



A Flying Start for Queensland Children

Queensland Government
Education White Paper

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Premier and Minister's foreword

A world-class education system is part of the government's vision for tomorrow's Queensland: a Queensland that is strong, green, smart, healthy and fair.

Access to quality early education for all Queensland children and improving the level of educational attainment and skills is central to this vision.

Last year the government undertook an extensive statewide consultation with the release of the Queensland Government's Education Green Paper: A Flying Start for Queensland Children. The purpose of this consultation was to open up discussion with the community about how to continue towards this vision of a world class education system for Queensland.

The enthusiastic response to the consultations reflected the widespread community interest in contributing to important decisions about our education system. Parents, teachers, students, education stakeholders and other members of the community generously shared their views on education and ideas for the future.

This community partnership is important to the success of our education system, and we thank all of those who participated.

Evidence of the strong links between our schools and their communities is also apparent in the significant number of Queenslanders who have taken up the challenge of becoming a volunteer Queensland Ready Reader. More than 1450 people from all walks of life have joined the program. We thank all of you for your interest and effort in supporting the education of our young people, and look forward to welcoming many more enthusiastic new volunteers to this important program.

Readiness for learning in the years leading up to the start of school is the foundation of success at school. A smooth transition from primary to secondary education is essential to young people's continuing success, along with enthusiasm for learning and participation in school activities in the upper primary and early secondary years.

The Queensland Government is convinced that our 12 – 13 year old young people will flourish best in a high school environment – especially if they are challenged and supported in the Junior Secondary years. With the introduction of the new Australian Curriculum, we cannot fail to give them the opportunities already available to their peers in other high-performing states and territories.

Parents and students should be confident that all schools in Queensland will reach certain essential standards, no matter where they are or who runs them. These standards extend from what is taught, to who is able to teach, and to what we expect of a school for it to open its doors.

After listening to the consultations and the expert reviews, this White Paper outlines how the government will take action to continue to build Queensland's educational performance.

We have a lot to be proud of in our Queensland schools. We will continue building on our strengths to ensure we achieve our vision of providing a world-class education system.



Anna Bligh MP
Premier of Queensland and
Minister for Reconstruction



Cameron Dick MP
Minister for Education and Industrial Relations

Introduction

The Queensland Government has made education a priority over the last decade, undertaking a series of significant reforms to drive improvement. We are proud to have an education and training system that enables our schools to deliver results that are up amongst the highest-performing countries in the world.

Our results in the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) illustrate the strength of our education system on the world stage. Compared to students from other Australian states and territories, Queensland students ranked 3rd in reading literacy, 3rd in mathematical literacy and 4th in scientific literacy.

A number of major educational reforms have laid the foundation for the success we see in the PISA results, including:

- Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF), ensuring young people are ‘learning or earning’.
- The introduction of the Prep year in 2007, giving Queensland children a full-time year of early education prior to the start of Year 1. The Year 1 starting age was subsequently raised in 2008.
- Senior Education and Training (SET) plans implemented statewide in 2005. These now help students build diverse education and career pathways that can be recognised through the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), first issued to Year 12 graduates in 2008.
- Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework, bringing consistent standards to school studies from Years 1 to 9.
- Introduction of kindy and the building of up to 240 kindergarten services to give all children access to quality programs in the year before Prep.

Queensland’s average scores have shown significant improvement in 10 of the 20 NAPLAN test areas from 2008 to 2010, the highest number of significant improvements of any state and territory over this period. We are working to continue this forward momentum.

The *Flying Start* Green Paper: three objectives

In February 2010, the Queensland Government released *A Flying Start for Queensland Children: Education Green Paper* for public consultation.

The Green Paper put forward a number of initiatives and proposals to shape the future direction of education in Queensland, focusing on school readiness, transitions to secondary school and boosting performance for all schools.

Objective 1: Getting ready for school

Improving children’s development, wellbeing, and school readiness.

The Green Paper announced:

- making kindy available for all Queensland children
- a reading awareness campaign to encourage families to read to their children
- enlisting an army of volunteer Queensland Ready Readers in primary schools.

Objective 2: Getting ready for secondary school

Improving transitions from primary to secondary school, and supporting adolescent development.

The Green Paper proposed: Moving Year 7 to secondary school.

Objective 3: Boosting performance for all schools

Improving school discipline and the quality of teaching and setting high performance standards for all schools.

The Green Paper announced:

- review of teacher preservice education and school induction
- Teacher Education Centres of Excellence.

The Green Paper proposed:

- establishing an independent education standards authority to set and monitor common standards for teachers and all schools.

The Flying Start consultation process

From February to June 2010, Queenslanders engaged in an extensive consultation process that invited their opinions through face-to-face community forums and electronic media. The Flying Start website received nearly 50 000 visits and more than 8000 copies of the Green Paper were downloaded during the consultation period.

In the first People's Question Time, held on February 26 2010 and streamed live over the internet, Queenslanders embraced the opportunity to put their questions about the future of education to the Premier and the Minister for Education and Training.

The 93 public consultation forums held right across the state, from Palm Beach to Thursday Island, and from Proserpine to Charleville, were attended by 2601 people. The forums gave local school communities face-to-face opportunities to have their say on the proposed reforms and to suggest new ideas. Parents and home tutors living in rural and remote communities tuned in to Flying Start community forums hosted by schools of distance education.

A total of 1560 submissions were received from parents, teachers, community members and education stakeholder groups, offering ideas and feedback on the reform directions proposed by the government.

Following this period of community consultation, more in-depth discussions continued with key stakeholder groups to ensure a complete understanding of the unique issues faced by each section of the community, by schools and by Queensland's teaching workforce.

The Flying Start Advisory Committee, with representatives from each of these key stakeholder groups, has provided leadership, advice and guidance on all aspects of the reforms. Their work was supported by the expertise of the Reference Group to the Review of Teacher Preservice Education and School Induction and the Year 7 Stakeholder Reference Group.

The outcomes of the government's extensive consultations have informed the education reform package presented in this White Paper. These reforms seek to ensure that Queensland children are better prepared for school, that they are supported in the transition between primary and secondary school, and that they will benefit from high quality schools and standards no matter which Queensland school they attend.

The community consultation process is summarised in an appendix to this White Paper.

Flying Start White Paper Reforms

Reforms in progress	Strategies to achieve reform
<p>Objective 1: Getting ready for school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four new Early Years Centres, 2006 – 2010 Introduced Prep 2007 Compulsory school entry age raised 2008 Universal access to kindergarten 2009 22 new kindergarten services since 2010 'Books for Bubs' program launched 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support parents and engage the community in the early years of children's learning. Recognise Prep as the first year of school, to maximise attendance and achievement so children get the best start to school.
<p>Objective 2: Getting ready for secondary school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QCAR – Qld Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework announced 2005 Year 12 outcomes reports introduced 2005 Learning or earning laws introduced 2006 Queensland Certificate of Education 2008 National literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) tests commenced 2008 National Education Agreement and National Partnership Agreements Masters Review report released 2009 Closing the Gap Indigenous Education Strategy 2009 New Australian Curriculum to be phased in from 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Year 7 as the first year of secondary schooling from 2015 to support the best educational settings and transitions for young adolescents. Challenge students in early secondary school with demanding curriculum and high standards. Make the transition from primary to secondary school easier, safer and more welcoming for Year 7 students. Prepare and support state school teachers, so they can provide top-class learning experiences and leadership for Junior Secondary school communities. Introduce Junior Secondary in state schools in stages, to learn from best practice and involve local school communities. Provide new and refurbished classrooms for state schools to meet Year 7 needs and deliver specialist curriculum. Work with non-state schools to bring about the change. Give assistance to Year 7 students from families in rural and remote areas. Sustain state primary schools to continue their focus on sound foundations.
<p>Objective 3: Boosting performance for all schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non State Schools Accreditation Board established 2001 Queensland Studies Authority established 2002 Queensland College of Teachers established 2006 Review of Teacher Education and Induction 2010 Queensland Education Leadership Institute opened 2010 Teacher Education Centres of Excellence announced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish best practice in Queensland teacher preparation by negotiating cooperative commitments. Continue the commitment to the Teacher Education Centres of Excellence under the National Partnership. Hold all Queensland schools to consistent high standards and encourage school improvement to support student achievement. Ensure that standards for curriculum, assessment and reporting are aligned with school accreditation standards.

Actions to achieve reform

- We will:
- create a single point of information for parents of young children
 - maintain the reading awareness campaign
 - recruit and train additional Queensland Ready Readers
- offer free reading training to parents of children in Prep to Year 3
 - provide early literacy training for people working with families and young children
 - continue the roll-out of extra kindergarten services and approved long day care services.

- We will:
- recognise Prep as the first year of schooling.

- We will:
- make Year 7 the first year of high school from 2015
 - introduce Junior Secondary in state schools from 2013
 - encourage all state and non-state schools to strengthen their support for students' transitions from primary to secondary.

- We will help schools:
- implement the new Australian Curriculum
 - teach in ways that engage students and encourage them to think critically and creatively
- teach curriculum that builds over the early secondary years
 - focus on improving student achievement in literacy, numeracy and science.

- We will help schools:
- promote positive behaviour and provide pastoral care for all students
 - improve working relationships between primary and secondary schools so that students and parents know what to expect and their studies are continuous
- give appropriate support for students with additional needs, such as students with disabilities or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - provide additional funding to support Year 7 students' travel to local secondary schools.

- We will:
- offer up to 500 scholarships for state primary school teachers to prepare them for teaching in Junior Secondary settings
 - deliver a comprehensive professional development program to ensure state school teachers of Junior Secondary are well equipped to respond to the needs of students at this stage
- work with providers of teacher education programs to encourage more aspiring secondary and Junior Secondary teachers.

- We will:
- introduce Junior Secondary for Years 8 and 9 in state schools from 2013
 - include Year 7 when it becomes a secondary year in 2015
 - take advice from established practitioners and educational experts
- facilitate local advice and involvement
 - share learnings with state and non-state schools.

