

QASSP POSITIONS

This document is to frame conversations with an incoming government post November 2024 and any change of senior leaders within the Department of Education.



Supporting State School Leaders Since 1966
Queensland Association of State School Principals

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

QASSP believes in a primary school curriculum that is clear, evidence-based and carefully sequenced to ensure students receive an engaged, relevant and decluttered curriculum.

QASSP calls for a revamp of the primary curriculum placing greater focus on essential knowledge and providing more clarity for teachers on what all students need to learn in each year level. Identifying optional content to declutter the curriculum in order to make the curriculum relevant to students and ensure teachers can localise content.

QASSP believes that there is the need for the QCAA to develop a primary school syllabus that is co-designed with the profession to be delivered for all primary schools in the state (Sector Blind). The new primary curriculum/syllabus needs to improve connections across different subject areas so children can better apply new knowledges and skills.

QASSP believes that there is a need to slow the implementation down of version 9 of the Australian Curriculum in the first instance using the proposed timeline below. This will allow schools the chance to fully implement the English and Maths curriculum which are so vital to ensuring the successful start to learning for all children in this state. It also allows time for a syllabus to be developed in these other areas.

Year	Subjects to be Implemented
2025	English, Maths
2027	Science, HPE
2028	Technology, HASS
2029	Languages, The Arts

Schools can progress the implementation of subjects faster than above, however need to be conscious of teacher workload and ensure all staff have a deep knowledge of the curriculum to be taught and associated pedagogies.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (INCLUDING SDAs)

QASSP advocates for effective behaviour management strategies in state primary schools, emphasising the need for principal autonomy in implementing tailored approaches. Each school should have access to cluster behaviour resources to modify student behaviour, ensuring that every student receives appropriate support. Additionally, all schools should have access to flexible spaces designed to regulate student behaviour effectively. To

enhance capacity, staff must receive ongoing training in behaviour management techniques. Furthermore, schools require additional resources to ensure students achieve optimal educational outcomes. QASSP supports the Department of Education in trialling innovative behaviour programs, with successful initiatives considered for broader implementation, fostering a positive learning environment and promoting student success across Queensland primary schools.

CLOSING THE GAP FOR FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS

QASSP is committed to fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive education for First Nations students. We advocate for programs that honour and integrate Indigenous knowledge, language, and traditions into the curriculum. We prioritise the wellbeing, engagement, and academic success of First Nations students by promoting culturally safe environments, supporting Indigenous staff, and collaborating with communities. Our policy seeks to close the achievement gap by addressing systemic barriers, enhancing resources, and creating tailored learning opportunities that reflect the diverse needs and strengths of First Nations students, empowering them to thrive in their educational journeys

COACHING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

QASSP advocates for all school leaders to have access to high-quality, face-to-face coaching that aligns with their Annual Development Plans (ADPs). This coaching should be distinct from supervision, ensuring a supportive environment for professional growth. Additionally, the system must fund these coaches, who should be regionally based to ensure fair and equitable access for all principals. Providing targeted coaching will enhance leadership effectiveness and ultimately improve educational outcomes across Queensland's diverse schools.

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SCHOOL RESOURCING

The QASSP membership will only support the CROSSR review if it contains the following as minimum outcomes:

Required Immediately

1. Additional Instructional Leadership positions for every Queensland primary school to be delivered via the allocative model.
2. Provision of fully funded access for every Queensland school to a dedicated trained Workplace Health and Safety and Rehabilitation and Return to Work Officer.
3. Full indexation of all grants to schools at the same rate applied for indexation of the Commonwealth grant provided to Queensland for education.
4. Provision of additional office support staff, to service every Queensland student fairly in a sector blind allocation.

Required during the life of the NSRA Agreement

5. Provision of additional time for primary school teachers to collaborate with colleagues and build teacher capacity in planning, moderation and assessment.
6. Provision of additional time in the allocative model to allow staff in leadership roles time off class to advance student learning (this includes year level leaders and co-ordinators for activities such as The Arts, sports, and camps) so that primary schools can deliver an engaged well-rounded curriculum.

