

Chapter 8

QUEENSLAND

Overview

School attendance is compulsory in Queensland for children aged 6–15 years and some 76 per cent of secondary students continue their schooling until 17 (year 12).

Most primary schools now include preschool (P–7), and most secondary schools offer years 8–12, though some schools run from preschool to mid-secondary (P–10) and some schools offer P–12 or 1–12. Special education programs operate in many primary and secondary schools as well as in special schools. Though many preschools run morning or afternoon sessions for 4- and 5-year-olds, a growing number offer full-day preschool programs.

To ensure a planned approach to the development of Queensland schooling, the Minister for Education approved the trial of a policy proposal from an intersystemic working group for:

- a New Non-State Schools Planning Assessment Committee, to make recommendations to the Minister on proposals for new or significantly changing non-government schools
- a Queensland Schools Planning Forum to share information and develop indicative plans on future likely demand, particularly in growth areas.

Schools are funded through a combination of Commonwealth and State grants, supplemented by tuition and other fees raised from parents and fundraising activities carried out by bodies associated with the schools, such as Parents' and Citizens' and Parents' and Friends' Associations.

Most Queensland schools make special provision for special needs students, students with disabilities, those from language backgrounds other than English, Indigenous students and students from ethnic, low-socioeconomic, rural and remote backgrounds.

Table 8.1 Number and percentage of students in Queensland schools, 1998

<i>Primary students</i> □		
<i>Government</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Independent</i>
270,434	55,191	27,557
76.6%	15.6%	7.8%
<i>Secondary students</i>		
<i>Government</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Independent</i>
150,603	42,891	37,950
65.1%	18.5%	16.4%

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools Australia* 1998

Structure of schooling

In 1998, there were 353,182 students in Queensland primary schools and 231,444 in secondary schools.

Government sector

Education Queensland serves students throughout the State. It operates 995 primary schools, 189 secondary schools, 72 combined primary/secondary schools and 51 special schools. The total of 1,307 schools includes seven schools of distance education, ten Continuing Centres for Secondary Education and two hospital schools. All schools enrol boys and girls. In addition, Education Queensland operates 22 Environmental Education Centres and provides educational services in juvenile centres.

Students attend school for 198 days each year, beginning in the last week of January and finishing in mid-December (late November for year 12). The year is divided into two semesters, each of two terms.

Education Queensland's statement of purpose is 'Achieving the best educational outcomes for every student in our

schools'. Key strategies include quality curriculum programs for all students; excellence in teaching; fair and equitable practices; sensitivity to cultural diversity; adoption of technology to enhance teaching, learning and management; a safe, supportive and productive learning environment; productive partnerships between schools and their communities; confidence in public education; and a skilled, confident and responsible workforce.

Catholic sector

Queensland Catholic education comprises five diocesan authorities and a number of independent Catholic schools. In 1998, there were 98,082 full-time students in 270 schools.

The primary objective for Catholic schools is to form students in their faith tradition so that they may participate fully in society and enable them to take their places in a skilled and adaptable workforce, or to pursue some other worthwhile engagement in life.

Independent sector

In 1998, 65,507 students at preschool, primary and secondary levels were enrolled in 149 independent schools in Queensland.

Independent schools in Queensland vary in terms of the size of school, coeducational and single-sex education, and both boarding accommodation and day tuition. Eighty-six of the independent schools offered combined schooling in 1998, from preschool or year 1 through to year 12.

Many of the schools have an affiliation with a religious denomination or educational theory. Scholarship programs and fee remission assist parents who choose to send their young people to independent schools but find the fee levels prohibitive.

Major developments

Government sector

Information technology

Education Queensland implemented the Schooling 2001, School LANs and Connect-ED projects, which provided enhanced computer resources, introduced local area networks within schools, and connected all government schools to the Internet and departmental Intranet. The ratio of computers to students increased to 1:9.5 and local area

networks have been installed in 104 schools. All schools were connected to the Intranet and the Internet through the Connect-ED project, which received the Gold Award in the 1998 Government Technology Productivity Awards.