- We will:
- invest in facilities to enable state schools offering secondary education to deliver Year 7 as the first year of secondary school
 - work with clusters of state schools to create innovative ways of offering Junior Secondary
- install flexible classrooms in eligible state schools for specialist learning in Junior Secondary
 - help schools acquire resources that suit Year 7 students and fit the new Australian Curriculum.

- We will:
- assist non-state secondary schools to upgrade their facilities to accommodate Year 7 students
 - provide increased funding to non-state schools for the provision of Year 7 as a secondary year
- streamline accreditation and funding eligibility processes for non-state secondary schools to deliver Year 7.

- We will:
- conduct a comprehensive review of the educational needs of geographically isolated families and the services offered to them
 - increase the Year 7 rate of the Living Away From Home Allowance to the secondary student rate
- ensure distance education delivers secondary Year 7 studies under the new Australian Curriculum.

- We will:
- reaffirm the value and mission of primary schooling
 - involve state primary and secondary schools in a shared focus on the upper primary and Junior Secondary years of schooling, and on students' transitions
- assist primary school administrative and support staff to adjust throughout the change of Year 7 to secondary.

- We will:
- immediately adopt 24 recommendations of the Review of Teacher Preservice Education and School Induction
 - implement the recommendations of the review about teaching course content from 2012, in partnership with the universities and the Queensland College of Teachers
- commission a Teacher Education Implementation Taskforce to work with all parties responsible for teacher preservice education and school induction to negotiate a shared strategy to achieve best practice in Queensland's teacher preparation
 - enhance the operations of the Queensland College of Teachers by implementing the strategy in concert with the new national approval of teacher preservice education.

- We will:
- open five Teacher Education Centres of Excellence in state schools across Queensland
 - focus all centres on quality teaching, including behaviour management
- give each centre a strategic focus on teaching priorities such as Indigenous students, science, literacy and numeracy, and Junior Secondary teaching
 - continue support for the National Partnership funding of centres in non-state schools.

- We will:
- legislate shared criteria and standards for all Queensland schools
 - create a new focus on school improvement to support student outcomes
 - respect schools' differences and encourage innovation through quality assurance processes that allow diversity of schools and systems.

- We will:
- establish an education standards authority in 2013 to perform curriculum, assessment and reporting functions and accredit all schools
 - review the functions of the Queensland Studies Authority in preparation for the new standards authority and to align with the new Australian Curriculum.

Objective 1: Getting ready for school

Why it matters

Early engagement of children in learning opportunities builds basic skills and provides a flying start to later development and success in school.

The 2009 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) of childhood development in five year olds showed that Queensland children, before they reach school, are more developmentally vulnerable than their interstate counterparts.

The AEDI results also told us that only 62 per cent of five year olds were regularly being read to at home in Queensland.

This is an area we need to boost for Queensland children.

Brain development is rapid in the early years, and there are opportunities to acquire new knowledge in a variety of ways. Research shows that just 20 minutes a day reading aloud with young children helps prepare them for school. It encourages children to listen, develop their imagination and language skills, and establishes strong literacy foundations.

Reading aloud is a great way to spend time with children and a firm foundation to start school!

What has already been done

In partnership with the Commonwealth Government, the Queensland Government has committed to an investment of almost \$900 million to create up to 240 new kindergarten services by 2014. This will deliver access to a quality kindergarten experience for all children in the year before Prep.

Already 22 kindergarten services have been established since 2010, with one more to open this year. Another 85 will open in 2012, and up to 132 more by 2014. In 2010, 40 per cent of children were enrolled in an early childhood program in the year before Prep – up from 29 per cent in 2008.

Recognising the importance of qualified early childhood teachers, the Queensland Government has offered more than 100 scholarships since 2010 to upgrade the qualifications of existing early childhood staff to four-year early childhood teacher degrees. Nearly 200 more are being offered in 2011.

In addition, the Queensland Government invested \$32 million over four years (2006-10) to establish four Early Years Centres at Caboolture, Gold Coast North, Browns Plains and Cairns. These 'one-stop shops' provide integrated early childhood education and care, family support and maternal and child health services.

What the Green Paper put forward

The reading awareness campaign

In February 2010, the government commenced a statewide reading awareness campaign. The campaign promotes the importance of reading to babies and young children, and highlights the significant impact this activity can have on their learning readiness.

The parents of every newborn child will receive a free children's book as part of the campaign. The Books for Bubs program to encourage parents to read to their child every day was launched on 1 July 2010 by Premier Anna Bligh, who gave out the first copies of *It's Bed Time* at Townsville Hospital.

Queensland Ready Readers

In the Green Paper, the Queensland Government called on community members to volunteer as Queensland Ready Readers in primary schools.

Queenslanders have responded to this call across the state and more than 1450 have already been trained. More than 870 trained volunteers have been placed in more than 360 state and non-state schools across Queensland.

Volunteers tell us they have been very satisfied with the training they have received, and have felt supported and welcomed locally.

The trained volunteers will continue to be placed in 2011, and further training sessions for new volunteers will be provided throughout the year.

What emerged from consultation

Support for reading awareness campaign

Consultation with Queensland parents revealed strong interest in accessing information about their role as their child's first teacher and a desire for help to develop their child's early literacy readiness.

There was a positive response to the Queensland Ready Readers initiative, and calls for volunteers to be supported by training, resources and good local coordination of the program.

The majority of people indicated their willingness to volunteer, however many regretted being unable to do so because of their work commitments during school hours.

Prep enrolment

The Green Paper did not raise the issue of enrolment in the Preparatory Year (Prep), which is not compulsory in Queensland. However in forums and submissions some people advocated making Prep enrolment compulsory.

Concern was expressed, especially by state primary school principals, about attendance rates in Prep being lower than those in the compulsory primary school years. The non

compulsory status of Prep was not seen as encouraging full-time or regular attendance.

Other stakeholders – in particular, some parents' organisations – want to preserve the right of parents to determine whether Prep is the best setting for their child.

What we will do

Strategy:

Support parents and engage the community in the early years of children's learning.

The Queensland Government will support parents through the early years of their child's development with tailored information, resources and training about early childhood education and development.

Actions

1.1 We will create a single point of information for parents of young children.

In collaboration with other government departments and non-government agencies, the Department of Education and Training will coordinate the provision of high quality information to support parents to provide healthy, safe and nurturing environments for their child.

A 'Fast Finder' web directory will be published to link parents with information and resources about young children's development, health and wellbeing. The directory will act as a single point of information for services such as the Raising Children Network, 13 HEALTH, QFinder, and Beyond Blue.

1.2 We will maintain the reading awareness campaign.

The reading awareness campaign commenced on television and in newspapers across Queensland in early 2010. This campaign sends a strong message to parents about the importance of reading to their children. It also provides support for parents on how to help their children acquire crucial, early learning skills.

The program is continuing in 2011.

1.3 We will recruit and train additional Queensland Ready Readers.

Queensland Ready Readers trials in Townsville, Wide Bay and Toowoomba have been a great success. As foreshadowed in the Green Paper, the initiative has been expanded to cover the whole state.

Volunteers receive training before being placed in schools and the additional support they provide to young students, especially in the early years, will help make a significant difference to educational outcomes.

Volunteers do not replace the valuable work of our teachers or teacher aides.

The safety of the students is paramount, so standard checks for working with children apply to volunteers, free of charge.

We are continuing our efforts to recruit volunteers to join the Queensland Ready Readers. Our target is 3000 fully trained volunteers.

1.4 We will offer free reading training to parents of children in Prep to Year 3.

This reader training program for parents of children in Prep to Year 3 was announced on 14 July 2010. Already, nearly 2000 parents have taken up the offer of training.

The program gives parents tips and strategies for making literacy activities part of daily family life. Parents are also presented with knowledge about the reading process, so they can assist their children with literacy development.

1.5 We will provide early literacy training for people working with families and young children.

Across Queensland, staff in libraries, community child health services, playgroups and day care centres help families to care for the health and early education of their young children.

The State Library of Queensland works through the Queensland Public Libraries network to deliver professional development for workers in these services who have a close relationship with parents and children.

This professional development will enable these staff to help families with young children to access early literacy programs regardless of where they live.

Strategy:

Recognise Prep as the first year of school, to maximise attendance and achievement so children get the best start to school.

The Prep Year was introduced in Queensland as a non-compulsory first year of school in 2007. Prep is a full-time school program, but principals have observed some fluctuations in attendance.

Phase One of the new Australian Curriculum is scheduled for implementation in 2012, and enrolment and full-time attendance in Prep will be essential so students develop the set foundation skills, knowledge and understanding for this year level. As part of reforms at the national level, schools will assess and report Prep students' achievements.

Action:

1.6 We will recognise Prep as the first year of schooling.

The government's ambition is that every Queensland child will have 13 years of schooling, from Prep to Year 12.

Prep enrolment is not compulsory in Queensland. This is the case in most other states as well: Tasmania is the only state or territory that makes the Prep year compulsory.

Queensland's approach respects parents' choice of the best situation for their individual child. The statewide attendance rates of Prep students are only slightly

lower than the other primary year levels, and appear to relate to higher absences due to illness.

However, full-time attendance in Prep gives children a flying start to school. The new Australian Curriculum includes Prep. No Queensland child can afford to miss out on this important foundation year.

The department will recognise Prep as the first year of school. School principals will actively advocate with parents that Prep enrolment and attendance are vital to the interests of children beginning school. An attendance strategy will reinforce the message that 'Every Day Counts' for the early years of schooling.

Parents will still be able to determine when their children start Prep. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis to applications for flexible entry for children coming from isolated areas of the state.

Objective 2: Getting ready for secondary school

Why it matters

Young people in early adolescence are a distinct group with individual needs. In this phase – from around 10 to 15 years of age – most young people enter puberty and face more rapid physiological and psychological change than in any other phase of life. Along with many positive developments, there is a greater risk of students becoming disengaged from learning, demonstrating variable achievement and exhibiting challenging behaviours.

