## Contextual Information

This document contains contextual information about the *School Opinion Survey* dataset to assist users to assess fitness for purpose and to inform decision making.

### Data source

School Opinion Survey

### Description

The *School Opinion Survey* (SOS) is an annual suite of surveys (parent/caregiver, student, staff and principal) to gauge opinions on important aspects of schooling in Queensland state schools. The staff and principal surveys also provide an opportunity for school staff to express their opinions on the school as a work environment.

### Owner

State Schools Division | Department of Education, Training and Employment | Queensland Government

### Custodian

Performance Monitoring and Reporting | Department of Education, Training and Employment | Queensland Government

### Custodian contact

SchoolOpinionSurvey@dete.qld.gov.au

### Collection authority or relevant legislation


### Purpose of collection

- Increased understanding of opinions of parents/caregivers, students and school staff with various aspects of their school.
- Increased understanding of areas of strength at Queensland state schools and areas that could be improved.
- Increased understanding of various aspects of the work environment in Queensland state schools from staff and principals including effective relationships, work roles, general morale and development of schools as learning environments.
- Key Performance Indicators in corporate documents such as Service Delivery Statements, the Strategic Plan and the Annual Report as well as monitoring performance at both the school and systemic level.
The surveys have been enumerated annually in July/August, and respondents were asked to respond thinking back over ‘this school year’.

Data only collected from Queensland state schools, and the scope and coverage was dependent on the size and composition of the individual schools. Target populations were:

- **Parent/Caregiver Survey**—**sample of all parents/caregivers** and included parents/caregivers of preparatory year and special school students.
- **Student Survey (2012)**—**sample of students in Years 5, 7, 9 and 11**.
- **Student Survey (2013)**—**sample of students in Years 5, 6, 8 and 11**.
- **Principal Survey**—**all Principals (including Heads of Campus)** aligned to Departmental collection centres.
- **Staff Survey**—**all staff (excluding Principals)**.

**NOTE:**

- **Staff** refers to permanent, temporary and casual staff.
- **Staff** refers to part-time and full-time staff.
- **Staff** refers to both teaching and non-teaching staff who were in paid employment at the time of the survey (including Administrative Assistant Enhancement Program (AAEP) employees and paid tuckshop convenors, cleaners and grounds staff).
- Visiting and itinerant staff were included for the **school at which they were based**.
- Supply teachers were included for the **school at which they taught on the first day of the survey administration week**. If this was a local holiday, the next school day was used for this purpose.
- Staff who had more than one position in the school or had positions in more than one school were asked to respond in terms of the **position for which they had the most paid hours, or which occupied most of their time**.
- **Staff does not** refer to voluntary staff (including unpaid tuckshop convenors, other tuckshop staff, library and classroom assistants).
- **Staff does not** refer to private contractors or to staff who were paid by other government departments.
- **Staff does not** refer to staff on leave (including sick leave and long service leave) for the **whole week** the survey was administered.

A six point agreement response scale has been used since 2012:

- Strongly disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree, Somewhat agree, Agree, Strongly agree

Respondents were also presented with an ‘Unable to comment’ response category and these responses were excluded from calculations.
The Parent/Caregiver Survey sample was selected from the master list of ‘eldest child’ enrolled in the school:

- Schools with more than 40 families administered the survey to a **sample of 40 families**.
- Schools with 40 or less families administered the survey to **every family**.

**NOTE:** If a selected parent/caregiver didn’t want to complete the survey, the next selected family on the sampling list were asked to complete the survey.

The Student Survey sample was selected from the master list of all students enrolled in the target year levels:

- Schools with more than 60 students in each of the targeted year levels administered the survey to a **sample of 60 students in each of the targeted year levels**.
- Schools with 60 or less students in each of the targeted year levels administered the survey to **every student in each of the targeted year levels and supplemented with students in other year levels as appropriate**.

**NOTE:** In Special Schools, the Student Survey was administered to age equivalent students at the Principal’s discretion.

**NOTE:** If a selected student was away on the day the survey was administered at the school, the next selected student on the sampling list was asked to complete the survey.

During the sampling process, schools may have selected respondents who would find using the Standard English survey difficult or impossible (e.g. students with disabilities or learning difficulties, parents/caregivers or students who had a non-English speaking background). Schools were encouraged to make provisions to assist respondents in completing their survey (e.g. encouraging students to select an appropriate peer to assist them; providing a list of multi-lingual peers; organising the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)).

Schools could also request the following non-standard survey forms:

- Translations of the Parent/Caregiver Survey were available in Arabic, Chinese (simplified Mandarin), Hindi, Korean, Samoan and Vietnamese.
- Braille copies for each of the survey types.

