to reach their full potential.

# Record of achievement in education

In the past decade, there have been a number of significant changes to the education system in Queensland. The benefits of some of these reforms are only now becoming evident.

## Prep Year

In 2007, the Prep Year was introduced to all schools for all Queensland children in the year before school. Now 97 per cent of eligible students attend Prep.

In 2008, changes to the school starting age at Year 1 — making students on average six months older when they start school — brought Queensland closer in line with other states and territories.

## 'Earning or learning'

Queensland led Australia in introducing the 'earning or learning' changes in 2006. The school leaving age was raised to 16, with young people required to be 'earning or learning' for another year after that.

Senior Education and Training Plans now help students plan diverse education and career pathways that can be recognised through the Queensland Certificate of Education, which was first issued to Year 12 graduates in 2008.

Queensland continues to lead the nation in the number of school-based apprenticeships, with more than 40 per cent of all commencements across the country.

From 2001 to 2008, the proportion of young Queenslanders aged 20 to 24 years attaining Year 12 or a Certificate II increased from 79 per cent to 84 per cent.

## Middle years strategy

In state schools, the middle phase of learning action plan saw class size targets reduce from one teacher for every 30 students to one teacher for every 28 students in the middle years — among the lowest middle years class size targets in the country. Teachers received extensive professional development in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. High-performing teachers were also supported to become middle phase leaders.

## School discipline

In June 2004, the Government gave new powers to principals to deal with individuals who disrupt the good order of schools or threaten the safety of staff or students at school premises.

The Government has also announced that it would give state school principals more power to exclude students, supporting them to keep bad behaviour out of the classroom so students can get on with learning.

## Assessment and reporting

In 2005, consistent standards for curriculum, assessment and reporting were introduced for all classrooms from Years 1 to 9 under the Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) framework.

What this means for students, parents and teachers is:

- a clearer and more consistent statement of what students should be taught in each year of school
- clearer standards of how well they should know it

## Building on our reforms

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Quality assurance of non-state schools with establishment of Non-State Schools Accreditation Board	Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) Queensland Studies Authority established	Prep Year trial	Prep Year trial extended	Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Framework introduced School reporting and annual Year 12 Outcomes reports introduced



- consistent grades so that an 'A' at one school is the same as an 'A' in another school
- easy-to-understand reporting to parents on the progress of their children.

Queensland was also an early advocate for a national curriculum and welcomes the roll-out of this important initiative in our schools.

### Transparent reporting

In 2005, Queensland introduced an unprecedented level of public accountability and reporting to provide the community with a comprehensive picture of school outcomes.

All schools are now required to have an annual report, with a set of consistent information about school outcomes available on school websites. We are the first state to centrally publish school-by-school results so parents can see how their child's school is performing. Queensland also publishes schools' Year 12 results in newspapers and releases information on Year 12 graduates' post-school work or study choices.

### A kindy year

Early childhood education in Queensland is being revolutionised with the biggest investment in the state's history.

Up to 240 kindergartens are being built across the state and all children aged 3½ to 4½ years will have access to a quality kindergarten program by 2014, so they are ready for the next stage of their learning.

The kindergarten programs will be provided through community-based services, on school sites and through long day care centres.

The first eight of the new kindergartens will open this year, and another 12 will open in 2011.

In Queensland's remote Indigenous communities, the Bound for Success program is providing a highly successful early childhood program for children in the two years before Year 1.

### Driving improvements in performance

In response to the NAPLAN 2008 results, the Queensland Education Performance Review (QEPR) — conducted by Professor Geoff Masters — recommended practice tests by students, and measures to improve the quality of teachers, professional development, teaching and testing, and school leadership.