Teaching young adolescents

Many state and non-state schools in Queensland have tailored environments in the early secondary years to promote learning and engage students. More than 200 state and non state schools offer Year 7 along with secondary year levels. There is much to be learned from their successes.

The introduction of Prep in 2007 followed by the increase in the school starting age in 2008 brought the Queensland schooling system into line with most other Australian states. From 2015, students entering Year 7 will be in their eighth year of formal schooling and six months older than previously.

The implementation of the first phase of the new Australian Curriculum will begin in 2012 in all Queensland schools. By 2013, national content and standards will apply for English, mathematics, science and history from Prep to Year 10.

Placing Year 7 in the secondary school environment, with access to specialist teachers and facilities, will better position Queensland students to take advantage of the new Australian Curriculum. It will also provide the variety, intellectual challenge and age-appropriate support that adolescents need during this important life phase.

We are confident our 12 – 13 year old young people can flourish best in secondary school. This is endorsed by educational experts and experienced principals of schools where Year 7 is already included along with secondary year levels.

What has already been done

Supporting students' transitions

In 2002, the landmark Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) package was introduced by the Queensland Government. ETRF emphasised the importance of transitions in the lives of young people.

Reforms introduced under ETRF included the introduction in 2007 of a new, full-time Prep year to make the transition into compulsory schooling easier for children.

Under the ETRF, investment in technology substantially increased, to provide access for students and staff to good quality Information and Communication Technologies in state schools.

The ETRF also brought in the 'learning or earning' laws, and a broader range of learning options for students in the senior secondary years of school. These reforms help better prepare young people for the transition from school to further education and training or work.

Curriculum continuity

In 2005, the Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) framework was announced. It aligns curriculum, assessment and reporting across Years 1 to 9 in all Queensland schools.

The new Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is developing and implementing a new nationally consistent curriculum, in collaboration with all states and territories. This new Australian Curriculum will set out consistent core content and achievement standards for all schools across Australia.

High expectations and teaching quality

The 2009 Masters Review recommended improving the performance of Queensland primary schools in literacy, numeracy and science. The government's response seeks to guarantee teacher quality and raise the bar in science, literacy and numeracy teaching and learning in Years 1 to 9.

What the Green Paper put forward

The Green Paper proposed giving Year 7 students a flying start into secondary schooling from 2014, with access to specialist staff and facilities that provide challenging and age-appropriate learning experiences.

What emerged from consultation

The Green Paper proposal to move Year 7 to high school in 2014 received varying degrees of support from different stakeholders.

In community consultations, groups of forum participants strongly supported the proposal. At the same time, more than half of the submissions from individuals expressed concerns with the move. Major stakeholders were largely in favour, though they argued for extra resourcing to make the change.

Supported transition to high school

Consultation feedback confirmed the importance of particular support for students in the transition from primary to high school, continuing into the early years of secondary school. There was widespread support for stronger action to assist students in the transition from primary to secondary schooling.

Strong pastoral care was considered an effective way to support students in their new environment, and suggestions to enhance this provision included counselling, diagnosis of individual needs, and 'buddying' with older students.

Issues particular to rural and remote communities

Consultation feedback confirmed that changes to Year 7 would have a particular impact on families in some rural and remote communities, whose children might have to leave home to attend boarding school when they start secondary school.

Some families in rural and remote areas may be faced with a decision to send their Year 7 children away to boarding school, prepare their children to travel long distances to access secondary education and to bear additional costs associated with boarding and travel. With the increased entry age to Year 1 in 2008, students will be six months older in Year 7, however their readiness for the transition was raised as a particular concern for rural and remote students during consultations.

What we will do

The Queensland Government will establish Year 7 as the first year of high school from 2015. We will improve support for students as they move from primary to secondary, and reform the early secondary years.

There are several reasons why 2015 has been chosen as the time when Year 7 will become a secondary year.

Parents of the 'half cohort' that will reach Year 7 in 2014 have expressed concerns about their age and becoming the first group to deal with two major education reforms: Prep and now the change of Year 7. We understand these concerns. A little over a quarter of this smaller cohort will turn 13 in Year 7. From 2015 on, half of Year 7 students will turn 13.

Making the change in 2015 rather than 2014 will also allow both primary and secondary schools more time to prepare for this major reform. They will have longer to adjust their facilities, resources and staffing to accommodate the new state of affairs.

Junior Secondary in state schools

In state secondary schools, we will introduce Junior Secondary for Years 7, 8 and 9, to ensure the bridge between primary and secondary school is safe, strong and consistent for all students.

Junior Secondary will focus on age-appropriate education, and support for students' wellbeing and transitions.

From 2013, Years 8 and 9 will become Junior Secondary. Year 7 will be included in 2015 when it becomes a secondary year.

The Senior Secondary years will remain as Years 10, 11 and 12.

Strategies and actions

Strategy:

Establish Year 7 as the first year of secondary schooling to support the best educational settings and transitions for young adolescents.

Action

2.1 We will:

- make Year 7 the first year of high school from 2015
- introduce Junior Secondary in state schools from 2013
- encourage all state and non-state schools to strengthen their support for students' transitions from primary to secondary.

In 2015, Year 7 will become the first year of high school in all Queensland state and non-state schools. Most other states and territories already have Year 7 in secondary, including the educationally high-performing states of New South Wales and Victoria.

The government will make the legislative amendments required to establish Year 7 as the first year of secondary schooling. The main change will be to the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, to ensure that Year 7 is defined as secondary education.

Supporting young adolescents

The clear message from consultation, research and best practice in other states and territories and our own successful schools is that what matters most is the quality of the educational experience that young people receive. An important part of that educational experience is that our students are supported through the years of early adolescence, and in their transition from primary to secondary schooling.

Junior Secondary

We will progressively introduce Junior Secondary to state schools from 2013 to 2015. From 2013, Years 8 and 9 in state schools will become the Junior Secondary years. Year 7 will be included from 2015 when it becomes a secondary year.

Under six guiding principles, Junior Secondary will provide challenging educational offerings that engage young adolescents, while giving them a sense of belonging and support through the changes they face. (See Box: Junior Secondary in Queensland State Schools.)

Junior Secondary in Queensland State Schools

From 2013, Queensland state schools will recognise Years 8 and 9 as Junior Secondary, with Year 7 to be included in 2015.

The following six guiding principles for Junior Secondary have been drawn from best practice examples already in place in Queensland state and non-state schools, and elsewhere in Australia.

SIX PRINCIPLES

1. *Distinct identity*

Junior Secondary students will be encouraged and supported to develop their own group identity within the wider high school. This can involve dedicated school areas and events.

2. *Quality teaching*

Teachers working with students in the Junior Secondary years will be given the skills they need through additional professional development, so they can support young teens through these crucial early high school years.

3. *Student wellbeing*

We will meet the social and emotional needs of Junior Secondary students with a strong focus on pastoral care. For example, schools could provide a home room to support students as they adjust to new routines and greater academic demands.

4. *Parent and community involvement*

We want parents to stay connected with their child's learning when they enter high school. Parent involvement in assemblies, special events, award ceremonies and leadership presentations will be welcomed.

5. *Leadership*

Schools will be encouraged to create leadership roles for students in Years 7, 8 and 9. Dedicated teachers experienced with teaching young adolescents will lead Junior Secondary supported by the principal and administration team.

6. *Local decision-making*

The needs of each school community will influence how Junior Secondary is implemented in each school.

Many state schools already include Years 7, 8, and 9 within the one school – for example, P–12 colleges. In other cases, primary and secondary schools will work together to build Junior Secondary from 2013, so that students experience continuous learning and smooth transitions.

All schools

All schools will strengthen their learning environments and experiences to cater better for young adolescent students, and support their transition from primary to secondary.

For state schools, applying the six Junior Secondary principles will be necessary, but there will be flexibility to allow individual schools to fit their own circumstances.

Non-state schools will continue to be able to determine their own structures and span of year levels, given accreditation to do so. Different schools and schooling sectors are best placed to make their own local decisions about how to implement Year 7 as the first secondary school year.

Strategy:

Challenge students in early secondary school with demanding curriculum and high standards.

Actions

2.2 We will help schools:

- implement the new Australian Curriculum
- teach in ways that engage students and encourage them to think critically and creatively
- teach curriculum that builds over the early secondary years
- focus on improving student achievement in literacy, numeracy and science.

Best practice in the early years of secondary school challenges students to develop higher-order thinking skills and engage with relevant content. Students are encouraged to make connections across their knowledge of the traditional subjects. Assessment sets high expectations, with tasks that require reflection and real world application.

Already, the Queensland education system encompasses a wide range of differing school structures and approaches to schooling. Many state and non-state schools structure their curriculum in P-12 and P-10 settings and include Year 7 in a setting that is not specifically primary.

The Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) framework allows schools to progressively develop their students' learning through primary school and into the early secondary years.

The new Australian Curriculum will bring new challenges to Year 7 learning. Implementation of Phase One will commence in 2012. Support will be provided to all schools to implement the new Australian Curriculum, taking account of the movement of Year 7 into secondary in 2015.

Strategy:

Make the transition from primary to secondary school easier, safer and more welcoming for Year 7 students.

Actions

2.3 We will help state schools:

- promote positive behaviour and provide pastoral care for all students
- improve working relationships between primary and secondary schools so students and parents know what to expect and their studies are continuous
- give appropriate support for students with additional needs, such as students with disabilities or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Students, especially those in the Junior Secondary years, need to feel safe and supported while being allowed to explore the increased options and independence that secondary schooling offers.

Good transitions for our young people are not just about the move between two schools. They begin much earlier in primary schools, with preparation for the change, and continue well into the new secondary environment, with supportive orientation and pastoral care.