EB11 FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Members of the Queensland Association of State School Principals request that EB11 negotiations pursue five key priorities:

1. Providing every Queensland primary school with access to additional Instructional Leadership classified positions, to be delivered in an equitable transparent model.
2. Application of an updated resourcing threshold model that differentiates between primary and secondary principal positions. (This model needs to enshrine primary schools as level 9 above 1300 students, level 8 above 1100 students and ensure that a career pathway is reintroduced to primary leadership for schools above 450 students so that remuneration and classification reflect the complexities of these positions) including moving level 4, 5 and 6 primary schools up where appropriate.
3. Increase school leaders' remuneration to ensure at the point of signing the agreement, our primary leaders are the highest paid primary leaders in Australia to attract and retain skilled leaders.
4. Maintain principal classifications at the same level for a school, even when the classification drops until that leader leaves the school which is to be funded centrally.
5. A full audit of principal accountabilities with approximate time allocations for roles, to reduce school leader workload.

EDUCATION FUTURES INSTITUTE

QASSP supports the Queensland Education Futures Institute as a critical platform for leadership development. We advocate for innovative collaboration with associations, ensuring its programs complement existing offerings delivered by associations. The Institute should provide coaching and professional support for school leaders, utilising expertise from external agencies and retired school leaders. It should also offer a broader range of learning options, responsive to local needs.

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Primary schools need to be provided with the funding and human resources in order to deliver Excellence as well as Equity to our student populations. All schools should have

equitable access to face-to-face professional learning, funded accordingly and suited to where schools are situated (rural and remote).

FINANCE

QASSP advocates for clear and transparent management of school bank accounts by the Department. We believe the Department must establish a set per-student bank balance as an ideal benchmark and ensure schools are adequately funded. A minimum of ninety cents in every dollar allocated to the Department through grants should be directed to schools, ensuring essential resources are available for student success. Schools' bank balances should not be used as a justification to withhold necessary funding, and transparency in fund allocation is crucial for trust and equity across all Queensland state schools.

HUMAN RESOURCES

QASSP is dedicated to advocating for the effective recruitment, retention, and development of high-quality staff in Queensland state schools. We emphasise the importance of equitable resourcing to ensure schools have access to a diverse and skilled workforce that meets the unique needs of students and school communities.

Our policy prioritises the professional growth and wellbeing of all staff by supporting ongoing professional development, mentorship programs, and clear career pathways. We encourage the adoption of inclusive and flexible work environments that promote work-life balance and foster staff morale.

QASSP advocates for proactive measures to address staff shortages, including innovative recruitment strategies, investment in leadership development, and a focus on early career support. We also recognise the need for targeted initiatives to support staff in rural and remote areas. By ensuring schools are adequately staffed and resourced, we aim to create environments where all students and staff can thrive.

INVESTIGATIONS

QASSP recognises the critical responsibility of the Department of Education to address serious allegations, including those involving child safety, with rigor, transparency, and urgency. Protecting students must remain a paramount priority.

Equally, QASSP upholds that principals, as leaders of our schools, are entitled to natural justice, including a presumption of innocence until proven otherwise. Investigative processes must ensure that principals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect while maintaining the integrity of school operations.

Key Principles

1. Natural Justice and Presumption of Innocence

- Principals must have the right to respond to allegations and be supported through transparent, evidence-based investigative processes.
- Decisions to stand down a principal should only occur when there is an immediate and demonstrable risk to student safety, and removal must remain a last resort.

2. Timeliness and Resolution

- Investigations must be resolved as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to school communities and undue stress on individuals. QASSP advocates for clear, enforceable timelines for all investigative steps.

3. Triage and Departmental Expertise

- QASSP calls for the establishment of a principal-led presence within the Department's Ethical Standards Unit to assist in the triage of allegations. This ensures informed decision-making that recognises the complexities of school leadership while prioritising student safety.

QASSP is committed to working collaboratively with the Department to refine processes, ensuring investigations are fair, timely, and conducted with the highest standards of integrity. Principals must be supported to continue leading schools effectively while safeguarding the wellbeing of students and school communities.