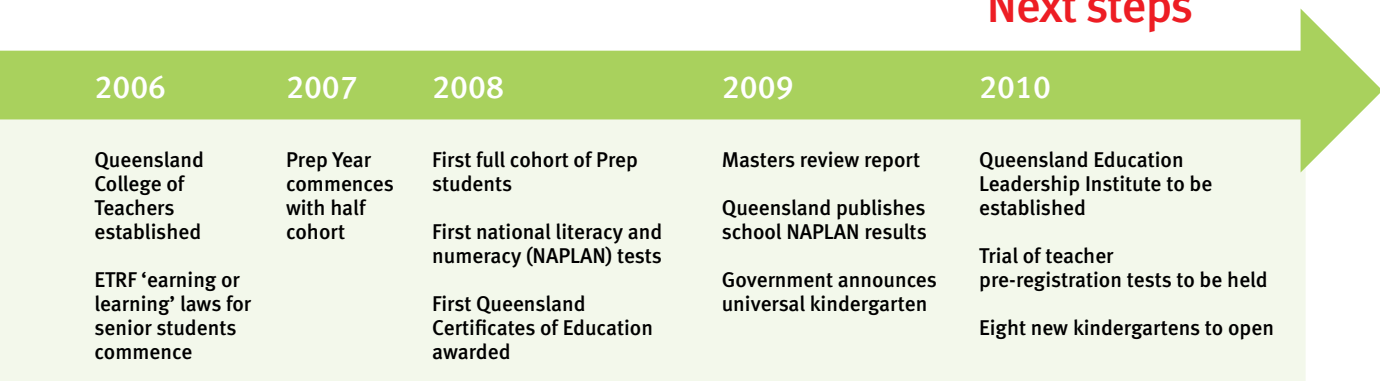
The Government is taking action on the recommendations of the Masters review, which lays the groundwork for assured standards in teaching quality.

The bar will be set high for graduates who want to become registered teachers. By 2011, all aspiring primary school teachers will undertake tests in literacy, numeracy and science when applying for initial registration. The tests will be trialled this year.

This year, a new framework will be introduced so that teachers and schools are confident they are receiving evidence-based professional development in literacy, numeracy and science.

Starting from July 2010, the new Queensland Education Leadership Institute will coordinate advanced evidence-based training for school leaders that will include driving education performance in schools and imposing strong school discipline. This is a critical investment in school leaders and recognises their demanding jobs.

## Next steps





# A Flying Start for Queensland Children: an overview

Getting ready for school	
<p><b>Objective 1:</b> Improving children's development, wellbeing and school readiness</p>	<p><i>This is achieved by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing a kindy year for all children</li> </ul> <p><i>We will do better by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging families to read to their children</li> <li>• Enlisting an army of volunteer Queensland Ready Readers in primary schools</li> </ul> <p><i>The Government wants to know:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What else could help families give their children a flying start to school</li> </ul>
Getting ready for secondary school	
<p><b>Objective 2:</b> Improving transitions from primary to secondary school and supporting adolescent development</p>	<p><i>This is achieved by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipping our schools with well-prepared teachers and great facilities</li> </ul> <p><i>The Government wants to know:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What you think of providing high-quality, challenging and age-appropriate learning experiences for Year 7 students by moving Year 7 to secondary school</li> <li>• What you think are the major development issues affecting young teenagers that need to be considered in any move of Year 7 to secondary</li> </ul>
Boosting high performance for all schools	
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> Improving school discipline and the quality of teaching and setting high performance standards for all schools</p>	<p><i>This is achieved by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having high expectations of students, teachers, schools and our system of education and ensuring they get the support they need</li> </ul> <p><i>The Government wants to know what you think of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifting the quality of teaching training courses provided by universities, and the support teachers receive when they first start teaching</li> <li>• Improving support for teachers undertaking their school placements during their training</li> <li>• Establishing an independent education authority to set and monitor common standards for teachers and all schools</li> </ul>









# Getting ready for school

## Objective 1: Improving children's development, wellbeing and school readiness

### What do we know?

Education starts at home and parents and families are their children's first teachers.

Children's brains develop rapidly in the early years, and there are chances to learn something new at almost every turn.

Research shows that the simple act of regularly reading to children has a positive impact on their literacy and learning.

#### Learning starts at home

Introducing children to books at an early age can help give them the pre-literacy skills they need to get off to a flying start.

Without this early support before school, some children can start their formal education at a disadvantage.

Early setbacks are hard to make up, and gaps widen as children progress through the school years.

International research has found there is an almost 90 per cent chance that a child who is a poor reader at the end of Year 1 will remain a poor reader at the end of Year 4.

Children who start school lacking basic early literacy skills, for example, are more likely to have behaviour problems later on in primary school, disrupting their learning and that of other students in their classroom.

Research also shows that investments in quality early childhood education pay off in many ways.

International research estimates that every dollar invested in universally available quality early care and education returns itself many times over in public education, criminal justice and welfare costs over the next few decades.

#### Early education gives children the best start

Investing in early childhood is one of the best investments society can make.

That's why in 2007 the Government introduced a Preparatory Year of learning before Year 1, bringing Queensland into line with other states.