Learning and Wellbeing framework

All state schools will have a Learning and Wellbeing framework that includes:

- an explicit commitment to developing a positive school ethos
- a whole school positive approach to the management of school behaviour
- social and emotional learning practices embedded within the general curriculum.

Over the coming years, state schools will build the capacity of their staff to respond to the academic and pastoral needs of all students. All state schools will develop and implement a wellbeing curriculum, supporting the inclusion of Year 7 in the Junior Secondary years from 2015.

2.4 We will provide additional funding to support Year 7 students' travel to local secondary schools.

The Queensland Government already provides more than \$170 million per year to fund school transport for school students attending both state and non-state schools.

Because there are fewer secondary schools than primary schools in Queensland, many students will need to travel further to attend Year 7 at their nearest secondary school.

The government will provide additional funding to support Year 7 students' transport arrangements to local secondary schools.

Strategy:

Prepare and support state school teachers, so that they can provide top-class learning experiences and leadership for Junior Secondary school communities.

Actions

2.5 We will:

- offer up to 500 scholarships for state primary school teachers to prepare them for teaching in Junior Secondary
- deliver a comprehensive professional development program to ensure state school teachers of Junior Secondary are well equipped to respond to the needs of students at this stage
- work with providers of teacher education programs to encourage more aspiring secondary and Junior Secondary teachers.

Investing in our teachers

The quality of teaching has the greatest impact on student learning outcomes of any factor within the school.

The new Australian Curriculum requires more specific subject knowledge in Year 7 than has commonly been taught in Queensland primary schools.

When Year 7 becomes a secondary year level, some teachers from primary schools may choose to move to Junior Secondary, and existing secondary teachers may specialise in Junior Secondary.

We will support the Year 7 change with an investment in Queensland's state schooling workforce to build the capacity of teachers in the Junior Secondary years. An extensive program of professional development will be offered to all state school teachers, principals, deputy principals and other administrators involved in the Junior Secondary years, whether they have a primary or secondary background.

Teaching staff will be equipped with specialist subject knowledge and the skills to foster the social and emotional development of students in the Junior Secondary years. Literacy across the curriculum and pastoral care will be priorities.

Encouraging teacher supply

To fill the anticipated demand for specialist and Junior Secondary teachers, the government will offer up to 500 scholarships for state school primary teachers to undertake study to prepare them for this role.

The Department of Education and Training will work with universities to tailor education courses so teachers are ready to meet the new arrangements. This avenue will also inform student teachers of the growing demand for Junior Secondary and specialist teachers, and encourage their involvement.

The primary-secondary balance

Across all of Queensland, it is expected that fewer teachers will be needed in state primary schools, and about 1300 additional teachers will be needed in secondary.

Some changes will occur through teachers' normal employment changes, such as retirements. Where required, graduates who can teach in Junior Secondary will be recruited.

Strategy:

Introduce Junior Secondary in state schools in stages, to learn from best practice and involve local school communities.

Actions

2.6 We will:

- introduce Junior Secondary for Years 8 and 9 in state schools from 2013
- include Year 7 when it becomes a secondary year in 2015
- take advice from established practitioners and educational experts
- facilitate local advice and involvement
- share learnings with state and non-state schools.

Establishing Year 7 as the first year of secondary in state schools is one of the biggest changes for our schooling system since Year 8 moved to secondary in 1964.

We will listen to experts in the field of education for young adolescents, and learn from the best practice experience of some of our most successful schools that already include Year 7 in an environment that also includes secondary years.

The Department of Education and Training is creating regional advisory bodies that will enable it to consult better with local communities on educational issues, including the inclusion of Year 7 in secondary.

Strategy:

Provide new and refurbished classrooms for state schools to meet Year 7 needs and deliver specialist curriculum.

Actions

2.7 We will:

- invest in facilities to enable state schools offering secondary education to deliver Year 7 as the first year of Junior Secondary
- work with clusters of state schools to create innovative ways of offering Junior Secondary
- install flexible classrooms in eligible state schools for specialist learning in Junior Secondary
- help schools acquire resources that suit Year 7 students and fit the new Australian Curriculum.

Classrooms or teaching spaces suited to teaching and learning for young adolescents will be an important element of the Year 7 experience in secondary schools.

We will invest additional funds in state secondary and special schools to deliver appropriate class spaces, where needed, for Year 7 students to begin their Junior Secondary experience.

The types of spaces that may be provided include connected, self-contained learning spaces that allow flexible groupings of students and contemporary provision of information and communication technologies.

We will stage the building of these new classrooms in the years leading up to the start of the 2015 school year, consulting with schools about local needs. Working together may result in new solutions shared between local clusters of schools.

Funding for school resources

The government will provide additional funding to support state schools that offer secondary education to purchase resources for Year 7 students and make some refurbishments to their facilities. All schools delivering Year 7 in secondary will receive additional funds to help acquire Year 7 resources.

Strategy:

Work with non-state schools to bring about the change.

Actions

2.8 We will:

- assist non-state secondary schools to upgrade their facilities to accommodate Year 7 students
- provide increased funding to non-state schools for the provision of Year 7 as a secondary year
- streamline accreditation and funding eligibility processes for non-state secondary schools to deliver Year 7.

The non-state schooling sectors support the proposed move of Year 7 to secondary. They have expressed a concern that adequate funding needs to be provided to support the move.

The government will provide funds to help non-state secondary schools upgrade their facilities, including boarding facilities, to accommodate Year 7 students.

In addition, the non-state sector will benefit from extra general funds that will flow through the existing funding arrangements.

The government will negotiate with the Australian Government for non-state schools to receive Commonwealth funding for Year 7 as a secondary year from 2015.

Streamlined accreditation

Non-state schools that are already accredited to deliver secondary school programs will be capable of providing Year 7. They are already equipped for a specialist curriculum and they know what teaching expertise and specialist facilities are required.

Some non-state schools will need to seek additional accreditation to deliver Year 7. The government will streamline accreditation and funding eligibility processes to facilitate this requirement.

The Department of Education and Training will work with the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board or the new education authority so schools can be accredited easily.

Success in Junior Secondary

Many Queensland schools, both state and non-state, already offer settings where Year 7 is included along with secondary years. P-10 schools in rural areas, P-12 colleges in urban centres, or boarding schools that take boarders from Year 5 to Year 12, are just a few examples.

As well, secondary schools are already proficient at including Year 8 students who are new to the secondary environment.

Secondary schools welcoming their first Year 7 students from 2015 can apply these successful practices.

Here are some examples of successful approaches used in Queensland schools now. They could be applied with equal success with Year 7 students when they become secondary students.

- Establish a Junior Secondary school identity, perhaps with a separate area within the school campus.
- Allocate a single teacher to each Year 7 class for core or foundation studies.
- Give Year 7 classes access to specialist teachers and facilities for learning experiences appropriate to their maturing interests.
- Provide Year 7 classes with a home room to aid students' sense of security and stability in the Junior Secondary environment.
- Group Years 7, 8 and 9 for activities such as showcasing events, sporting activities, cultural events and excursions.
- Set high academic expectations for Year 7 students.
- Embed pastoral care in the educational program so students can examine issues related to their physical, emotional, social, cognitive and civic development.
- Provide a variety of learning experiences, perhaps with electives, to introduce students to the richness of secondary curriculum.
- Provide learning support and other support tailored to the needs of students.

Strategy:

Give assistance to Year 7 students from families in rural and remote areas.

Actions

2.9 We will:

- conduct a comprehensive review of the educational needs of geographically isolated families and the services offered to them
- increase the Year 7 rate of the Living Away from Home Allowance to the secondary student rate
- ensure distance education delivers secondary Year 7 studies under the new Australian Curriculum.

To access a secondary education the families of geographically isolated students may choose for them to attend boarding school, live with a relative or in a student hostel, or use distance education.

We will conduct a comprehensive review of the educational needs of geographically isolated families and the services available to them. The review will involve extensive consultation with families and their representatives, and take into account the circumstances of remote Indigenous communities.

The Living Away From Home Allowance gives financial assistance to eligible Queensland families who do not have reasonable daily access to a Queensland Government school with the relevant school year level. It includes a tuition allowance and a travel allowance for student travel between home and boarding school.

The government will increase the rate of these allowances for eligible Year 7 students to the secondary level.

Students in boarding schools

Initial indications suggest there may be up to 400 geographically isolated students who will seek access to boarding in Year 7, once it becomes a secondary year.

The government will establish a reference group to investigate the funding needs for boarding schools in the light of demand for boarding school places.

Distance education

By 2015, all schools providing distance education will offer Year 7 as the first year of secondary.

State schools will have access to increased e-learning options for students whose parents decide to send their children to schools close to home.

Strategy:

Sustain state primary schools to continue their focus on sound foundations.

Actions

2.10 We will:

- reaffirm the value and mission of primary schooling
- involve state primary and secondary schools in a shared focus on the upper primary and Junior Secondary years of schooling, and on students' transitions
- assist state primary school administrative and support staff to adjust throughout the change of Year 7 to secondary.

The government believes establishing Year 7 as the first year of secondary school will offer a huge opportunity for our students.

Nevertheless, we strongly affirm our continued commitment to primary schooling as the foundation years of education. For Year 7 to succeed in secondary, primary schools will need to continue to improve students' grounding in literacy, numeracy and science.

Stability for state primary schools

Some state primary schools will still gain enrolments through natural growth. Others will see an overall fall in enrolments as Year 7 moves into secondary. The State schools' entitlement to staff and resources is based on the number of students they have, so it is inevitable that some state primary schools will be affected.

Primary schools depend not only on teachers but on a range of non-teaching staff including principals and deputy principals, administrative staff, teacher aides, grounds care staff and cleaners.

To help primary schools adjust, delivery of Year 7 as the first year of secondary will be supported by a comprehensive and detailed workforce plan for state schools.

The department will implement a transition strategy to provide stability in primary schools during the transition period. Transitional arrangements will include all classified positions in primary schools, including principals, deputy principals, teacher aides and administration support positions, being held for up to three years during the transition period to ensure they are not disadvantaged by the decision.

