A Flying Start for Queensland Children

Snapshot for Parents

The Junior Secondary years make sense.

What a positive direction indeed – based on flexible, clear principles.

— Professor Donna Pendergast, Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University

For more information go to www.qld.gov.au/flyingstart

Tomorrow’s Queensland: strong, green, smart, healthy and fair

The readiness of students for a move away from home, family circumstances and the additional costs associated with boarding fees and travel, are all important considerations.

To support students in rural and remote locations we will:

• Increase the Living Away from Home Allowance for eligible Year 7 students to the secondary student rate. This includes a tuition allowance and a travel allowance for student travel between home and boarding school.

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

• By 2015, offer Year 7 as the first year of high school for all state schools providing distance education.

• Provide access to increased e-learning options for state schools to offer students whose parents decide to send them to schools close to home.

• Review the educational needs of geographically isolated families and the services available to them.

Boosting performance for all schools

High expectations, even better teaching and improved discipline are essential to boosting the performance of our schools and the success of our students.

Major education reforms in Queensland, as outlined below, are designed to raise standards.

The Queensland Government established the Queensland Education Leadership Institute in 2010 as the platform to provide school leaders with the skills and training they need to help drive major educational reforms.

It is essential teachers have a sound knowledge of critical areas like reading, writing, mathematics and science, and how to teach these subjects. The Masters Review in 2009 reinforced the importance of strong core teaching skills, which is why pre-registration tests for new primary school teachers are being developed.

The government commissioned the Caldwell Review in 2010 to examine teacher preparation programs and is acting on the key findings.

Shared standards for both state and non-state schools will raise performance in all Queensland schools.

Having one education standards authority will connect school accreditation standards with curriculum, assessment and reporting standards.

To continue boosting school performance we will:

• Legislate for all Queensland schools to be accredited under shared standards for the first time. The standards will cover key issues for school quality, such as educational programs, student welfare, including behaviour management and school resources.

• Legislate to establish a new independent education standards authority to monitor the standards in all schools from 2013. The authority will merge and expand the functions of the Queensland Studies Authority and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board.

• Provide on-the-job training for pre-service teachers in state schools and professional development for practising teachers at five Teacher Education Centres of Excellence. Independent schools will set up four centres of excellence, while Catholic schools will boost mentoring for new teachers.

• Ensure all teacher education programs prepare teachers to assess student learning and give personalised support to students with special needs. All programs will also be strengthened with a renewed focus on behaviour management.

• Establish a Ministerial Taskforce to work through further reforms to teacher education, based on the recommendations of the Caldwell Review.
Education is the key to a bright future for Queensland children and the State Government is investing strongly in education to give our children the flying start they deserve.

The State Government is driving a package of reforms to give children the boost they need at critical stages of their education, particularly during the early years and in the transition to high school.

These initiatives build on earlier educational reforms, including the introduction of an extra year of schooling – Prep – in 2007 and have been moulded by expert advice and wide community consultation.

Our focus is on:

- Getting children ready for primary school;
- Getting children ready for high school, and
- Ensuring teachers and schools can provide the flying start that each child deserves.

Getting ready for school:

- Train at least 20,000 parents with children in Prep to Year 3 so they can learn how to help their children become confident readers.
- Establish an online directory of information to help parents guide their child’s early development.
- Recognise Prep as the first year of schooling to take full advantage of the new Australian Curriculum which will be introduced in Queensland from 2012.
- Promote the importance of enrolment in, and regular attendance at Prep.
- Give individual consideration to applications for flexible entry to Prep for geographically isolated children.

Getting ready for high school:

- Offer 500 scholarships for state primary school teachers to prepare them for teaching in high schools.
- Establish five new Teacher Education Centres of Excellence to provide on-the-job training for preservice teachers and professional development for state school teachers.
- Strengthen all teacher education programs.
- Set up a new independent standards authority to set and monitor standards across all schools.

Getting students in rural and remote locations ready for high school:

Students in Queensland’s rural and remote communities deserve the very best educational opportunities we can provide.

When Year 7 becomes part of high school in 2015 we will ensure all our students are supported as we make this important change. The government is committed to addressing the particular needs of students living in geographically isolated areas.

We recognise the changes which come into effect in 2015 will have an impact on rural and remote families.

Where there is no local school close by, geographically isolated families may opt for their students to attend boarding school, live with a relative closer to a school, live in a student hostel, or use distance education.

Getting students in rural and remote locations ready for high school:

- Promote the importance of enrolment in, and regular attendance at Prep.
- Introduce Junior Secondary in state schools in 2013 to support students in the early years of high school.
- Create a kindergarten place for every child.
- Provide extra kindergarten services.
- Provide training for parents with children from Prep to Year 3 to help them improve their children’s literacy.
- Move Year 7 to high school by 2015.
- Support all school sectors to make the change.
- Introduce Junior Secondary in state schools in 2013 to support students in the early years of high school.
- Offer 500 scholarships for state primary school teachers to prepare them for teaching in high schools.
- Provide professional development for state school Junior Secondary teachers. Extra funding that Catholic and independent schools will receive may also be used for professional development.
- Review the needs of geographically isolated families.

Boosting school performance:

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