

“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

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 preservice 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.

## A Flying Start for Queensland Children Snapshot for Parents



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.

### At a glance

#### Getting ready for 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.
- Expand the Queensland Ready Readers program.

#### Getting ready for high school:

- 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:

- 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 ready for school

Children soak up knowledge from the moment they are born. They are naturally inquisitive and time invested in teaching and learning at home, and in the early years of formal education help set children on the path to success. Education starts at home, and parents and families are their children's first teachers.

Literacy and numeracy skills are the essential building blocks of early learning. We can do more before our children start school to help them acquire these skills.

So the Queensland and Australian governments are working together to ensure our children are ready for school.

We know that kindergarten helps children by improving their development, wellbeing and school readiness so we are giving all Queensland children access to kindergarten programs.

To support our youngest children we will:

- By 2014, provide every Queensland child access to kindergarten, taught by qualified early childhood teachers.
- Continue rolling out up to 240 extra kindergarten services by 2014 in areas where they are needed most.
- Continue to fund additional long day care services to deliver approved kindergarten programs. More than 340 kindergarten long day care services have already been approved, providing an extra 9700 funded kindergarten places.
- Offer more scholarships to early childhood education and care staff to upgrade their qualifications so they can gain teacher registration to deliver approved kindergarten programs.
- Expand the Queensland Ready Readers program of community members who support reading in schools to up to 3000 volunteers.

Call 1800 4 KINDY  
to find your nearest  
kindy program  
today

- 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

The transition to high school is an important time in our students' lives and the government's education reforms are designed to provide the best support and education for our students.

We have consulted widely before introducing this positive change. It follows the successful introduction of Prep in 2007. In 2008, the Year 1 entry age was raised by six months, bringing Queensland into line with other states.

By 2015 more than half the students in Year 7 will be turning 13.

Educators agree that young teenagers are ready for greater independence and the depth of learning that high school provides, which is why in most other states and territories Year 7 is already the first year of high school.

By 2015 Queensland Year 7 students will be in their eighth year of school, and this is the right year for high school to begin.

From 2012 Queensland is adopting the new Australian Curriculum for English, mathematics and science. Every Australian school student will learn this core national curriculum. Education Queensland will also build on Science Spark – an exciting initiative involving the equivalent of 100 full-time science teachers currently working in primary schools to develop the knowledge and confidence of our Year 4 to 7 teachers to teach science. The science teachers are helping schools to plan and teach engaging science programs without relying on laboratory work. Our Year 7 students at high school will benefit from access to specialist resources, such as science labs and science teachers.

To support our Year 7 students we will:

- Move Year 7 to high school in all state, Catholic and independent schools in Queensland by 2015.
- Introduce Junior Secondary in all state schools from 2013 for Years 8 and 9, with Year 7 joining in 2015. Catholic and independent schools will decide how their Years 7, 8 and 9 will be structured.
- Assist state, Catholic and independent schools to prepare and upgrade facilities for the move.
- Pilot Year 7 in up to 20 state high schools before 2015.
- Increase the Living Away From Home Allowance for eligible Year 7 students to the secondary student rate.
- Review the educational needs of geographically isolated families and the services available to them.
- Work with universities to ensure teacher education courses reflect the new changes.
- Provide 500 scholarships to state primary school teachers to prepare them to teach in high schools.
- Provide comprehensive professional development for state Junior Secondary teachers to ensure they are well-equipped to work with young adolescents in high school.

## 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.

“Our Year 7s will thrive on the opportunities created by the stimulating Junior Secondary environment!”

Jeff Davis, Executive Principal, Varsity College, Gold Coast