Safe school environment

A Child Protection Policy and a supporting training package were developed. All staff will be trained in 1999.

As part of a whole-of-government crime prevention strategy, anti-violence programs in schools became a priority. Activities included:

- launch by the Minister for Education of *Bullying! No Way*, a video and resource materials for professional development
- distribution to schools of a CD-ROM professional development resource
- creation of a website to enable 'workable solutions' for anti-violence programs in schools to be shared.

Staff development

The Centre for Leadership Excellence published its *Standards Framework for Leaders* and the Centre for Teaching Excellence trialled a draft *Standards Framework for Teachers* in 100 government schools.

Organisational changes

Following the change of State government in mid-year, extensive consultations to develop alternative models of school-based management were held. Three options were then published for comment, designed to meet the criteria of: a focus on student learning outcomes; equity; flexibility; and transparency of resourcing. Schools will make their choice of option by mid-1999.

A new structure of 36 district offices replaced the 11 regional offices and 45 school support centres, to provide educational, accountability and corporate services to schools. Four regional centres were established to assist schools with facilities issues.

Catholic sector

Major developments included:

- focussed activity in vocational education and training (VET), including uptake of New Apprenticeships
- increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy in the early years
- development of strategies to involve teachers in professional development

- implementation of the religious education key learning area (KLA).

Independent sector

Information technology

The use of information and communications technology across the curriculum strengthened in 1998 with many schools embracing laptop programs. Access to databases such as the Geographic Information Service enhanced the teaching and learning opportunities. A number of schools, particularly those in low socioeconomic communities, received computers under the Commonwealth EdNA Computers for Schools project.

Staff development

Independent schools released staff members to participate in a range of professional development programs facilitated by the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland Inc., with particular emphasis on assessment of proficiency levels in English, including the use of instruments supportive of Indigenous students; the development of individual educational programs for low-incidence disability students; school-based training for teaching staff in the use of information and communication technology; and the Discovering Democracy program.

The 1998 focus areas

Intersystemic curriculum

The Queensland School Curriculum Council (QSCC) develops preschool curriculum guidelines and syllabuses, sourcebooks and initial in-service training materials for years 1–10. It develops tests to assess student performance in aspects of literacy and numeracy, collects and analyses systemic information about the performance of students in these tests and reports the results of the analyses to the Minister for Education.

The Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (QBSSSS) issues students with Senior Certificates. It provides schools with approved course documents and has accreditation, recognition and registration responsibilities for VET programs in the senior secondary curriculum, up to and including Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate II level. It provides advice on all aspects of senior secondary education to the Minister for Education.

Literacy

Students in years 3 and 5 were assessed in aspects of literacy which included reading and viewing, writing and spelling. The results of these tests indicated that:

- girls performed better than boys in all aspects of literacy
- students from Indigenous backgrounds performed well below the cohort of students tested in all aspects of literacy
- students from language backgrounds other than English performed at a similar level to the cohort, although there were large numbers of students at the lower and upper ends of the scale.

While the tests were developed to allow reporting on a range of student abilities, they also allowed for reporting against the national benchmark standards, reading, spelling and writing.

Citizenship education

QBSSSS developed a short course, 'The Australian Constitution', which was available for the first time in 1999. It aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the Australian Constitution and system of government. Recently developed Board subjects that are related to citizenship education include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Futures, and Political Studies.

Civics and Citizenship Education is one of 11 topic categories which are embedded in the student learning outcomes at all levels of the QSCC years 1–10 studies of society and environment curriculum development project. This involves the development of a syllabus and support materials, including sourcebook guidelines and modules, and initial in-service materials. The sourcebook modules contain suggested learning and teaching materials.