Prep is now an integral part of state, Catholic and independent schools across Queensland.

Parents whose children have attended Prep know that this new year of schooling has done wonders to get their children ready for more formal learning in Year 1.

The Government now wants to build on this investment.

Currently only 29 per cent of kindy-aged children attend a kindergarten program in Queensland, compared with 80 to 95 per cent in other states and territories.

That's going to change rapidly with up to an extra 240 kindergarten services on school sites set to operate throughout Queensland by 2014.

To give children a flying start, the Government is also introducing universal access to a kindy year provided by qualified teachers in community-based kindergartens, at schools and through long day care centres.

Providing all children with the chance to access a quality early childhood education will help ensure that all Queensland children can get the great start to learning that they deserve, regardless of where they live or the economic circumstances of their families.





All children will have access to a kindy year

It is the biggest investment in early years services in Queensland's history and will mean every child will have access to a kindergarten program provided by a qualified early childhood teacher. It represents a 60 per cent increase in the number of kindergartens.

The first eight of the new kindergartens will open this year, and another 12 will open in 2011.

### What are the challenges now?

An Australia-wide survey of five-year-olds in 2009 showed more than one-third of Queensland children are not regularly read to at home.

In this survey, teachers reported that only 61.7 per cent of Queensland children are regularly read to or encouraged in their reading at home, compared with the Australian average of 69.8 per cent.

Queensland ranked seventh out of Australian states and territories on each of the five areas of childhood development assessed in the survey.

For language and cognitive skills, only 61 per cent of Queensland five-year-olds were classified as on track, compared with an Australian average of 77 per cent.

Reading to children helps them learn

The language and cognitive area includes important literacy and numeracy skills such as the ability to recognise letters and sounds, write your own name, count, recognise shapes and time, remember things, and show interest in books, reading and number games.

These skills are the essential building blocks of early learning and we need to do more to make sure children can acquire these skills before they start school.

### What is proposed?

We need to lift our performance by tackling early literacy and learning on every front — through the education system, at school, in the community and at home.

#### The education system

Making sure that every child has the chance to attend a quality kindergarten program will do much to help Queensland children catch up to other states and territories and give them a flying start to school.

This is a crucial investment in children's early learning and represents the next big change to the education system in Queensland.

#### At home

We can go a long way toward improving early literacy skills and better preparing children so they are ready for school by encouraging parents to read to their children.

Just 20 minutes a day reading aloud with young children builds stronger relationships, encourages listening and language skills, promotes attention and curiosity, and establishes a strong reading foundation.

#### In the community

Lots of mums, dads and carers already help in classrooms, in tuckshops and on sporting fields. Their involvement in school life through these activities is crucial and without it, schools would struggle to provide a well rounded education.

We want to build on the current level of volunteering by getting more people involved from the community and business and expanding the range of school activities they are involved in.

A little bit of central support can go a long way in helping schools and volunteers find each other.

### At school

Schools can play an important role in helping parents and carers to get involved in their children's education by providing advice and tips to parents on useful activities.

To improve early literacy, we need to attract more volunteers into our schools, ensure there is a good fit between the needs of children and the volunteers who give so generously of their time, train them and make sure the community knows their contribution to schools is welcome and essential.

The contribution of volunteers will add to the extra efforts schools are already making to improve literacy and numeracy. On top of daily teaching, more literacy and numeracy information is being given to families, summer schools have been held for Years 5, 6 and 7 in state schools, and teachers are being guided by new literacy and numeracy indicators. All school sectors are participating in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership, together with the Commonwealth.

### How could this be achieved?

#### Encouraging parents to read to their children

#### Reading awareness campaign

Reading to children is one of the most effective ways parents can help their children to learn.

The Government wants to encourage parents to make reading to their children a priority. This can happen at any time of the day during any activity, from structured storybook reading through to doing the shopping.

That's why an awareness campaign will be launched to encourage parents and carers to read to their children regularly and to take every opportunity for learning that presents itself in everyday life.

The campaign will promote the importance of reading and provide support for parents on how to help children acquire early, crucial skills.

The campaign will complement more targeted programs that are already in place to help families read to their children.

The State Government, together with the Smith Family and the Carpentaria Shire Council, funds a Reading to Children program in 15 locations across Queensland. Each family in the program receives resources to help them, including tip sheets, a DVD and a book that matches the age of their child.

