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Parents of 1 in 7 school-age Queenslanders Choose Independent Schools

The growth trajectory of Queensland's independent schooling sector is continuing with new enrolment figures showing 3.2% growth in the last year, with enrolments into Year 7 increasing by nearly 8%.

More than 124,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) students were enrolled in 211 Queensland independent schools in August 2019 – up 3,810 students and 7 schools on 2018, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data released today.

Over the past 10 years, sector enrolments have grown a staggering 18% or over 19,200 students.

The 2019 ABS Schools Australia report showed the sector's share of all school-age enrolments grew to 14.9% that's more than 1 in every 7 students.

Independent school enrolments grew by nearly double the rate experienced for all of Queensland, and more than double the rate of enrolment growth in Catholic and State Schools.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) Executive Director David Robertson said parents valued the education diversity and opportunities on offer in independent schools.

"ISQ's longitudinal *What Parents Want* survey has consistently found parents choose independent schools because they: prepare students to fulfil their potential in life; employ high quality teachers; meet individual student needs; enforce good discipline and offer distinctive approaches to teaching and learning," he said.

Mr Robertson said analysis of the data also showed the independent sector was educating a growing number of the state's most vulnerable students.

The number of independent special schools – which includes specialist schools for students with disability and Special Assistance Schools for disengaged and at-risk students – has risen from 22 to 24 schools across 31 sites. These schools enrolled 2,505 students.

Mr Robertson said the integrated approach Special Assistance Schools take to student education and welfare had clearly struck a chord with communities.

"Specialist education services for disengaged young people are the fastest growing school type in Queensland's independent schooling sector. It's an area of high need that requires dedicated and compassionate professionals to build student confidence, skills and abilities."

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