

United in our pursuit of excellence



Independent Public Schools

Driving local decision making and innovation



Premier's Foreword

The Independent Public Schools initiative delivers on the LNP Government's election commitment to give Queensland principals, teachers, parents and local communities greater control and ownership of their schools as well as greater input into decisions that affect them.

The LNP Government knows that there is a great diversity of communities throughout Queensland. We want schools to have greater freedom to work with parents, businesses and industry to make decisions that best meet the needs of their local community to improve outcomes for students.

The Independent Public Schools initiative will cut red tape, remove layers of management and give local communities a greater say in decision making.

This Government is committed to lifting education standards for all students. Our focus is on providing a strong education system and giving our children the best possible start.

Our state schools play a vital role in delivering education for families across Queensland, wherever they reside and whatever their circumstances. *Independent Public Schools* will make our state school system even better.

I look forward to working with you to deliver stronger outcomes for our most precious resource – our young people.

The Hon. Campbell Newman MP
Premier of Queensland



Minister's Foreword

Education is the foundation of our future and I am focused on improving outcomes for all Queensland school students – we owe it to them to provide the best possible stepping stones to help them realise their full potential.

Queensland has an impressive state school system. It is one of our greatest strengths. It's a system that can be further improved by giving principals, staff and local communities greater ownership of their schools and greater autonomy in decision making.

Building on the high degree of autonomy already afforded to all state schools, *Independent Public Schools* will have the freedom to determine their staffing profile as well as the departmental policies and procedures that best suit their individual environments. Principals will have direct communication with the Director-General as well as additional autonomies focused on cutting red tape and opening up new opportunities for innovation.

This Government is committed to getting the basics right and getting Queensland back on track. The best way to do this is to enable the people closest to their communities to make decisions affecting them.

This prospectus outlines the opportunities that will be provided to *Independent Public Schools*. I welcome the interest of those school leaders, teachers and school communities who are considering an application to participate in this important initiative.

The Hon. John-Paul Langbroek MP

Minister for Education, Training and Employment





Maximising possibilities

The *Independent Public Schools* initiative recognises the best decision making often occurs at a local level through direct response to local community needs and aspirations.

It will reduce red tape, giving schools more opportunities to achieve the best possible outcomes for their students and local communities.

From 2013, 30 *Independent Public Schools* will have the opportunity to embrace a range of additional autonomies to enable:

- increased innovation
- stronger partnerships with industry
- further tailoring of local school programs.

Queensland is a diverse state with diverse school communities to match. *Independent Public Schools* will have the freedom to be responsive and open to the broader range of possibilities their communities can offer.

Queensland state schools already have a range of autonomies. The *Independent Public Schools* initiative will build on these autonomies.

Autonomies currently available to all Queensland state schools

Queensland state schools can:

- drive the implementation of the Australian and Queensland Curriculum
- adopt a range of curricula
- plan the school's learning program including setting flexible school hours
- offer differentiated learning programs
- determine the timing of their student free days
- determine their staffing with endorsement from local workplace committees
- recruit non-teaching staff
- select their own deputy principals and heads of department when vacancies occur
- select casual and temporary teachers through departmental processes
- manage minor maintenance and minor capital works projects up to \$100 000
- manage school utilities and retain savings
- expend the school bank account to a maximum of \$250 000
- sign or vary contracts with procurement approval and dispose of plant and equipment up to the expenditure delegation.





Enhanced local governance

All *Independent Public Schools* will be required to establish a school council.

School councils will enable greater involvement of the school community and other stakeholders, such as industry, in setting the strategic direction for the school.

School councils will approve and monitor the school's strategic direction, further strengthening collaborative local decision making.

As well as the range of existing autonomies afforded to state schools, *Independent Public Schools* will have additional autonomies over governance and administration. These include:

- the principal will have a performance agreement with the Director-General
- an independent review of the school's progress will be based on a four-year cycle

The role of the school council

The school council will:

- approve strategic plans and policies that set the future direction of the school
- approve other strategic documents such as those relating to school revenue and expenditure
- monitor the school's strategic direction
- advise the school's principal about strategic matters
- approve workforce plans.

Advancing innovation

By utilising local expertise and responding directly to local community needs, *Independent Public Schools* will be able to embrace enhanced innovation to further maximise student learning outcomes.

Opportunities for innovation

Maximised autonomy will enable *Independent Public Schools* to find exciting new ways to do business. Enhanced innovation will drive improved outcomes for Queensland's students. On offer is:

- a direct line of communication with the Director-General and other senior executives who will help prioritise innovation by paving a smooth path through departmental processes
- the freedom to directly recruit staff and to build a team that is fit-for-purpose to drive innovation
- more autonomy to manage and utilise infrastructure, financial resources and human resources
- more autonomy to work in new ways with local businesses, industry and other community organisations
- an option to pursue creative models of sponsorship, industry partnerships and infrastructure partnerships
- increased flexibility to shape curriculum offerings that suit the needs of their students e.g. International Baccalaureate programs, extracurricular programs, gateway programs and centres of excellence
- freedom to shape and deliver innovative educational practices that maximise outcomes for students.