The awareness campaign will involve a range of media and will be supported by advice and support for parents. An investment of over \$1.3 million in 2009–10 will support this initiative.

### Discussion question

1. What support could be provided to help families give their children a flying start to school?

### Enlisting volunteer readers in schools

#### Volunteer reading programs work

Volunteer reading programs in schools have been shown to improve learning, as well as improve communication and understanding between the generations.

There is extensive research from Australia and around the world showing that well-trained and supported community volunteers can make a significant difference to children's learning.

Some communities already have well established and successful volunteer reading programs. These volunteers are highly valued by students, parents, schools and the community.

The Government wants to make sure that all primary schools across the state have access to trained volunteers who can help children with reading.

We want to build on the contribution of existing volunteers and volunteer programs across state and non-state schools. The proposed new program will complement rather than replace existing services.

Together with the local Rotary, Bundaberg South State School has established a Rotary Readers program. A pool of community volunteers works with the school to deliver the 'Support a Reader' program, in partnership with teachers, teacher aides, parents and grandparents. Volunteer readers visit the school on a regular basis, providing support to children through one-on-one reading in a school setting. Rotary is responsible for promotion, advertising and recruitment of volunteers, as well as organising blue cards for the volunteers. The learning support teacher at the school helps organise training for the volunteers to make sure they know the best techniques to help children with their reading.

### Queensland Ready Readers volunteers

The Government wants to enlist an army of Queensland Ready Readers to volunteer in schools across Queensland, with a special focus on improving early literacy.

There are many people with great skills from raising their own families who are keen to contribute to their communities, especially for the benefit of children. The Queensland population is ageing, and older Queenslanders are better educated and more active than ever before.

Sometimes these people are just unsure of how to become involved with their local schools.

The Government wants to make this really simple and encourage these people to use their skills to contribute to children's education.

We also want to support busy schools by helping them to access a pool of trained volunteers.

Having a broad range of adults in classrooms showing children the wonders of reading will make an important contribution.

Some other states and territories provide funding to independent organisations to attract, support and train volunteers and mentors for placement in schools. For example, the School Volunteering Program in Western Australia connects schools with volunteer readers and mentors.

Funding of \$8.7 million over four years will support the initiative, including new funding for Volunteering Queensland to work across Queensland with businesses and community organisations to draw on successful programs, and link with schools and communities to attract and support more volunteers to work in schools.

Recruitment for volunteers will start in three locations with high early literacy needs — Townsville, Toowoomba and Wide Bay — from March 2010. Volunteers are expected to be able to begin in schools in those areas by July 2010.

Statewide rollout of the initiative is planned by the start of the 2011 school year.

Volunteers will receive training from qualified education staff and be supported by Volunteering Queensland. Existing volunteer reading programs will not be affected, and schools will still be able to ensure that their volunteers are a good match with their philosophy and values.

The Government wants to encourage all schools — state, Catholic and independent — to be involved in this initiative and will work with the three schooling sectors in the design of the program. Ultimately, the participation of the Catholic and independent schools will be a decision for them.

While volunteers will not take the place of trained teachers or teacher aides, the additional support they offer — especially in the early years — can make a significant difference in educational outcomes.

Standard checks for working with children will apply to volunteers to ensure children's safety. They will be conducted free of charge for volunteers.

### Discussion questions

2. How can volunteers be supported to help children read at school?
3. Would you volunteer at your local school?
4. What would encourage you to volunteer as a Queensland Ready Reader?



# Getting ready for secondary school

## Objective 2: Improving transitions from primary to secondary and supporting adolescent development.

### What do we know?

Adolescence is a time of great physical, psychological and social change.

Children and young people learn best when they are in age appropriate settings. They need to be engaged and challenged by their learning experiences.

As they get older and spend more time at school they are better prepared to pursue in-depth learning in more specialised subjects.

More children will turn 13 in Year 7

Research on adolescents' brain and learning development shows they have an increasing ability to engage in higher order thinking and more complex ways of processing information. Physically, their bodies are undergoing rapid and sometimes confusing changes.

As every parent knows, children at this age are heavily influenced by their peers, but also by the experiences they have at school. They engage in greater risk-taking behaviour, but are also able to exercise more independent judgments. The ways they think about themselves and the world become more complex and multidimensional.

Socially and emotionally, adolescents are actively seeking out new challenges, new friends and new experiences.

Most Queensland children are currently in Year 8 when they turn 13 and begin their teenage years.