The arts

In 1998, schools could offer: six Board subjects in years 11 and 12 in the arts KLA (art, dance, drama, film and television, music, and music extension [performance]); 43 Board-registered subjects in art; and 35 Board-registered subjects in performing arts. In addition, 992 arts subjects offered by institutions such as the Australian Music Examination Board could be included on the Senior Certificate as Recorded subjects (ie subjects that count towards the Senior Certificate but are not included in the Overall Position ranking for tertiary entrance). Over a third of senior students participated in the arts KLA in 1998. Art was the most popular Board subject in the KLA, attracting over 17 per cent of the student population, while dance attracted under 3 per cent. Females

were twice as likely to take arts subjects as males. In all Board subjects in the arts KLA, girls achieved a slightly higher mean level than boys; this difference was largest in art and music.

Following QSCC approval of the years 1–10 Arts Design Brief in September 1998, work began on a draft syllabus for school trials. The syllabus is arranged in five strands: dance, drama, media, music and visual arts. Two strand organisers, Engagement in Arts Learning and Reflection on Arts Experiences, provide common threads across the strands. The key notions of communication, aesthetic awareness and arts contexts also are integral to all strands.

The emphasis is on practical activities with clearly defined outcomes. Arts learning takes place ‘through arts experiences which focus on engagement and reflection during and following those experiences’. The syllabus recommends that in years 1–7 students should have access to learning in all five arts strands. In years 8–10 students will be able to specialise in one or more areas.

Vocational education in schools

In 1998, the number of VET subjects reported on the Senior Certificate increased dramatically. Twenty-eight Board-registered subjects containing embedded VET were reported for the first time, adding to the six Board subjects with embedded VET which had been reported previously. Of 35,394 students receiving a Senior Certificate, 11,952 received a result in one or more subjects with embedded VET, an increase from 2,616 such students in 1997. In 1998, 4,192 students were awarded 5,975 VET certificates through participation in these subjects.

Another reason for the increasing number of reported VET subjects was the systematic inclusion of modules/units of competency undertaken by senior secondary students through TAFE as Recorded subjects. Over 4,000 year 12 students undertook TAFE Recorded subjects in 1998.

There was almost equal participation by males and females overall in Board and Board-registered subjects with embedded VET. In the industry area of Computer Studies, male enrolments outnumbered female enrolments marginally, but there were considerable gender differences in all other industry areas: female enrolments were double those of males in the areas of Tourism, Business and Hospitality, while male enrolments were double those of females in the area of Land and Animal Systems, and 30 times greater in Industrial Skills.

Eleven per cent of year 12 students undertook some VET through TAFE in 1998; participation was evenly divided between males and females, and between students in disad-

vantaged and non-disadvantaged schools. The participation rate for students from rural schools was 10 per cent.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students

The progression rate (from year 11 in 1997 to year 12 in 1998) was 85.4 per cent overall. The progression rate in schools classified by Education Queensland as disadvantaged was slightly less than this, at 83.7 per cent. The progression rate in isolated schools was 84.3 per cent.

Government sector

Literacy

Implementation of the highly successful Support-a-Reader and Support-a-Writer programs in government schools continued to provide additional assistance for young children with literacy difficulties. In 1998, approximately \$3.4 million was allocated directly to schools to support students identified through the Year 2 Diagnostic Net as having reading and/or writing difficulties. A Strategic Results Project in targeted schools in the Cape and Gulf communities implemented Support-a-Reader and Support-a-Writer programs for Indigenous students.

The Reading Recovery program expanded in 1998 to 310 government schools. Some 2,780 students, 382 Reading Recovery teachers, ten trainee Reading Recovery Tutors and 18 Reading Recovery Tutors were involved in the program.

Through the Centre for Teaching Excellence, vacation schools were held for teachers and paraprofessionals in the area of literacy. These schools addressed issues such as literacy across the curriculum in the lower secondary school, boys and literacy, managing the education of students with learning disabilities, reading skills, and working with students with learning difficulties.

Approximately \$1 million in additional funding was again provided to schools to assist with the professional development needs of key teachers and teachers new to the Year 2 Diagnostic Net process.

In 1998, government assessment programs were implemented for all students in years 2 and 5. A sample of students in year 3 was also assessed in the area of literacy.

The QSCC finalised development of new years 1–10 syllabuses in the areas of science and health and physical education. Cross-curricular issues relating to literacy have been incorporated into professional development resources

supporting implementation of these syllabus materials. The syllabuses will be implemented from mid-1999.