All state school teachers and school leaders involved with Junior Secondary will be offered professional development to help equip them with the knowledge and skills to work with young adolescents in the secondary environment.

Up to 500 scholarships will be offered to state primary school teachers to study to become specialist secondary teachers.

We will also mount a recruitment campaign to attract more teachers to the Junior Secondary area – and work with universities to encourage preservice teachers to consider this career path. Significant professional development training will be undertaken with Junior Secondary teachers.

Details of the transition strategy will be finalised with a transitional working party that will be set up to work with employees and their relevant unions to ensure agreements are understood and individual employees can have their issues addressed.

Objective 3: Boosting performance for all schools

Why it matters

Queensland schools perform at a high level. We are looking to build even better school performance. We know from research that high expectations for students, teachers and schools are the key to better results.

National education agenda

Queensland is an active participant in the national education arena and a sponsor of the new national bodies focussed on education standards.

- The new Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for the development of the new Australian Curriculum, national assessment programs, and national data collection and reporting.
- The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) is responsible for providing national leadership in the profession of teaching and school leadership. It has responsibility for national professional standards and professional development for teachers and school leaders. AITSL will also lead the development of new national processes for approving preservice teacher education programs.

What has already been done

Over the past decade, the Queensland Government has taken action to improve education standards in Queensland with respect to schools, teaching and curriculum and assessment.

Standards

Queensland presently has three independent statutory bodies whose role is to ensure the setting and maintenance of standards. They are the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT), the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB).

The Queensland College of Teachers

The QCT was established in 2006. It is responsible for the registration of teachers based on professional standards and suitability to teach. It develops and applies professional standards for all Queensland teachers.

The QCT also approves and monitors Queensland preservice teacher education programs against the professional standards.

Following the Masters Review, the QCT is implementing pre-registration testing and a professional development framework for practising teachers.

The Queensland Studies Authority

The QSA was formed in 2002. It has responsibility for developing and accrediting school syllabuses and guidelines from kindergarten to Year 12.

A key QSA role is its responsibility for testing, assessment, moderation and certification. This includes the administration of Nation Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and the development of Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs).

The QSA is responsible for assessment, moderation and quality assurance of the Senior Phase of Learning. It is the QSA that releases senior students' Queensland Certificate of Education and Tertiary Entrance Statement, including 'OPs'.

The Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB)

The NSSAB commenced in 2001. It determines whether non-state schools are accredited to operate and monitors their ongoing compliance.

The NSSAB monitors schools' five-yearly reviews against accreditation criteria, investigates relevant complaints and conducts audits of school survey data.

School and system quality assurance

School systems and individual schools already have quality assurance processes in place.

Catholic schools undergo systematic school renewal cycles. State schools also have cyclical reviews under the School Planning, Reporting and Reviewing framework, and have recently introduced Teaching and Learning audits.

The Masters Review

Following the Masters Review in 2009, the government committed to implementing recommendations to improve and reinforce educational standards across the system.

One of those recommendations has resulted in the development of pre-registration tests in literacy, numeracy and science for all aspiring teachers, to build community confidence in teaching standards.

A rigorous professional development framework has been implemented, with programs to improve literacy, numeracy, scientific knowledge and assessment capability for teachers and school leaders.

To strengthen school leadership, the Queensland Education Leadership Institute was established in June 2010 to provide high quality professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of leaders in all school sectors.

What the Green Paper put forward

The Green Paper announced a comprehensive review of teacher preservice education and induction programs and the establishment of five state school Teacher Education Centres of Excellence.

The Green Paper also proposed a single independent education standards authority to set and monitor high standards for educational programs, teachers and all schools. It proposed the new authority would be created by combining the QCT, the QSA, and the NSSAB.

What emerged from consultation

Suggestions about teacher education

In consultation, comments about the content of teacher preservice education courses emphasised the need for teachers to be confident in their content area and to display a mastery of literacy and numeracy skills.

People also wanted to see teachers skilled in various teaching approaches (not a one-size-fits-all style of teaching). They wanted teachers to be able to respond effectively to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, and to be able to manage classrooms and student behaviour.

Many suggested having experienced, motivated and inspiring mentors for beginning teachers entering the profession and a lighter teaching load initially.

Increased focus on practical experience or 'pracs' during preservice education was also strongly supported.

Suggestions about Teacher Education Centres of Excellence

Responses to the initiative to establish five Teacher Education Centres of Excellence were in favour of giving preservice teachers practical experience and guidance.

Some people thought five centres were not enough for the whole state. It was suggested that some centres should be established in rural, regional or low socioeconomic areas or that one of the centres could focus on preparing teachers to work with Indigenous children.

Suggestions about behaviour and classroom management

Behaviour and classroom management were raised as key themes in the majority of submissions. There was strong interest in ensuring that aspiring teachers gain the necessary skills before commencing teaching. Further training in behaviour management techniques was suggested both for preservice and practising teachers.

Support for consistent high standards

The results of public consultation indicated broad support for clear standards, and a view that a single standards authority setting high standards for all schools would help raise school quality and student achievement.

Support for state school accreditation

Major stakeholder groups supported the concept of introducing accreditation for state schools, similar to the process that is already applied to non-state schools.

At the same time, stakeholders emphasised that any accreditation system must recognise the individual characteristics of state and non-state schools.

Integrated standards authority

Most feedback on this proposal was provided by major stakeholder groups representing the needs of school systems, teachers, principals, parents and providers of preservice education programs.

These stakeholder groups did not support the concept of establishing a single integrated education standards authority across the three areas of schools, teachers and curriculum.

In particular, there was unanimous concern amongst key stakeholders about the proposed integration of the QCT into a new standards authority. They emphasised the QCT was a relatively new body and should remain as a separate entity responsible for maintaining and promoting the professional status of Queensland teachers.

Some stakeholders suggested there was scope to improve the operation of existing education standards authorities. A number of stakeholders emphasised the role the QSA would have to perform in supporting the implementation of the new Australian Curriculum.

What we will do

We want to build on the work that has already been done to ensure consistent standards in our curriculum, schools and teaching. These standards will apply across school sectors and across the essential elements of good educational practice.

An independent standards authority that accredits all schools (state and non-state) will level the playing field and give the public the same assurance of minimum standards in all schools.

Strategy:

Establish best practice in Queensland teacher preparation by negotiating cooperative commitments.

Actions

3.1 We will

- immediately adopt 24 recommendations of the Review of Teacher Preservice Education and School Induction
- implement the recommendations of the review of teaching course content from 2012, in partnership with the universities and the Queensland College of Teachers
- commission a Teacher Education Implementation taskforce to work with all parties responsible for teacher preservice education and school induction to negotiate a shared strategy to achieve best practice in Queensland's teacher preparation

- enhance the operations of the Queensland College of Teachers by implementing the strategy along with the new national approval of teacher preservice education.

The Green Paper initiated a Review of Teacher Preservice Education and School Induction (Caldwell Review). The review was conducted by Professor Brian Caldwell and former Queensland principal, Mr David Sutton.

The reviewers produced two reports which make 65 recommendations. The reports indicate that Queensland is well placed to create a world-class system of teacher education and school induction.

The recommendations affect universities with regard to teacher education programs, as well as the QCT, which approves and monitors these programs. They also impact schools and school systems with respect to their employment and school induction practices for beginning teachers.

Reforms to give preservice teachers a flying start to their career

The government has published its response to the Caldwell Review. The government supports, and will immediately implement, 24 recommendations relating to good practice and program content. The government, QCT and teacher education institutions have agreed to reforms to teacher education programs. The reforms will apply to all commencing preservice teachers from 2012.

All undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education programs will be strengthened to include two subjects or equivalent on how to:

- assess student learning, identify learning needs, and personalise support for students
- work with students who have special educational needs, or who fall behind and need special support to catch up.

All programs will be strengthened by a renewed focus on behaviour management. Preservice students will be required to demonstrate their theoretical understanding and practical skill, throughout the program including the practicum (or 'prac').

All programs will include how to use English as a Second Language approaches to teach students from a wide range of cultural or language backgrounds, including Indigenous students.

Teacher Education Implementation Taskforce

Reforms from the Caldwell Review will extend beyond the direct responsibility of the Queensland Government and will include many stakeholders, sectors, and levels of government. Queensland's reforms will need to align with the national AITSL initiatives.

To bridge these differing responsibilities, the government is establishing a Ministerial Teacher Education Implementation taskforce. The taskforce will

negotiate a collaborative approach to the remaining 41 recommendations of the Caldwell Review, and the development of agreements and legislation.

Queensland College of Teachers

The QCT will remain as a separate statutory body responsible for maintaining and promoting the professional status of Queensland teachers.

With changes at the national level, the QCT's current responsibility for approval of preservice teacher education programs will need to be reassessed.

The Teacher Education Implementation Taskforce will reassess this role of the QCT, taking account of the outcomes of the Caldwell Review as well as AITSL's new national processes.

Strategy:

Continue the commitment to the Teacher Education Centres of Excellence under the National Partnership.

Actions

3.2 We will

- open five Teacher Education Centres of Excellence in state schools across Queensland
- focus all centres on quality teaching, including behaviour management
- give each centre a strategic focus on teaching priorities such as Indigenous students, science, literacy and numeracy, and Junior Secondary teaching
- continue support for National Partnership funding of centres in non-state schools.

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality, all school sectors have committed to implementing measures to promote excellence in teaching.

State schools and independent schools are implementing teacher education centres of excellence. Catholic schools are focussing on excellence in mentoring preservice teachers, beginning teachers and school leaders.

The centres of excellence will provide hands-on, in-school experiences for preservice teachers and professional development for existing teachers. They will also help develop stronger partnerships with Queensland universities.

State school centres of excellence

The state school Teacher Education Centres of Excellence are aimed at improving the practicum element within teacher education programs. Five centres have been announced. Their locations are: Kelvin Grove State College, Morayfield East State School, Mount Stuart cluster (Townsville), Aspley State Special School, and Benowa State School and State High School.