Unless they attend a P–10 or P–12 school, this is the first year of five years they will spend at secondary school.

When the Government introduced the Prep Year, it then raised the school starting age, bringing Queensland children in line with other states.

Year 7 is in secondary school in most states

This shift in the compulsory school starting age will start to have an impact in Year 7 from 2014, when some Year 7 students will turn 13 in that year and all will be in their eighth year in primary school.

By 2015, students will be around six months older when they get to Year 7. In fact, at least half of these Year 7 students would have previously been in Year 8 and will now turn 13 in Year 7.

For most of Australia (except Western Australia, South Australia and presently Queensland), Year 7 is the first year of secondary schooling.

### Where are the majority of students when they turn 13?

	Now	In five years time	In what level of school are they now?
NSW	Year 7	Year 7	Secondary
VIC	Year 7	Year 7	Secondary
<b>QLD</b>	<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Primary</b>
WA	Year 8	Year 7	Primary
SA	Year 7	Year 7	Primary
TAS	Year 7	Year 7	Secondary
ACT	Year 7	Year 7	Secondary
NT	Year 7	Year 7	Secondary

Access to specialist teachers helps children progress

Top performing nations around the world, including Singapore, Finland and the United Kingdom, all have Year 7 in secondary school.

In secondary schools, specialist teachers help ensure depth of learning in areas requiring more specialist knowledge, for example, the sciences, history, languages, arts and technological design.

Students have much to gain from the range of different experiences, teaching styles, expertise and facilities in secondary school.

The challenge of these experiences contributes much to a student's future and prepares them well for their development as young adults.

### What are the challenges now?

By the end of 2014, Year 7 students will have spent eight full years in a primary school setting and some will have turned 13 years of age. It is time to think about whether a primary school setting is best for them at that age.

Primary school settings by their nature are designed for young children and their structures and routines may not be suitable for the complex learning needs of young adolescents.

All states and territories have signed up to the Australian national curriculum, the first stage of which will be implemented from 2011 to 2013.

Queensland's Year 7 students will have a better chance of benefiting from the national curriculum if they have access to the specialist teachers and facilities that most other states and territories provide for their Year 7s in secondary school.

### What is proposed?

To better meet the developmental and educational needs of young people and achieve greater depth of learning, the Government proposes to move Year 7 into secondary school in 2014.

This would mean students will spend seven years in primary school (P-6) and six years in high school (Years 7-12), as occurs in the majority of other Australian states.

### How could this be achieved?

#### Move Year 7 to secondary school

Extra investment for all secondary schools

A change of this size would affect the 178 state and 81 non-state secondary schools, and will need time to implement.

It also means that new classrooms, specialist teachers and facilities would be required. That is why we are seeking feedback on this important issue now.

The Government would make a significant additional investment to give our children this flying start to secondary school, including support for Catholic and independent secondary schools to make the change.

Preliminary work on what such a move could cost has indicated that the change might require capital funding of between \$300 million and \$350 million over the next four years, but further work would be undertaken in partnership across the schooling sectors to plan and implement the change and finalise the costs.

These are preliminary figures and need to be tested by a school-by-school audit of local circumstances and school capacities.

While the change is proposed to be in place statewide by 2014, it could happen earlier in some communities, for example, where there is only one primary and one secondary school in an area and new classrooms are scheduled to be built to accommodate growing enrolments.



**Remote and rural communities have different needs**

The Government understands that such a change would have a significant impact on some rural and remote communities.

For families in some rural and remote communities, starting high school means seeing their children leave home to attend boarding school. There is no doubt that this proposal would have a particular impact on them.

For some other communities, the change might not be as great. There are more than 230 non-state and state schools in Queensland that educate students through primary to secondary school – from small, rural P–10 schools to larger P–12 schools in some of our fastest growing metropolitan areas.

Some of these schools already organise their teaching and learning in a way that treats Year 7 differently from regular primary school and there are many things to be learnt from the practices and experience of these schools.

For example, some schools treat Years 7 and 8 as a transition from primary to secondary and organise classes so that students have a foundation teacher for some subjects and specialist teachers for others. This means students have a smaller number of teachers and fewer classroom changes in their first year at secondary school.

There would be implications for school staff with the change. Overall, we will need more teachers. Some primary school teachers would be given the opportunity to work in secondary schools, and support would be provided to ease their transition.