Citizenship education

As the centenary of Federation in 2001 approaches, the Constitutional Centenary Foundation has organised an annual national convention in Canberra for senior secondary students to discuss constitutional issues and to promote civics and citizenship. Five Queensland zone conventions were held early in 1998 and attracted approximately 450 participants from 158 schools, 107 of which were government schools.

Some of the topics debated at zone conventions included:

- If Australia is to be a republic, how should the Head of State be chosen?
- Should the Constitution expressly recognise the Indigenous peoples of Australia?

From the zone conventions, 18 student delegates were selected to attend the national convention on 13–15 May at Parliament House, Canberra.

In February, Education Queensland and the Education and Protocol Office of Parliament launched an interactive CD-ROM package, *Queensland Parliament: Exploring Parliamentary Democracy*. It contains information on the history and processes of parliament and government in Queensland, takes students on a guided tour of Parliament House and provides details of current Members and their electorates.

The Youth Action Program was piloted in April 1998 in ten government secondary schools. The program establishes a broad range of training options for students in years 8–12, and is designed to promote skills acquisition, leadership, individual responsibility, teamwork, community service and self-reliance. Pilot schools delivered a core component (the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) and participated in a Service Provider program with a range of community service organisations.

The jointly funded Commonwealth–State Access Asia program is beginning its third triennium and presently supports approximately 70 government, Catholic and independent schools. The program is underpinned by the belief that Australia's expanding relationships with Asia add urgency to the need for increased knowledge and understanding by Australian citizens of the nations and cultures of Asia.

The government Education Adviser, with the Asia Education Foundation, began drafting a support document on Asia for teachers and other curriculum writers. The project documents should be available to teachers in mid-1999.

Implementation of the professional development package *Under the Skin: Combating Racism in Queensland Schools* took place in workshops across the State.

The workshops consisted of a series of activities that enabled participants to engage in:

- understanding racism and associated concepts
- exploring the historical and social construction of racism in Queensland
- working towards a safer and more supportive environment through whole-school strategies.

The arts

Music and art are currently mandatory only in primary schools (years 1–7). However, Queensland curriculum guides are available for dance, drama and media for years 1–10. In 1998, schools included these either as part of their physical education and English programs or as separate areas of study. Most secondary schools continued to offer a number of arts subjects, including two or three in core studies at year 8.

Over 80 per cent of primary school students attended schools where the general class music program was taught by a specialist music teacher. There were 471 full- or part-time specialist music teachers, who taught in one or more schools. Other schools used Tune In Levels 1–4, a high-quality resource developed by Education Queensland for schools without access to specialist assistance.

Many schools organised school- or district-based arts enrichment activities, including artists-in-schools workshops and master classes, music camps and vacation programs. Schools also took part in major regional and statewide eisteddfods, festivals, exhibitions and arts-related competitions. The largest competition was the Queensland Festival of Music, which had over 30,000 school student participants in bands, orchestras and choirs.

Four Queensland government school students were the only Australians awarded prizes in the Fifth Annual World Children's Picture Contest, organised in Japan for students aged 6–13 years. There were 26,000 entries from 52 countries and 200 awards were made.

Two government high school students from rural areas won the two senior divisions of the Comalco Young Playwrights Awards, managed by the Queensland Theatre Company.

Over 15,000 students in 508 ensembles participated in 11 regional festivals, from which the best ensembles were selected to perform in Fanfare 98, the statewide festival of bands and orchestras. Adjudicators noted significant improvement in musical outcomes, especially at the highest achievement levels.

The Minister's Awards for Excellence in Art program involved 15 district exhibitions, through which 46 talented students were selected to attend four days of workshops in Brisbane led by prominent artists. (The collection of 46 works was exhibited in the Brisbane City Gallery in Term 1, 1999.) During 1998, works from the 1997 Awards program toured to ten regional galleries in Queensland to celebrate student excellence and provide inspiring examples of student art work. Various resources, including a CD-ROM, were developed to assist students and teachers to identify and work toward excellence in visual arts education.