**NOTE:** Where Translations or Braille copies of the surveys were returned, data entry was undertaken during processing to ensure that respondent confidentiality was maintained.

The projected number of parent/caregiver and student forms/online access slips distributed to schools were calculated from data collected in the February enrolment returns. The projected number of staff forms/online access slips were based on data from the human resources database. A small number of additional survey forms and online access slips were sent to schools to accommodate for any slight increases in the populations. Schools could request additional survey forms and online access details if required.

Schools were encouraged to administer the surveys following the suggested procedures in the **Administration Guide** to achieve the highest possible participation by parents/caregivers, students and staff. Schools were instructed to ensure that all responses remained confidential so that confidence in the survey results was maximised.
Collection history

- Parent/Caregiver Survey—annual since 1998.
- Student Survey—annual since 2012.
- Staff Survey (including Principals)—annual 1999–2002.
- Staff Survey (excluding Principals)—annual since 2003.
- Principal Survey—annual since 2003.

Collection methodology

- A contractor posted the survey parcels to schools.
- Schools administered the surveys, following the suggested procedures in the Administration Guide and sent completed forms back to the contractor.
- The contractor scanned the forms and provided the Department with a de-identified unit record file for each of the survey types administered as paper forms.
- The Department administered the online surveys, and manually entered any late returned paper forms or non-standard survey forms (e.g. translations or Braille).
- The Department processed and cleaned the datasets by survey type, and stored the clean datasets on a Departmental system.
- The Department created, validated and released reports in two stages (preliminary and final).
- The Department undertook an evaluation and review of the end-to-end survey process, and documented improvements to future processes.

Data adjustments

- The contractor reviewed and edited responses as necessary.
- The Department processed and cleaned the datasets to ensure only one response was selected per item and removed duplicates and full non-responses.
- The Department’s WebSurvey System contains automatic validation edits to ensure that online data were correct.

Coherence

- Minor changes have occurred over the years, including the addition/removal of items and minor changes in item wording.
- Major reviews of the data items took place in 2003, 2005 and 2007.
- A significant redevelopment of the surveys occurred over 2012 and 2013 to align the surveys with the proposed National School Opinion Survey, and has resulted in a break in the time series.

Response rates

A response rate is not provided for the survey types as this is difficult to accurately calculate because it is unknown if all of the forms and/or access detail slips (including spares) that were sent to schools were distributed or not. As a reference for interpreting school level results, the number of respondents who answered each item is provided in conjunction with the percentages for each response.
The surveys have been collected using a mixture of paper forms and online surveys (using the Departments WebSurvey System):

- **Parent/Caregiver Survey**—paper forms during 1998–2010 then respondent choice of paper or online since 2011.
- **Primary Student Survey and Secondary Student Survey**—paper forms during 1998–2010 then Principal choice of paper or online in 2011.
- **Student Survey**—Principal choice of paper or online in 2012 then online in 2013.
- **Staff Survey**—paper forms during 1999–2010 then respondent choice of paper or online 2011–2012 then online in 2013.
- **Principal Survey**—paper forms 1999–2006 then online since 2007.

Reporting levels available:

- Queensland state schools;
- Queensland; and
- Departmental reporting levels (including Like School Group (LSG); Assistant Regional Director (ARD); and Region).

Reporting levels are available for each of the survey types:

- Parents/caregivers;
- Students;
- Staff (including Principals); and
- Principals (non-school level reporting only).

Estimates:

- Data are reported as the number of total valid responses to an individual statement (denominator) and the per cent of valid responses for the agreement response scale.
- School level data are prone to very high variability due to small sample sizes taken from the population. It is advised to be used with caution.
- School data are unweighted.
- Non-school level data are weighted to relevant benchmarks.
Caveats

- **n**: The number of respondents in the school who answered an individual item.
- **Total Agreement**: Presents the aggregation of positive responses, that is; ‘Somewhat Agree’, ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’.
- Percentages are rounded to one decimal point in reports, so discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.
- Staff refers to both teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Staff includes responses from Principals.
- Staff data are aggregated to host schools (where applicable).
- Teaching staff includes Class Teachers; Deputy Principals; Guidance Officers; Heads of Department and Heads of Special Education Services; Itinerant and Visiting Teachers; Principals; Resource Teachers, Reading Recovery Teachers and Tutors and Learning Support Teachers; Teachers in Charge and Staff in other teaching roles.

Dissemination

- Queensland state schools receive annual school level reports, which include non-school level benchmarks.
- Schools are required to include survey results in their annual report.
- The Department includes statewide survey results in their annual report.
- Customised data are available upon request.