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Media Release

Back to School 2020 - Qld Set to Usher in Extraordinary School Year

2020 will be an extraordinary year for school education in Queensland with enrolments set to spike and Year 12s to sit external assessments for the first time in almost 50 years.

High school classrooms across the state are expected to swell on the back of an out-of-the-ordinary surge in enrolments after the state's smaller-than-usual group of foundation Prep students finished Year 12 in 2019.

Queensland independent schools are expected to enrol an additional 5,000 students in 2020, bringing total enrolments across the state's 216 independent schools to about 129,000 students.

Independent Schools Queensland Executive Director David Robertson said the additional enrolments included about 3,000 in projected annual growth and a further 2,000 from the sector returning to a full cohort of students across every year level for the first time in 13 years.

Mr Robertson said Queensland independent schools were expected to welcome about 7,800 first-time students into Prep and more than 12,000 Year 7s into high school.

"Eight new independent schools and campuses have been approved by the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board and are expected to open in 2020," he said. See Back to School 2020 – New Independent Schools and Campuses Media Release for details.

Mr Robertson said 2020 would be a milestone year for the state's new Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) which will see Year 12s sit external assessment for the first time since 1972.

"Eligible Year 12s will also be the first to graduate with an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) instead of an Overall Position (OP) at the end of their studies in 2020. The ATAR, which is the main mechanism used nationally for tertiary admissions, will count a broader range of student learning in Queensland including vocational education and training qualifications," he said.

Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network Executive Officer Justine Cirocco welcomed new families joining the independent sector for the first time in 2020 as well as the sector's many returning families.

"I encourage new families to attend their local school parent group meetings, social events and to join relevant year-level social media groups to connect with other parents and carers and to keep track of the many events and activities that occur throughout the school year," she said.

Ms Cirocco also encouraged parents to use the new school year as an opportunity to establish positive, respectful and collaborative partnerships with their children's teachers.

"When parents and teachers are in sync – when they feel their roles, experience and knowledge are respected – student wellbeing and learning can soar," she said.

"Decades of research has shown that parents have the greatest influence on their child's learning when they: set high but realistic expectations for their child; regularly read and talk with them; encourage good study habits; create a stimulating home environment; and reinforce and connect learning in the classroom with everyday activities at home," she said.

The majority of Queensland schools will start the new school year from the week commencing Tuesday January 28. However, some independent schools may have different start dates. Parents should check commencement dates with individual schools.

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