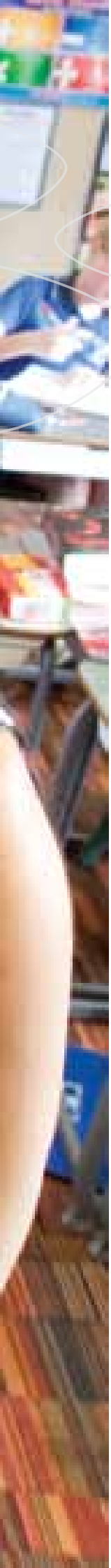
The Government wants to make sure it hears the range of views from parents, families, educators and communities across the state on this issue.

Together, we need to decide what is best for our Year 7 students to ensure they receive the best possible education – one that is competitive with the rest of Australia and the world.

## **Discussion questions**

5. **Should Year 7 be in secondary school when it is the eighth year of formal schooling?**
6. **What do you think are the major development issues affecting young teenagers that need to be considered in any move of Year 7 to secondary?**
7. **Should the early years of secondary school be changed to help students adjust to the transition from primary school?**
8. **Are there particular challenges in the proposal to move Year 7 for remote communities that rely on distance education and boarding schools?**
9. **What could be done to help address these challenges for families and communities?**
10. **What do you think about this issue:**
  - a. **as a student?**
  - b. **as a parent or carer?**
  - c. **as a teacher?**





# Boosting performance for all schools

## Objective 3: Improving school discipline, the quality of teaching and setting high performance for all schools

### What do we know?

The Masters review found that high-performing education systems set high expectations for all students and schools and have a low tolerance for ongoing poor performance.

Well-prepared teachers, strong school leaders, excellent curriculum and classrooms that are calm, disciplined and free from disruption are the key ingredients to learning.

In Queensland currently, there are three main independent bodies that oversee the quality of education and the standards of our schools:

#### Overseeing quality in schools

- Queensland College of Teachers, which registers teachers and approves and monitors their training courses
- Queensland Studies Authority, which develops and accredits the subject material that students study, and oversees assessment and reporting and certification
- Non-State Schools Accreditation Board, which registers non-state schools.

In addition to these bodies, each schooling sector — state, Catholic and independent — has its own processes to oversee and monitor the quality of their schools.

In some other school systems, all schools — government and non-government — are subject to independent monitoring regimes, which can include school inspections. Schools can receive recommendations for improvement, and good ideas from successful schools can be shared.

### What are the challenges now?

#### Improving teacher quality and school leadership

Queensland's school performance, as reflected in national and international tests and in educational research, needs to improve.

Significant reforms are already under way to improve teacher quality and school leadership.

#### Teaching quality

We know from the Masters review that high-quality teacher training is essential to good teaching.

It is essential that the training provided at our universities is relevant to the challenges that teachers face when they enter schools. Good preparation gives beginning teachers a flying start.

The ability of teachers to come to grips with the reality of the classroom depends heavily on the quality of their training and the support they receive when they first start teaching.

The quality of this training and support can impact on student learning. Bad experiences can mean that potentially talented teachers leave early in their careers.

#### Set high standards

It is now time to look at the education system to make sure it is working to support good teaching and effective schools.

Each of our schooling sectors has its own philosophy and approaches to schooling. This diversity is one of the strengths of the Queensland education landscape.

There are, however, many areas of common practice — in teacher training, and in curriculum, assessment and reporting.

The introduction of the Australian national curriculum, the first phase of which will be implemented from 2011 to 2013, will continue to strengthen the common practice across our schools.

It will also mean that the Queensland Studies Authority will no longer have a central role in developing P–10 curriculum for Queensland schools.

Given these changes and the challenges that schools face, it is time to review how the independent bodies operate and their roles.

### **School discipline**

Strong school discipline is imperative to the success of schooling. Each schooling sector responds to student discipline in ways appropriate to that sector.

For the state school system, the Government has already announced tougher powers for principals and stronger behaviour standards for students. There is room for improved behaviour management programs.

We want to hear from you on what you think we need to do to ensure our children are learning in calm classrooms that are free from disruption.

## **What is proposed?**

To guarantee world-class education and boost the performance of schools for all Queensland children and young people, the Government proposes to:

- review the quality of teacher training courses provided by Queensland universities and the support provided by schools to beginning teachers to ensure all teachers have the skills they need for effective teaching and maintaining high standards of school discipline
- create five Teaching Centres of Excellence, based in key schools across the state, to give student teachers a solid foundation in their teacher training placements
- Establish an independent education standards authority to set and monitor high standards for teachers and all schools across Queensland.