Independent Public Schools will use their additional autonomies to enable them to better respond to the unique potential of their students and communities.



Locally tailored workforce

Independent Public Schools will be able to shape their workforce to best meet their school's strategic direction.

Principals of *Independent Public Schools* may develop a workforce plan in consultation with their local workforce committees. This plan will be submitted to the school council for approval.

Independent Public Schools will have additional autonomy to provide greater flexibility in staffing options.

Independent Public Schools will be able to recruit all school staff including classroom teachers (where vacancies exist) without using the department's existing transfer system.

Increased financial flexibility

Independent Public Schools will be able to utilise their full budget, providing them with the flexibility to direct resources to best meet their students' individual needs.

Independent Public Schools will receive a one-line school budget that includes school grants and a staffing budget expressed in both full-time equivalent staff and notional monetary terms.

Building for the future

Independent Public Schools will be able to formulate infrastructure plans and industry links to shape a physical environment that best matches the strategic vision for their school.

Independent Public Schools will:

- have autonomy to participate with local government authorities, industry and community to plan joint facilities
- have the opportunity to contract and manage their own maintenance using QBuild or contractors
- develop a *Strategic Infrastructure (Assets) Plan* in direct consultation with central office
- submit requests for capital works projects directly to central office.





Public accountability and transparency

As part of Queensland's strong state education system, *Independent Public Schools* will still comply with state legislation, industrial instruments, directives, delegations, whole-of-government policies and national agreements.

While *Independent Public Schools* will not be required to follow a number of operational procedures, they will be required to operate within the following parameters:

- participate in an independent review based on a four-year cycle
- enter into a performance agreement between the principal and the Director-General
- have an annual performance review
- operate in accordance with *United in our Pursuit of Excellence 2011-2015*
- participate in system audits
- provide systemic data and use corporate systems e.g. OneSchool and MyHR
- purchase IT products that are compatible with the department's managed operating environment.

Supporting our *Independent Public Schools*

Independent Public Schools will receive a one-off \$50 000 grant to assist with their transition. This funding will enable the schools to seek expertise and advice about the establishment and effective functioning of their school council. In addition, schools will be eligible to receive a further \$50 000 in funding each year for administrative purposes following an annual performance review.

Independent Public Schools will continue to benefit from the strengths of the Queensland state education system through access to:

- existing liability insurance
- legal and media advice
- financial and procurement advice
- industrial relations advice and support
- Curriculum into the Classroom
- OneSchool
- MyHR
- Workcover support
- central and regional office support.

How to become an *Independent Public School*

All Queensland state schools can apply to become an *Independent Public School* by:

- registering their interest via the Expression of Interest (EOI) Form
- submitting a short written application of no more than three A4 pages with their EOI (see below).

Applications to become an *Independent Public School* in 2013 close **7 September 2012**.

A departmental panel will consider all applications.

Written applications

Schools need to prepare a written application to support their EOI.

The application needs to:

- demonstrate broad consultation has occurred with:
 - staff, including the Local Consultative Committee
 - parents, including the Parents & Citizens' Association (P&C)
 - the wider community, including local businesses and industry
- demonstrate the school's capacity to assume greater responsibility for their affairs
- outline the potential benefits for students and the broader school community
- outline the innovative educational programs or practices the school will implement.

School staff and relevant community members should be consulted prior to applying. Consultation should occur in a number of ways to ensure the whole school community is engaged and has an opportunity to provide input.

To become an *Independent Public School*, a school council must already exist, or there must be an explicit commitment to establish one.

Future opportunities

There will be a total of 120 *Independent Public Schools* rolled out across the state over the next four years.

There is a diverse range of communities throughout Queensland and increased independence will not suit everyone.

Not all schools will be in a position to utilise the autonomies on offer from 2013, however many may wish to consider the option of applying in future years.

Further opportunities to express interest to become an *Independent Public School* will be provided each year, with 30 schools to be selected annually.



Expression of Interest (EOI) Form to become an *Independent Public School* in 2013

Name of school:	
Principal: ¹	
Principal's signature:	
Contact email:	

Written application

In no more than **three A4 pages** demonstrate:

- broad consultation has occurred with:
 - staff, including the Local Consultative Committee
 - parents, including the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C)
 - the wider community, including local businesses and industry
- the school's capacity to assume greater responsibility for their affairs
- the potential benefits for students and the broader school community
- outline the innovative educational programs or practices the school will implement.

For more information about the EOI process visit the Education Queensland website at www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/independent-public-schools/index.html

Application checklist

- EOI form completed
- school staff, parents and local community consultation completed
- maximum three A4 pages written application attached
- commitment to establish the school council
- school council already established
- name and signature of substantive principal submitted (if applicable)
- application submitted by 7 September 2012.

Submissions

Please send your EOI form and written application to IPS@dete.qld.gov.au by 7 September 2012 for consideration in the 2013 *Independent Public Schools* selection process.

¹ Where there is an acting principal, the name and signature of the substantive principal must also be submitted.