LEADERSHIP SHORTAGE IN QUEENSLAND STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The teacher crisis was ten years in the making; the next problem to impact on schools across the country will be a school leadership crisis, with trouble spots already emerging. The impending shortage of experienced school leaders will pose a critical challenge to education in Queensland and Australia.

There is a growing number of inexperienced leaders being thrust into positions of significant responsibility prematurely. As experienced leaders retire or move on, the pool of qualified successors is becoming smaller and smaller, leading to the promotion of individuals who often lack the necessary experience and skills to effectively manage large schools. Placing inexperienced leaders in charge of sizable educational institutions risks compromising the overall quality of education, which has a negative impact on the quality of the education delivered and also puts the individuals at risk.

Proactive measures such as targeted leadership development programs, mentorship initiatives, and strategic succession planning is needed to tackle the problem including through the establishment and ongoing support of the Education Futures Institute.

What is also needed is a national approach, led by the Federal Government, with AITSL taking the lead in driving school leadership development across Australia. Ensuring that schools are led by competent and prepared individuals must become a priority of every government and education department in Australia.

To enhance school leader retention and wellbeing QASSP advocates for the following:

1. Delivery of an annual school leader wellbeing grant for every classified officer. Such an approach has proven highly successful in New Zealand, in prioritising leader wellbeing and ensuring that school leadership positions are once again attractive.
2. The introduction of paid sabbaticals for a school leader for every five years of service as a classified school leader.
3. Through the allocative model, provide additional human resources to support every Queensland principal.
4. Introduce clear Departmental thresholds to limit the workload and threatening behaviour impacts of spurious and vexatious complaints. Thresholds should provide restrictions to the multiple internal complainant pathways and to external organisations such as the Human Rights Commission.

LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Principals need to be supported to make locally based decisions and provided with the resources to do so. Top-down models of command and control can be effective in procedural systems. In schools where nearly every situation is contextual, decision making must be shifted to the school level (with support and guidance in some situations).

We need to take seriously the ability of experienced educators to make good decisions to suit their context and to move away from the increasingly prevalent management by clipboard and checklist approach which is forestalling initiative and creativity. There are many decisions that should be taken at the local level where the context is known. This means devolving more resources to the school level and trusting senior educators to make good decisions in their local contexts. Trust your leaders.

MANAGING FACILITIES

QASSP asserts that managing school facilities' maintenance, construction, and complex technical issues should not be the responsibility of school leaders. These tasks divert focus from instructional leadership and student outcomes. Dedicated, specialised personnel should handle facilities management to ensure efficiency and safety.

ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL GOVERNMENT POLICY

QASSP opposes a 'one-size-fits-all' approach in government policy for schools. Queensland's diverse geography and unique school communities require tailored solutions. Policies should recognise the distinct needs and challenges of individual schools, rather than applying uniform responses when issues arise, ensuring equitable support that reflects each school's specific context and circumstances.

OVERSEEING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Health is not a function of education and managing and delivering these services can detract from the delivery of quality outcomes for students. Where required, QASSP advocates that school leaders who are overseeing health professionals such as doctors, nurses or therapists, require additional resources and support. This expanded responsibility demands extra time and expertise, warranting both appropriate staffing and additional remuneration to ensure effective management and student wellbeing.

REHABILITATION/WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

QASSP advocates for the provision of fully funded access for every Queensland school to a dedicated trained Workplace Health and Safety and Rehabilitation and Return to Work Officer.

RESOURCING

QASSP advocates for equitable funding for primary schools, highlighting that they currently receive significantly less per student than secondary schools. Primary education is crucial, as early academic achievements strongly influence a student's future trajectory. Research indicates that prior performance in primary school is a better predictor of long-term success than student background, parental education, or occupation. Therefore, increased funding is essential to ensure that primary schools have the resources necessary to provide high-quality education, support student development, and ultimately improve educational outcomes, setting a strong foundation for lifelong learning and achievement for all students across Queensland.

RURAL AND REMOTE SETTINGS

QASSP advocates for competitive remuneration and quality accommodation for staff in rural or remote settings. Housing should match the standards and availability of defence housing. Additionally, staff should receive flights to their home base and additional pay aligned with the mining industry to attract and retain talent, ensuring equity and support for remote education. Allowances need to be increased with the rate of inflation annually.