All centres will focus on quality teaching, including behaviour management. Each centre will have a

different strategic focus, for example: early childhood education, the Junior Secondary years, science and mathematics teaching, teaching Indigenous students, community engagement, literacy and numeracy, and special education.

Independent school centres of excellence

Four established centres in independent schools are beginning their work: Trinity Lutheran College, Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Cannon Hill Anglican College, and Forest Lake College.

The centres are sharing resources, but each centre is differentiating to suit the school's priorities, such as teacher mentoring and early years education.

Catholic school centres of excellence

The aim of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission is that educational excellence will be enhanced by focusing on mentoring for preservice teachers, early career teachers, and school leaders.

School centres of excellence will be established in online learning and delivering modules for professional learning, including curriculum planning and delivery. Through school partnerships, schools with excellent teaching practices and resources are mentoring remote schools or schools in low socioeconomic areas.

Strategy:

Hold all Queensland schools to consistent high standards and encourage school improvement to support student achievement.

Actions

3.3 We will

- legislate shared criteria and standards for all Queensland schools
- create a new focus on school improvement to support student outcomes
- respect schools' differences and encourage innovation through quality assurance processes that allow diversity of schools and systems.

For the first time, all Queensland schools will operate under shared standards.

The shared standards will cover key issues for schools such as appropriate educational programs, provision for student welfare including behaviour management, and adequate resources to support teaching and learning.

A new school accreditation process will be established for state and non-state schools. The new process will be based on the existing non-state school accreditation regime, with a number of key enhancements.

The autonomy and diversity of schools and schooling systems will be respected through a system focussed on quality assurance, not quality control. School systems and groups of affiliated schools will be authorised to conduct cyclical reviews of school achievement against accreditation standards.

To develop the new accreditation criteria, standards and indicators, further close engagement with stakeholders, including state and non-state sectors, unions and parent groups will be needed. A cross-sectoral reference group will advise on the development of new accreditation standards as a basis for new legislation.

Strategy:

Ensure that standards for curriculum, assessment and reporting are aligned with school accreditation standards.

Actions

3.4 We will

- establish an education standards authority in 2013 to perform curriculum, assessment and reporting functions and to accredit all schools
- review the functions of the Queensland Studies Authority in preparation for the new standards authority and to align with the new Australian Curriculum.

A new independent statutory authority will be established in early 2013 to oversee schools' achievements against the standards shared by all schools.

The new authority will replace and expand the functions of the NSSAB and oversee the accreditation of state and non-state schools.

The new authority will also assume the curriculum, assessment, testing, reporting and regulatory functions of the QSA.

It will also assume responsibilities for registering and supporting home education.

The authority will employ assessors rather than school inspectors. There will be a renewed focus on school improvement processes and the ways that schools can use data to support ongoing improvements in teaching and learning.

Combining these functions in one body will allow school accreditation and school improvement to draw on the curriculum, assessment and data analysis capacity of the QSA.

We will review the roles and functions of the QSA during 2011 and 2012 to capitalise on the opportunity to reprioritise its existing operations in light of the emerging roles of ACARA and AITSL.

The way forward

The Queensland Government remains firmly committed to giving our children the best opportunity to commence their learning on a firm footing.

We are committed to improving the quality of our schools, our teachers and teaching, and the learning outcomes for our students.

The commitments outlined in this Education White Paper are aimed at providing a sound basis for learning in early childhood and building capacity and consistency in Queensland's schools.

The tasks will range from giving parents more support, through to providing the infrastructure, training and support to introduce Year 7 into secondary school by 2015.

We will implement the new Australian Curriculum, better prepare and develop our teachers, and require consistent standards from all schools.

In delivering education that allows every child to realise his or her potential, we recognise the efforts and achievements of all school sectors.

We acknowledge the essential roles of parents, teachers and the broader community.

The vision of this White Paper is that it will initiate a shared commitment to a flying start for Queensland's children.

Introduction

A Flying Start for Queensland Children: Education Green Paper for public consultation was released for public consultation in February 2010. This discussion paper proposed major reforms to the state's education system that would support the government's 2020 vision of delivering a world-class education and training system in Queensland.

Extensive community and cross-sectoral consultation was undertaken to ensure as many people as possible had the chance to provide feedback on the proposed reforms and ultimately inform the development of a white paper.

There were more than 8000 downloads of the discussion paper from almost 50 000 visits to the Flying Start website.

A total of 93 forums were conducted in numerous metropolitan, provincial, regional and remote centres across the state (see Appendix 1 for a list of these forums). Participants at the forums broke into groups to respond to the issues.

By the time the consultation process finished on 30 June 2010, 2601 people had attended the forums and a further 1446 individuals had provided their views by online survey or other means.

In addition, 114 stakeholder groups submitted their views for consideration, with some reiterating these views through representation on the stakeholders' Flying Start Advisory Committee.

The Flying Start Green Paper included a survey, which could also be completed online. The survey sought feedback through 14 open-ended questions, five of which also included a Yes/No component. These questions were based on the three key objectives in the Green Paper:

Objective 1: Getting ready for school

Objective 2: Getting ready for secondary school

Objective 3: Boosting performance for all schools.

This open-ended approach gave respondents the opportunity to have their say on all of the proposals. To capture the essence of respondents' comments, an analysis was undertaken to identify key themes. After all submissions were read and processed, 101 unique themes were identified.

The results from the Flying Start consultations come from three sources: the forum breakout groups; submissions and online survey responses from individuals; and submissions and consultations with major stakeholder organisations.

The consultation outcomes provided valuable feedback on the proposals and have influenced decisions and actions already being undertaken by the government. The results have shaped the package of education reforms announced in the Queensland Government Education White Paper *A Flying Start for Queensland Children*.

Community consultation

2 February to 30 June 2010

50 000 Flying Start website visits

8000 discussion paper downloads

2601 people attended 93 forums – with 320 breakout groups' views captured

1446 submissions from individuals

114 submissions from stakeholder groups and organisations



Objective 1: Getting ready for school

The importance of engaging with children and providing them with quality early learning experiences is being increasingly recognised. Getting off to a flying start is one of the most important predictors of a child succeeding at and enjoying school. The role of parents and caregivers is critical in ensuring children are physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally ready for school.

What the Green Paper proposed

The Green Paper set out to tackle early literacy and numeracy on every front — at school, in the community and at home.

The Green Paper proposed:

- encouraging families to read to their children
- enlisting an army of volunteer Queensland Ready Readers in schools.

What was asked

The Green Paper asked people to consider:

Q1 *What support could be provided to help families give their children a flying start to school?*

Q2 *How can volunteers be supported to help children read at school?*

Q3 *Would you volunteer at your local school?*

Q4 *What would encourage you to volunteer as a Queensland Ready Reader?*

Major findings

Widespread community support for the elements contained within Objective 1 was shown during the community consultation process.

People told us that the most effective ways to give children the best start to formal education are to:

- raise awareness of the vital role parents and caregivers play as educators
- provide training and resources to assist them to read with their children from an early age
- provide information on what they need to do to prepare their children for school.

There was strong support for the Queensland Ready Readers program, and people told us it was important that:

- volunteers are provided with resources and up-front and ongoing training
- schools have a structured framework for supporting and coordinating volunteers.

The majority of those responding to the survey said they would volunteer at their local school to help children read.

What people said about: Helping families give their children a flying start

There was common agreement that giving parents opportunities to start the learning journey with their child from birth onwards was critical to early learning.

Parents as primary educators

People often spoke of the need to *raise awareness of the role parents need to play as the primary educators of their children*, suggesting media campaigns or other targeted strategies to achieve this.

'Public education programs re importance of quality education and role parents have to prepare their children for schooling. Greater emphasis on the value of education within society. The important role parents play in their children's education and the benefit of good relationships between school and home.'

Training, information and resources

Many people suggested *providing information, resources and training to parents to help them to read with their children*. Resources could include books explaining to adults how to read to children, DVDs, websites and other media. Training could occur by establishing greater links with organisations such as early childhood centres, child health clinics, libraries, schools or distance education.

'Maybe parents/carers are finding it difficult to allocate time to read to children — life is very fast these days. If time is an issue, then perhaps some creative strategies could be devised and promoted to parents/carers to give them ideas on how to include reading with their children in their busy schedule. Maybe the government could fund a book with an accompanying CD to be provided to all three-year-old children for them to listen to. This approach would enable both child and parent/carer to be involved in the storytelling, but it could be done in the car on the way to day care/shopping etc.'

Some people recommended *providing training to families about parenting*, suggesting a range of ideas from informal demonstrations of parenting skills to structured courses. This type of training would be designed to provide parents with a broad range of knowledge and skills in parenting issues, including social skills, manners, behaviour, discipline, health, nutrition, sleep habits and other parental concerns.

'Educate parents on parenting. New parents either involve themselves in groups (e.g. playgroups) and learn good parenting skills from each other and staff, or fall through the net and learn few skills. Behaviour (good or bad) doesn't just happen in high school. I believe it is a lifelong journey. Good behaviour, consequences for actions etc. are things parents need to learn/know and put in place on an age-appropriate level from day one.'

People also raised the need to *provide information, training and funds for preparing children for school*. Suggestions included advice on the skill level expected to start kindergarten, Prep and Year 1, and guidelines for parents to develop the foundation skills necessary for their child to start school.

'Work in with Queensland Health who would have a record of all births and send out a yearly newsletter to parents at 12 months, 2 years, 3 years, etc. until the child begins school. These newsletters might just outline, for example, the 12 month one, suggestions for reading to children etc the 2 year might suggest how to begin incidental learning such as talking to your child when you shop, beginning to use motor skills, etc. Just ideas to start parents thinking about how important their role is at home in early education.'