## **How could this be achieved?**

### **Review of teacher training**

Parents want to know that teachers are getting strong grounding in subject knowledge and effective teaching practice. The ability to identify and support struggling students and ensure classroom discipline need to be essential components of teacher training.

Our systems need to ensure that there is a continuous feedback loop between schools and university training courses.

This is why we are introducing pre-registration tests for aspiring teachers, to make sure they have the skills they need to teach literacy, numeracy and science.

### **A flying start for Queensland teachers**

This also means looking closely at how teachers are trained in the subjects they are teaching, in how students learn effectively, and in how to use assessment.

The preparation of teachers needs to include a strong focus on evidence-based approaches, in particular to teaching literacy.

Teachers must also have sound practical skills and specialist training in running a classroom and maintaining strong school discipline in classrooms that are focused on learning.

To ensure universities include clear and consistent training on how to teach the foundations, a review will be undertaken of the content and standards of teaching courses. The review will also consider ways to give beginning teachers strong support in their first years of teaching.

There will be an on going survey of teacher graduates to find out how well their university courses and placements as student teachers in schools prepared them for the practical demands of teaching. As well, a survey will be undertaken by principals from schools that take the teacher graduates in their first year to see how well prepared they are.

Particular attention will be paid to school discipline and teaching literacy and numeracy.

Improving teacher 'prac'	<b>Teaching Centres of Excellence</b>
	Schools also play an important role in preparing teachers.
	Teacher training courses require student teachers to undertake teaching placements, or 'pracs', in schools as part of their training.
	To improve student teacher pracs, the Government will establish Teaching Centres of Excellence in selected schools to take on more teaching students and give them the opportunity to learn from the best.
	Five centres will be established over the next three years, with the support of funding from the Commonwealth Government.
The centres will be chosen from our top performing schools, with a strong record in education achievement and student discipline.	
These schools will work in partnership with universities to provide the best possible practice training for new teachers.	
Because the Centres of Excellence will be based in schools, they will be a direct link back to university teacher training, making for stronger relationships between training courses and the daily realities of the classroom.	
High performance standards	<b>Independent education standards authority to set and monitor high standards for teachers and all schools across Queensland</b>
	The Masters review pointed out that highly effective education systems have high expectations at every level — teaching, school and system.
	By having one body responsible for the standards for teaching and schools, that authority would connect the standards for curriculum, teaching and schools.
	For example, it would see that curriculum and assessment standards are built into university teacher training and school performance evaluations.
	What is learned from schools across Queensland would be fed back to universities to help them improve their teaching training. It would also be fed back to schools to help them improve their teacher preparation and curriculum support.
	Working together across all schools would enable us to harvest best practice across the schooling sectors. Working with all our stakeholders together will enable us to forge common, consistent and high standards in all the building blocks of education.
	The authority would apply the same high standards to state and non-state schools, and to home schooling. State schools would have to be accredited, like non-state schools.
	The authority would have a mandate to undertake school inspections. The inspectors would be well-trained experienced professionals with the expertise to improve school performance. They would also play a role in sharing best practice across schools catering to similar students.
	The authority would develop a common accreditation process that all schools would undertake, requiring input from staff, parents and the community. Schools would be assessed against a range of criteria, for example:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• educational outcomes and improvement strategies</li> <li>• curriculum and teaching standards</li> <li>• school discipline standards</li> <li>• student welfare and</li> <li>• parental and community involvement.</li> </ul>
Schools that do not come up to the mark would be required and resourced to implement significant changes to their curriculum, learning or school leadership.	







This is currently the case for non-state schools, and we intend to hold all schools in Queensland to the same high standards.

#### **Full and fair school reporting**

The authority would provide independent public information about schools and their performance and make sure the public reporting of the performance of Queensland schools is transparent and fair, and reflects the full picture of schools' circumstances.

#### **School improvement**

The authority would have powerful tools for school improvement — the criteria it uses for school accreditation and public reporting, and sharing its knowledge of what works in successful schools, including best practice in Australia and overseas.

It could help improve schools' performance on important issues such as school discipline, young people's transition from school to further study and work, and teaching and assessment to drive student performance. For instance, as part of accreditation, the authority would ensure all schools have effective school discipline plans.