QASSP supports reinstating Centres for Leadership and Wellbeing (CLAWs) in rural and remote areas to enhance the delivery of professional learning. This ensures equitable access to leadership development, fostering local talent and addressing unique challenges. Rural educators benefit from tailored, regionally accessible programs, promoting strong leadership and wellbeing in these communities.

SCHOOL LEADER ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

QASSP calls for increasing the attractiveness of school leadership roles by empowering principals with greater oversight of school improvement initiatives. This can be achieved by providing additional human resources to support administrative tasks, allowing principals to focus on instructional leadership of student outcomes. Furthermore, enhancing pay and working conditions for school leaders is essential to attract and retain talented individuals in these critical positions. By fostering a supportive environment and recognising the demands of school leadership, we can cultivate effective leaders who are dedicated to driving positive change and improving educational experiences for students across Queensland's diverse school communities.

SCHOOL LEADER WELLBEING

Principals and deputy principals carry heavy and diverse responsibilities and accountabilities which are well beyond teaching qualifications. To support and ensure personal wellbeing each principal and deputy principal should be entitled to funded professional, independent counsellor services. Access to professional support after critical incidents (including debriefing staff and the principal) is critical. It is also essential that other agencies take full responsibility within their areas of expertise (for example, health).

QASSP advocates that the Department of Education provides funding to allow school leader professional associations to employ wellbeing officers to support their members. This allocation is to be provided on a dollar for members basis. We also call for a review of governance practice to benchmark our Department as an employer of choice against other education jurisdictions.

SCHOOL OPINION SURVEYS

QASSP believes School Opinion Surveys are no longer valid measures of school performance or community sentiment. They consume valuable time and resources without delivering meaningful insights. We advocate for more effective, targeted methods of feedback to better inform school improvement efforts. If a survey is to be conducted it should be on the system, not individual schools.

SERVERS, SWITCHES

QASSP advocates that the Department of Education should cover the full cost of servers and switches in schools. These essential infrastructure components are critical for modern education, and their funding should not burden school budgets, ensuring equitable access to technology for all.

SMALL SCHOOLS

QASSP advocates for enhanced support for small school leaders, emphasising the need for strong instructional leadership. Human Resources must be highly responsive to the unique challenges of small schools. Teaching principals require access to additional instructional leaders to support pedagogical and curriculum delivery, ensuring improved student outcomes and easing the administrative burden on teaching principals. Small school principals require access to off-the-shelf integrated multiage curriculum programs that they can easily contextualise. The leaders and staff of these schools need to be provided with templates of policy and procedures to enhance efficiency and decrease workload.

SUPPORT PRINCIPAL DECISIONS

QASSP asserts that Regional and Central offices must support principals' decisions and not cater to serial complainants. Effective leadership requires backing from the system, fostering accountability and trust, rather than shifting responsibilities, ensuring principals can focus on improving student outcomes without undue interference.

SYSTEM TOOLS (SUCH AS MyHR, ONESCHOOL, WHS)

To reduce additional and unnecessary workload on leaders and teachers, system tools need to be high quality and fit for purpose. Current tools are outdated and often do not share data. Regional office staff require the same level of access as schools to improve the understanding and support provided to each state school.

TEACHER SHORTAGES

With teacher shortages throughout Australia continuing to have a significant impact on the continuity of learning for students, this places considerable stress on all educational leaders in schools. While there has been significant effort and resources put into this problem in the last two years, it will take significant time to reverse the trend. The issue unfortunately has been neglected by governments of all persuasions, for well over a decade. Regrettably it will continue to impact on our schools and classrooms for the immediate future.

While leadership teams continue to innovate and problem solve to ensure there is a teacher in front of every class, every day, this comes at a cost to our school leaders, who are doing two jobs – teaching and leading the school.

The status of the teaching profession needs to be elevated and pay scales need to be reviewed and increased. In jurisdictions where teachers are well paid, the workforce is more stable, has more capacity and the outcomes are higher.