Quality early childhood care

A number of people responding to the survey spoke of the importance of *providing sufficient and affordable quality early childhood and kindergarten programs and places*. They spoke of expanding existing places and making these accessible to all parents, as well as ensuring and improving the quality of early childhood education programs in terms of facilities, curriculum, links to school, and staff/student ratios.

'Making kindergarten more affordable and accessible to all parents, especially those who have to work.'

It was noted at consultation forums that principals had discussed lower attendance rates in Prep as compared to primary school, and as a consequence suggested that Prep should be made compulsory. Other people supported compulsory Prep, also acknowledging that children mature and develop at different rates and there are unique pressures on parents in isolated and rural areas.

'A more flexible starting age would reduce the differences in abilities of children in Prep, which would make this a more realistic option. Access to better early childhood facilities with qualified teachers at a minimum cost would be great, but also wasted if Prep continues to be non-compulsory.'

What people said about: Volunteering at school

People said they would like to volunteer at schools to help children read.

Would you volunteer at your local school?

Individual submissions

(80.6% of 1446 answered the question) Yes 79% No 21%

Training, resources and a feeling of appreciation

There was broad community support for the introduction of the Queensland Ready Readers (QRR) program, although people commented that it was important to provide volunteers with *up-front and ongoing training and resources, such as books, to QRR volunteers.*

'Volunteers who are working to assist children who are having difficulties with reading should be provided with training, as they need to understand the methods which teachers are using to assist children in their learning efforts. Volunteers must be able to reinforce the methods used to teach children to read, as it may have been a long time since they attended school and children may be taught differently now.'

People also spoke of a need to *ensure volunteers are welcomed, appreciated and recognised.* They indicated that QRR volunteers should feel they are valued and respected, and this may be achieved by providing them with a warm welcome, tangible signs of appreciation for their time and contribution (e.g. at school assemblies) or recognition of their efforts through the awarding of certificates or credit towards higher qualifications.

'A welcoming program/environment where volunteers won't feel judged or labelled according to their own educational/social background; a formal commitment form/ceremony; follow-up and monitoring; a thank you process.'

Structured framework

People also told us it was important for *volunteers to operate within a structured framework,* suggesting set times, locations, appointment of a school coordinator, allocated resources and students, links to the wider class curriculum, networking opportunities among volunteers, administrative support, monitoring, follow-up and more.

'Volunteers can be supported by an allocated volunteer coordinator position or community liaison position at each school ... The volunteer coordinator would be working to a developed volunteer program that meets the school needs, and a volunteer policy and handbook that each volunteer and all school staff are provided with so that expectations and roles and responsibilities are clear.'

Many people advised they were *unable to volunteer during school hours due to work or other commitments* or because they were *already volunteering at school.*

'I would love to (and have done in the past). However, I am also a single parent who works and it is extremely challenging fitting everything in.'

Objective 2: Getting ready for secondary school

Secondary schooling in Queensland provides discipline-based learning and helps direct students toward their future education and employment aspirations.

For those students transitioning from the primary to the secondary environment, particularly those attending a boarding school, the experience can involve substantial change. Ensuring that students settle into their new environment as quickly and comfortably as possible is important for effective learning.

What the Green Paper proposed

The Green Paper proposed moving Year 7 students to secondary school to provide them with high-quality, challenging and age-appropriate learning experiences.

What was asked

The Green Paper asked people to consider:

- Q5 *Should Year 7 be in secondary school when it is the eighth year of formal schooling?*
- Q6 *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?*
- Q7 *Should the early years of secondary school be changed to help students adjust to the transition?*
- Q8 *Are there particular challenges in the proposal to move Year 7 for remote communities that rely on distance education and boarding schools?*
- Q9 *What could be done to help address these challenges for families and communities?*
- Q10 *What do you think about this issue?*

Major findings

There were considerable differences between the results received from forums, group/stakeholder submissions and individual submissions in relation to the proposal to move Year 7 to secondary school.

People told us that there were benefits in moving Year 7 to secondary school, although they raised concerns about the:

- emotional maturity and readiness of students
- impact the move could have in rural and remote areas
- financial, infrastructure and human and physical resource implications.

Forums and group submissions were more supportive of moving Year 7 than submissions from individuals.

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

Forum breakout groups

(65% of 320 breakout groups answered the question) Yes 84% No 16%

Group submissions

(49.1% of 114 groups answered the question) Yes 72% No 28%

Individual submissions

(86.9% of 1446 individuals answered the question) Yes 44% No 56%

The greater willingness of forum participants to embrace the move may be due, at least in part, to the explanations provided and the ability of participants to have questions answered at forums.

There was no clear consensus among the major stakeholders about this proposal. However, nearly all key stakeholders did raise the financial, infrastructure and resource implications of moving Year 7 to secondary school, and saw benefits in the adoption of a middle school approach.

Many submissions raised the impact on rural and remote communities, including the emotional readiness of young people to leave home, costs associated with the extra year, and the longer term impact the move might have on the home and community.

What people said about: Moving Year 7 to secondary

Social and emotional development

Many people commented on the *emotional and social development* of Year 7 students in a secondary school setting, and told us that they wanted to see the early years of secondary changed so that Year 7 students could transition smoothly from primary to secondary.

‘Emotional readiness – just like the early years, a child going to high school needs to have their emotional and social skills developed to cope with the environment they will be in (e.g. the social groups, the peer pressure, the role modelling.’

Should the early years of secondary be changed?

Individual submissions

(74.8% of 1446 answered the question) Yes 69% No 31%

Additional care and support

It was strongly suggested that the transition *adopt some kind of middle school approach and additional care and support to ensure a smooth transition* for younger secondary students. This might involve separating younger students from older students — either within the one secondary campus or by locating them on a separate middle school campus — or ensuring that the Year 7 program is a mixture of the primary and secondary school models to facilitate a more successful transition between the two types of schooling. Younger students might be supported through pastoral care, counselling, diagnosis of needs, ‘buddying up’ with older students and other mechanisms.

‘If children are progressing to high school earlier then high school needs to adjust. It is very difficult for a lot of youngsters moving all day from class to class with a huge variety of peers. The early years of high school should be more like primary schools — with one main teacher and class.’

‘There should be regular one-on-one chats etc. to give them opportunities to speak about any concerns or anxieties they might be experiencing. Close supervision and quicker reaction when it comes to bullying or self-esteem issues which may be evident through their school work also. Buddy systems with children closer to their age, such as Year 9s or 10s.’

Issues to be mindful of

In addition to emotional and social development, some people thought *Year 7 students might not intellectually cope with the change*. Comments were received about time management, organisational skills, study habits and the ability to cope with workload, homework and multiple teachers/classrooms.

‘They will still need guidance in the first six months because they still have difficulty making appropriate choices and have some difficulties with “freedom”. They need to be taught how to manage time effectively and to develop goals.’

Appropriateness of the secondary environment, arising from being around older students was raised as an issue by some.

'The children are too young and most would not be ready to undertake such a big step mixing with the older students.'

A small number of people had concerns for students in the 2007 'half cohort' Prep intake, who would be the first group of Year 7 students in high school if it was introduced in 2014. Lost leadership opportunities and age of this cohort were mentioned, as were suggestions to delay the move to 2015.

'I've heard suggestions that the change would be made in 2014. This is the cohort who was also the first to experience Prep. Don't experiment twice on the same group of children.'

Year 7 student readiness

A significant number of people thought *Year 7 students are not ready or mature enough* to cope with secondary school. Comments included reference to the more supportive environment of primary school and that the secondary setting was inappropriate for Year 7 students.

'Overt social/peer pressures are exerted in the secondary setting. There is a strong external and internal motivation to conform to modes of behaviour, often influenced by the actions and common perceptions elicited by older groups. There is a strong need to 'fit in' and find a group identity – which can sometimes lead to impressionable younger students making poor choices.'

Nevertheless, some people told us *Year 7 students are ready for secondary school*.

'I believe that our system is getting a bit "bottom heavy" with eight years of primary school now (including Prep). Also, in my experience as a parent, some children (perhaps more boys than girls) seem to find Year 7 'boring' and are itching to be moving around more. High school, with lots of different teachers and classrooms and more interesting activities, suits their needs better.'

Aligning the education system

People also pointed out that the move *would align our education system with other states and provide access to specialised teachers and curriculum*.

'We should be consistent with other states. Secondary schools will generally have greater resources and be in a position to offer a greater variety of subjects and a broader and more challenging curriculum than primary schools, which may not be able to offer access to specialist teachers.'

'We have a growing population, with many moving from interstate, so streamline the schooling system to match the rest of the country.'

What people said about: Workforce, infrastructure and resources

Staff and school resources

Aside from the impact on students people also commented on the impact moving Year 7 to secondary will have on *human resources and school budgets*, and outlined issues such as changes to workloads, salaries, conditions and education of teachers, principals and other staff at primary and secondary schools. They also spoke about reduced budgets, the ability to meet loan repayments and the viability of some schools.

'I agree in principle but also acknowledge the massive resourcing and logistical implications of such a move. There are a host of issues relating to geographical factors, school capacity and organisation, facilities, teacher training and availability, enrolment losses/gains linked to staffing and classification. I personally like the P-12 or P-10 approach where schools have junior, middle and senior school programs.'

School infrastructure

Concerns were also raised about *existing infrastructure and resources*, particularly in relation to whether there would be enough room at secondary schools to accommodate Year 7 students.

What people said about: Rural and remote issues

Boarding school

Many people felt there would be specific impacts on rural and remote communities if students were to have an *additional year away from home at boarding school*. These concerns included the emotional readiness of young people to leave home, costs associated with this extra year, and what longer term impact the move would have on the community.

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

Individual submissions

(62.7% of 1446 answered the question) Yes 79% No 21%

Assistance for families and students

People wanted to see *more financial assistance, timely and comprehensive information for the families, and greater care and support for the students affected by the move*. Suggestions included allowances, tuition and travel subsidies, scholarships or other payments to assist families to cope financially.