#### **Engaging the community**

The authority would provide a valuable forum for the interests of the community to help shape education standards. For example, parents and industry would have a greater say on how to make sure young people are work-ready when they leave school.

### **Discussion questions**

11. What are the most important aspects of education that must be included in teachers' preservice training?
12. What do we need to do to ensure classrooms are free from disruption and focused on learning?
13. How can we provide better support to our beginning teachers to make the transition to the classroom?
14. Would a single standards authority help raise students' performance by setting clear standards for all schools?

# Learning from you: the consultation process

Education systems across Australia are experiencing significant change.

Queensland has a strong education system that is undergoing major reform.

But to face the challenges of the future, we know we need to raise the bar.

**Have your say** This discussion paper is presented in a spirit of genuine consultation with every school community in Queensland. No final decisions on the consultation proposals have been made yet. The Government wants to hear what you think is needed to give every child a flying start.

A report on the feedback in response to this paper will be released. That feedback will help shape the Government's policy across these areas.

Please take this opportunity to have your say on the proposals in this paper, whether you are a student, parent, carer, teacher, employer or other interested person.

Copies of this paper, including an electronic survey, are available at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au), by telephoning 1800 452 056 or by emailing [aflyingstart@deta.qld.gov.au](mailto:aflyingstart@deta.qld.gov.au)

## Preparing a response

**How to make a submission**

You can tell us your ideas by:

- responding to the discussion questions on Pages 25 and 26 of this paper, or online at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au)
- preparing a written submission on your own behalf or on behalf of your organisation that responds to the discussion questions or raises any other changes you would like to see to improve our schools
- joining in one of the public consultation forums which will be held in schools and communities around the state.

Submissions are invited from all interested people and organisations. Your submission should include the name and contact details of the person making the submission. For details around confidentiality, see bottom of Page 26.

Submissions can be made via email at [aflyingstart@deta.qld.gov.au](mailto:aflyingstart@deta.qld.gov.au)

Fax: 07 3237 1175

or mailed to

A Flying Start for Queensland Children Green Paper  
Assistant Director-General  
Research, Policy and Legislation  
Department of Education and Training  
PO Box 15033  
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Public consultation forums will be held around Queensland. Visit the Queensland Government website at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) to find out more and to have your say. The Government will publish the outcomes of the consultation and a policy paper in response to your views.

# Discussion questions

Please tell us a little bit about yourself. This personal information is sought to enable us to better understand the range of responses to the discussion paper. The information you provide will be treated with the utmost discretion.

I am best described as being from the following stakeholder groups

- |                                                               |                                                              |                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer of child 0 to 8 years   | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer of child 9 to 14 years |                                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer of child 15 to 17 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Student                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary teacher         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary teacher                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school parent               | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> University sector                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Principal                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other school staff      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General community                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer/industry                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Community organisation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State school sector                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-state school sector             |                                                  |

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What support could be provided to help families give their children a flying start to school?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. How can volunteers be supported to help children read at school?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Would you volunteer at your local school?**

Yes  No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. What would encourage you to volunteer as a Queensland Ready Reader?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Should Year 7 be in secondary school when it is the eighth year of formal schooling?**

Yes  No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. What do you think are the major development issues affecting young teenagers that need to be considered in any move of Year 7 to secondary?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Should the early years of secondary school be changed to help students adjust to the transition?**

Yes  No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Are there particular challenges in the proposal to move Year 7 for remote communities that rely on distance education and boarding schools?**

Yes  No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**9. What could be done to help address these challenges for families and communities?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10. What do you think about this issue:**

As a student?  As a parent/carer?  As a teacher?

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**11. What are the most important aspects of education that must be included in teachers' preservice training?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**12. What do we need to do to ensure classrooms are free from disruption and focused on learning?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**13. How can we provide better support to our beginning teachers to make the transition to the classroom?**

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**14. Would a single standards authority help raise students' performance by setting clear standards for all schools?**

Yes  No

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We want to hear your views. If you require more space please attach additional pages.

Forums and other consultation opportunities will be held around Queensland. Make sure you keep an eye out for what events are happening in your local area, so you can come along and have your say.

\*Submissions or parts of submission may be published by the Department of Education and Training after the close of consultation. The department reserves the right not to publish confidential correspondence, or correspondence that is irrelevant, defamatory or otherwise unsuitable for publication. If you believe that your correspondence (or part of it) should not be made public, clearly write 'Confidential' on each page and, in a brief covering letter, explain why the correspondence should be treated confidentially.