In the future, education is competing with numerous other areas of the workforce in attracting personnel. We must have competitive salaries and this needs to be part of the

discussion. There needs to be a significant increase in teacher salary – especially for experienced career teachers. While early career teachers are relatively well placed in financial terms, more experienced teachers reach a level at which their classification and remuneration remains fixed and doesn't match other professions of similar qualification and expertise.

Remuneration is not the whole story. If we want to connect teachers to their workplace and for them to stay connected with the profession, we also need to substantially improve their conditions. Teachers must have **time** for planning, assessment, and reporting, and these activities need to become scheduled as part of the working week. But more than this, teachers need to feel valued; to feel they are contributing to something bigger than themselves, to have the flexibility to respond to their particular group of students.

QASSP's recommended short-term strategies are as follows:

- Utilising the 100,000 registered teachers around the country who are not working in schools and reduce the barriers for them return to teaching.
- Engage the estimated 100,000 to 150,000 trained but unregistered teachers and create easily accessible pathways into teaching.
- Pay teacher registration fees of these trained teachers to return to teaching.
- Systems and school leaders need to think differently, looking for more part-time options.
- Look at the structure of the school day – can we do this differently?
- A different model for primary schools? More specialist teaching options and less generalist teachers – this would suit part-time teachers.
- Pay 4th Year teaching students to work in a school whilst studying – in school training.
- Pay 3rd Year teaching students to work part time as teacher assistants – or give them credits for their work in a school.
- Provide housing and other benefits (relocation) for hard to staff areas.
- Expand international recruitment for experienced teachers.

UTILISE THE KNOWLEDGE BASE AND EXPERIENCE OF RETIRED LEADERS

QASSP advocates leveraging the knowledge and experience of retired leaders to support the education system, particularly through the Queensland Education Futures Institute. Their expertise provides valuable coaching, mentoring, and strategic guidance, strengthening leadership development and enhancing school outcomes across Queensland

VOTES OF NO CONFIDENCE IN SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

QASSP strongly opposes the use of votes of no confidence in school principals by staff, as it may constitute workplace bullying and harassment. Bullying can occur in any direction within a workplace, including upwards towards leadership. Such actions have no basis in departmental policy and undermine professional integrity. Senior officers should not

entertain or endorse these tactics, as they create a toxic environment that hinders educational outcomes and undermines the role of leadership in schools. The Department provides a formal process for school staff to address concerns about school leadership or a leader's actions, through the iRefer process.

WORKLOAD

QASSP members draw attention to the urgent need to reduce school leader workload, as evidenced by the ACU Principal Survey, which has identified workload as the primary concern for 12 consecutive years. We call for a 25% reduction in red tape and additional human resources to support principals, enabling them to focus on their core responsibilities. Streamlining processes and providing adequate support will enhance their effectiveness and ultimately improve student outcomes across Queensland schools.

QASSP advocates for a comprehensive review of school leader workload, emphasising the need for additional administrative support in primary schools. This review must assess the roles and responsibilities of principals and leadership teams, aligning with departmental expectations focused on teaching and learning as outlined in the Equity and Excellence strategy. A detailed audit should identify tasks that can be reallocated to alleviate workload. Clear recognition of school leaders' roles, along with adequate resources for work beyond their primary responsibilities, is essential. Furthermore, leaders require Human Resources support for administrative tasks, enabling them to focus on instruction. Given nearly a decade of unfunded compliance burdens, we call for equitable access to centrally funded HR resources to address this crisis effectively.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

QASSP emphasises the urgent need to review roles and responsibilities related to workplace health and safety (WHS) in schools, to be funded centrally. Dedicated staff should be appointed to lead these initiatives, ensuring clear accountability. Changes and additions to WPHS policies must be adequately funded, including the allocation of extra staffing for Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs). The lack of funding reflects a disinterest in genuine workplace health and safety by the Department. Critical aspects, such as incident management, equipment safety assessments, return-to-work programs, and health management, must be prioritised. The extensive expectations placed on principals exceed their training and expertise, demanding significant time commitments. QASSP believes that principals should have access to qualified staff with designated WHS roles to support their responsibilities effectively. Proper resource allocation is essential for successful WHS implementation and to promote a safe school environment. The Department must urgently invest in a fit for purpose easy to use data processing system to record workplace health and safety issues in schools.