'Additional financial assistance, more scholarships and emotional support for families who will need to utilise boarding schools at an earlier age.'

'Support at local community and school levels. Different communities would have different needs and issues. Media messages are very important – clear, educationally and not politically motivated messages.'

Objective 3: Boosting performance for all schools

Setting high expectations for students, teachers and schools was identified as one of the most important prerequisites for success in the Masters review, which was commissioned by the government to review the performance of primary school education in Queensland. Developments at the national level also emphasise the value of common curriculum, standards, reporting and accountability.

While there are many different types of schooling available to Queensland families, it is critical that there are clear expectations and standards across all Queensland schools.

What the Green Paper proposed

The Green Paper set out to keep the quality of teaching high by helping teachers off to a flying start at the beginning of their careers, and by making sure all Queensland schools and teachers meet clear and consistent standards.

The Green Paper announced:

- a review of the quality of teacher education courses provided by universities and the support provided by schools to beginning teachers
- the creation of five Teaching Centres of Excellence to support teacher education.

The Green paper proposed:

- establishing an independent education authority to set and monitor common standards for teachers and all schools.

What was asked

Q11 *What are the most important aspects of education that must be included in teachers' pre-service training?*

Q12 *What do we need to do to ensure classrooms are free from disruption and focussed on learning?*

Q13 *How can we provide better support to our beginning teachers to make the transition to the classroom?*

Q14 *Would a single standards authority help raise students' performance by setting clear standards for all schools?*

Major findings

People felt that the most important aspects to be included in teachers' preservice education were:

- managing behaviour effectively in the classroom
- sound teaching and learning practices and principles (pedagogy) in their subject areas
- the ability to cater for students with diverse learning needs and from Indigenous and other cultural backgrounds
- more practical experience in the classroom
- confidence in their content area and mastery of literacy and numeracy skills.

Most people, including key stakeholders, indicated that beginning teachers would benefit from mentoring and more support in the initial years of teaching.

Although only 67.4 per cent of people making submissions responded to the question relating to the independent education authority, the results indicated a view that the formation of a single standards authority could help raise student performance by setting clear standards for all schools.

However, public feedback on this question was largely general in nature. The most detailed feedback on this proposal was provided by key stakeholder groups.

Nearly all key stakeholder groups disagreed with the concept of a single education standards authority, particularly in relation to the Queensland College of Teachers being included in the merger.

What people said about: Teacher preservice education

Behaviour and classroom management

People considered experience and understanding of *behaviour and classroom management* were most important in improving teachers' preservice education. Behaviour management was emphasised again in relation to keeping classrooms free from disruption.

'I think that they need a great deal of people skills and behaviour management skills taught before they enter the classroom. I have been in this position myself and it is very off-putting for a new teacher faced with a class of abusive students.'

Teaching practices

Many people also felt *teaching practices and fostering inclusiveness* through catering for students with differing abilities and needs were important components of teacher preservice education.

'The ability to understand the different types of learning. Not all students learn by the same methods. Teachers should also understand time and patience, and how to encourage children who are under or over achievers to excel more.'

Practical experience

More practical experience was also often cited in relation to teacher education. People spoke of the need to increase the proportion of practical subjects to theoretical subjects, as well as ensuring teachers undertook their practical teaching experience in different types of schools (e.g. schools in divergent socioeconomic areas, rural schools and metropolitan schools).

'Push for teachers to have more time in the classroom. It is absurd that pre-service teacher contact with classes is decreasing each year. A fourth year pre-service teacher is only having seven weeks teaching contact in front of kids. Teaching in the 21st century is behaviour managing and you can't get this from a text book. Get them into reality so they can decide if teaching is really something they want to do.'

What people said about: Minimising classroom disruption

Role of parents and principals

Another point raised was the need for *parents to accept greater responsibility for the behaviour of their child*. People said parents needed to be notified earlier of any behavioural issues and *principals should be given more power to address behaviour*.

'Put more responsibility back on parents. Teachers deserve to have students who should be able to speak respectfully, listen, follow directions and value education. Parents need to be held accountable.'

Class sizes

In addition to behaviour management training, some people said the way to keep classrooms free from disruption and focused on learning is to have *smaller class sizes* or to increase the ratio of teachers to students.

What people said about: Beginning teacher classroom transitions

Mentor beginning teachers

There was broad community support for *mentoring programs and team teaching approaches* to help new teachers to transition to the classroom. Some people commented that mentors should be supported by offering them appropriate professional development, additional time and remuneration.

'All beginning teachers should be partnered with a well trained, experienced teaching mentor. Someone who can monitor, advise, guide the beginning teacher in a non-threatening way.'

Structured supervision

People suggested that *structured supervision and professional development* would help new teachers make the transition to the classroom. Such supervision could include beginning teachers working in an internship capacity, or working as a teacher with the support of a full-time teacher aide.

‘Get them into a classroom as an internship for 12 months with the support of teachers instead of throwing them in the deep end and sinking.’

What people said about: Education standards

Clear and consistent standards

The most common response from the public in relation to the question about an independent standards authority was the *need for higher and consistent education, teacher and school standards*. The standards people referred to were wide-ranging and included such things as curriculum and assessment, reporting, student performance and certification/accreditation.

Would a standards authority raise student performance?

Individual submissions

(67.4% of 1446 answered the question) Yes 79% No 21%

However, as mentioned, public feedback on this question was general in nature, with more detailed responses being provided by stakeholder groups.

Queensland College of Teachers

In particular, stakeholder groups had strong views that the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) should continue to operate as a separate, self-funded body with a focus on teachers rather than schools.

‘QCT has a very specific and defined function in relation to teachers (as opposed to schools) and is funded by the teaching profession. It undertakes its functions efficiently and is well accepted by the teaching profession.’

Accreditation of all schools

There was broad support for the proposal to have *state schools accredited like non-state schools*. However, concern was expressed by key stakeholders about the use of school inspectors as the best mechanism for encouraging effective school improvement.

‘... support an approach to quality assurance that emphasises “informed professionalism” within a culture of trust, innovation and ongoing learning. This approach stands in contrast to low-trust, high-surveillance accountability regimes ... it is believed that the proposal to re-introduce an inspectorate for schools derives from the latter, discredited approach to accountability.’

Maintain school autonomy

Many emphasised school autonomy, and the individual characteristics that make up state and non-state schools, are strengths that should be recognised as part of any school improvement process.

‘Such an authority would still need to value and recognise the enormity of difference between schools (e.g. resourcing, teachers, students, size, cultural variety) across this quite large state. Overall I think clear guidelines can help — but teaching and pedagogy still needs to be allowed to develop at a community level.’

The public consultation results have informed the strategies and actions the government will adopt as outlined in *A Flying Start for Queensland Children: Queensland Government Education White Paper*.

Appendix 1: Community forums

Between February and June 2010, a total of 2601 people attended 93 forums across Queensland.

LOCATION	FORUM DATES
Townsville	18 February 2010
Thuringowa	18 February 2010
Townsville	19 February 2010
Warwick	22 February 2010
Warwick	22 February 2010
Aspley	1 March 2010
Albany Creek	1 March 2010
Atherton	2 March 2010
Innisfail	3 March 2010
Weipa	4 March 2010
Toowong	8 March 2010
Toowong	8 March 2010
Moranbah	15 March 2010
Goondiwindi	15 March 2010
Mackay	16 March 2010
Mackay	17 March 2010
Bowen	17 March 2010
Charleville	17 March 2010
Proserpine	18 March 2010
Roma	18 March 2010
Pine Rivers	22 March 2010
Brisbane	23 March 2010
Charleville	24 March 2010
Brisbane	24 March 2010
Brisbane	27 March 2010
Maroochydore	29 March 2010
Maroochydore	29 March 2010
Redlands	30 March 2010
Redlands	30 March 2010
Toowoomba	31 March 2010
Toowoomba	31 March 2010
Springwood	19 April 2010
Springwood	19 April 2010
Bundaberg	20 April 2010
Bundaberg	21 April 2010
Maryborough	21 April 2010
Maryborough	22 April 2010
Cherbourg	23 April 2010
Holland Park	27 April 2010
MacGregor	27 April 2010
Mansfield	27 April 2010
Beaudesert	28 April 2010
Longreach	29 April 2010
Longreach	29 April 2010
Longreach	30 April 2010
Kingston	30 April 2010
Biloela	4 May 2010

LOCATION	FORUM DATES
Gladstone	5 May 2010
Gladstone	6 May 2010
Dalby	10 May 2010
Dalby	11 May 2010
Coombabah	11 May 2010
Kingaroy	11 May 2010
Coomera	11 May 2010
Ferny Grove	13 May 2010
Ferny Grove	13 May 2010
Cairns	13 May 2010
Caboolture	14 May 2010
Mount Ommaney	17 May 2010
Mount Ommaney	17 May 2010
Yeerongpilly	17 May 2010
Petrie	19 May 2010
Yarrabah	21 May 2010
Thursday Island	24 May 2010
Cairns	25 May 2010
Brisbane	25 May 2010
Barron River	26 May 2010
Redcliffe	27 May 2010
Redcliffe	27 May 2010
Nerang	31 May 2010
Southport	31 May 2010
Charters Towers	1 June 2010
Ayr/Home Hill	1 June 2010
Charters Towers	2 June 2010
Hughenden	2 June 2010
Mount Isa	3 June 2010
Mount Isa	4 June 2010
Mount Isa	4 June 2010
Mermaid Beach	7 June 2010
Palm Beach	7 June 2010
Coorparoo	7 June 2010
Kelvin Grove	15 June 2010
Kelvin Grove	15 June 2010
Algester	15 June 2010
Ipswich	17 June 2010
Ipswich	17 June 2010
Emerald	21 June 2010
Rockhampton	22 June 2010
Rockhampton	22 June 2010
Rockhampton	23 June 2010
Yeppoon	23 June 2010
Gumdale	24 June 2010
Cannon Hill	24 June 2010

Community forums across Queensland