The Queensland Dance School of Excellence at Kelvin Grove State High School, in partnership with the Queensland Ballet Company, is providing an opportunity for talented dancers to continue their professional dance training during their senior secondary school years. The senior 18 of the 44 students graduated with the Diploma in Dance. Most students received offers of placement in institutions of their choice.

Vocational education in schools

There are currently six Board subjects with embedded VET available: Agricultural Science, Business Organisation and Management, Business Communications and Technology, Hospitality Studies, Technology Studies, and Engineering Technology; and 28 Board-registered subjects with embedded VET in nine study areas: Business (6), Computer Studies (4), English Communication (1), Hospitality Practices (3), Industrial Skills (5), Land and Animal Systems (3), Tourism (2), Trade and Business Mathematics (1), Literacy and Numeracy (3).

In 1998, school-based apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements involving 606 students were implemented in 102 government schools. The most popular industry areas were Business Services, Wholesale and Retail, Engineering, and Hospitality. A total of 28,439 students participated in work placements.

Projects included:

- the School to Work (State-Based) Project, to develop and implement models to allow personnel from business, industry and the VET sector to deliver accredited VET courses in senior secondary schools
- the School to Work Strategic Project – Rural and Remote Areas Project, to develop models of VET in rural and remote areas (Queensland manages the project in partnership with Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia.)
- the School to Work Strategic Project – VET and Work-Related Skills Project, to support students in years 9 and 10 at risk of not completing secondary school
- the Strategic Results Project, to focus on modes of delivery for VET placement and the conduct of VET programs on site for Indigenous students in Cape and Gulf communities
- Statewide consultation in relation to the Review of the Implementation of VET in Education Queensland Schools.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students

The Literacy Enhancement for Special Program Schools Scheme provides additional funds for socioeconomically disadvantaged students in government schools. In 1998, funds from the Commonwealth Literacy Programme were directed to 388 schools. The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage was used to identify schools with high concentrations of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Schools were required to develop initiatives as part of their longer term literacy and numeracy plans.

Catholic sector

Literacy

All diocesan offices have developed literacy plans and over 80 per cent of Catholic schools have developed a school literacy plan.

Students participated in the Benchmark testing program by sampling in year 3 and by census in year 5. Queensland Catholic education will use the 1998 data to construct baseline data for students in years 3 and 5.

Results showed Indigenous students performing below or significantly below the general cohort in the reading, writing and spelling strands, while urban students outperformed rural students and girls outperformed boys. Students from language backgrounds other than English generally performed slightly below the cohort.

Citizenship education

Schools received the *Discovering Democracy* primary and secondary kits. Many Catholic schools participated in the trialling of these materials, which were developed by Curriculum Corporation for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA).

Professional development programs were developed through intersystemic partnerships from funding made available by DETYA. The professional development program focussed on training teachers.

The arts

The new outcomes-based syllabus commenced the development cycle in 1998. Significant, broad consultation processes involving teachers from the Catholic sector were conducted.

The arts syllabus includes the areas of dance, music, media, drama and visual arts.

Vocational education in schools

Over 75 per cent of Catholic high schools are presently involved in the delivery of structured workplace learning through partnerships with business and industry.

Over 98 per cent of Queensland Catholic high schools have students enrolled in VET courses. Approximately 40 per cent of students in years 11 and 12 are enrolled in VET courses with accredited VET outcomes. Most of these enrolments are in QBSSSS-developed courses, though some are delivered through cooperative arrangements with a TAFE (40 schools) and a smaller number presently deliver non-Board-developed courses.

In 1998, 112 School-Based Apprenticeships (SBAs) were implemented in Catholic schools. Around 75 per cent of these contracts of training were for Certificate II outcomes (traineeships) while the remainder were for Certificate III outcomes (apprenticeships). In 1999, it is expected that around 220 SBAs will be implemented in Catholic schools.

Many schools in 1997–98 took advantage of the DETYA School to Work program to implement cooperative arrangements or partnerships with business and industry to improve the quality and industry relevance of VET programs in schools.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students

Queensland Catholic schools instituted a non-intrusive methodology for identification of socioeconomically disadvantaged students in 1997. The identification instruments used indicated an increase in the number of such students of 2 per cent from 1997 to 1998.

Provision for students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds focussed on literacy and numeracy tutoring, particularly using recently developed materials from projects associated with implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan.

Independent sector

Literacy

Most Queensland independent schools implemented literacy assessment and reporting in 1998 and either measured, or planned to measure, the achievement of years 3 and 5 students against nominated benchmarks. Tools included the Consensus Test, the Queensland Year 2 Diagnostic Net, California Achievement Testing and Year 3 Benchmarks. Data-gathering varies across the sector, however. Some schools will have data available in 1999.

Steps to implement assessment and reporting included staff in-service training and the introduction of new screening, assessment and reporting procedures. Programs used in a few schools included Reading Recovery, Support-a-Reader and Support-a-Maths-Learner – Number. Other initiatives in 1998 included the development of computer-generated teaching resources; professional development via conferences; seminars and training in the Early Years Literacy Program; and the appointment of key teachers.

The time per student devoted to literacy education each week varied with the student's level in school. In most schools, literacy education was conducted within other subjects rather than as a discrete subject. For pre-year 1 to year 3 students, an average of ten hours was spent, decreasing to an average of eight hours for years 4–6/7 students. Secondary students' time spent on literacy ranged between 3.5 and 17.75 hours per student, depending on the school.

The majority of independent schools planned initiatives in literacy. They focussed on teacher training, recruiting new staff, continuing diagnostic measures such as the Year 2 Diagnostic Net and other independent tests, developing individual literacy programs, and implementing programs such

as Support-a-Reader, Support-a-Writer, Early Years Literacy Program and Reading Recovery.

Citizenship education

In 1998, most independent schools used the studies of society and the environment KLA as the main source of citizenship education. Civics and citizenship was also implemented through subjects such as Christian living, personal development, English and health.

Initiatives and activities undertaken included multicultural studies, involvement with charities and local community services, parliamentary education in the classroom, guest speakers, the study of Australian history and involvement in anti-racism movements such as National Reconciliation and Sorry Day.

The arts

Most independent schools exposed students to a wide range of experiences and opportunities in the performing and visual arts in 1998. Performing arts activities included festivals, school musicals, choirs, bands, drama groups and scriptwriting. Visual arts activities included excursions to galleries, internal and external exhibitions, Arts Week programs and links with organisations such as community arts centres.

Some schools initiated media activities, which included use of interactive multimedia, the design of web pages, and the production of films and videos.

Vocational education in schools

Fifty-five independent schools participated in cooperative arrangements and partnerships with business and industry in 1998, to extend community and industry links and thus improve opportunity for senior secondary students in vocational education courses. The DETYA School to Work

program also provided opportunities for industry trainers to work with schools and to gain dual industry/education qualifications.

Independent schools with senior secondary enrolments included a variety of VET courses in their curriculum offerings, including Board-registered courses, cooperative arrangements with TAFE Institutes, initiatives involving private providers and arrangements associated with the New Apprenticeships program. Over 80 independent schools offered VET courses in 1998.

In 1998, 112 SBAs were contracted in the hospitality, engineering, primary, automotive, information technology, construction, retail, sport and recreation, furnishing and community services industries. The number of SBAs in independent schools in Queensland is expected to increase significantly.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students

Almost all schools had developed criteria which enabled them to identify and provide assistance to socio-economically disadvantaged students. These criteria included information obtained during interviews with parents, self-identification, the possession of a Health Care card or other Centrelink indicators.

A number of independent schools offered particular services aimed at attracting socioeconomically disadvantaged students, such as fee reduction and remission structures, scholarships and bursaries. The types of support students are offered included: subsidies on books and uniforms; additional and intervention tuition and learning assistance; services for Indigenous students; grants; medical services; and breakfast nutrition programs. Many students were also assessed during the year through interviews with staff.