

See the Future

Education and Training

Reforms for the Future

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL



Preparatory Year Update June 2004

Welcome

Welcome to the June update on the Preparatory Year, a component of *Queensland the Smart State Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper* released in November 2002.

These updates will provide information on the preparatory year trial and progress towards full implementation in 2007.

Changes to early education in Queensland

The Queensland Government has announced that it will:

- Implement a non-compulsory, full-time preparatory year before Year 1 in 2007; and
- Raise the school starting age for Year 1 in 2008.

This means that:

- All children born on or after January 2002 will be eligible for the new non-compulsory preparatory year before enrolling in Year 1.
- Children must turn five by 30 June in the year they begin their preparatory year.
- The current part time, state preschool program will not be provided in state schools from 2007.

In 2004, 52 state and 14 non-state schools across Queensland are trialling a full time, preparatory class prior to year 1. The trial will inform statewide implementation of a preparatory year in 2007.

Pamphlet now available

A pamphlet about eligibility for the new preparatory year and the change to the school starting age is now available on this website at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/pdf/prepinfosheet1v2.pdf>

In the coming weeks schools will receive copies of this pamphlet and responses to *Frequently Asked Questions* for parents. These will assist in informing parents and could be made available in your school/classroom.

Selection process for schools in 2005-06

Information detailing the selection process and timelines for 2005-06 schools introducing the preparatory year has been forwarded to all Executive Director (Schools).

In the state system each Executive Director (Schools), in collaboration with Principals, will be asked to submit a small prioritised list of schools as part of the 2005-06 phase-in. Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Association of Independent Schools Queensland Inc. will collaborate on the selection of the five schools for each year in conjunction with this process.

Recommendations from the state and non-state sector will be forwarded to the Minister for approval and announcement.

Professional development for teachers and teacher aides

A successful professional development day for Phase 2 teachers and teacher aides was held in Brisbane on Friday May 21 2004. This day was part of a range of strategies to support the schools' involvement in the trial. It built on the initial professional development induction in October 2003.

The program focused on supporting teachers and teacher aides in furthering their understanding of the draft Early Years Curriculum Guidelines with a presentation from QSA.

As well, it provided opportunities for the participants to share issues and to access interest-

based workshops structured in response to teachers and teacher aides requests.

Feedback has indicated a great enthusiasm for the day. Participants appreciated the opportunity to extend their thinking and understanding of the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* as well as the opportunity to further access information relating to their interest areas. Responses highlight the importance of networking and sharing of ideas across the State and across different contexts.

Prototype Preparatory Classroom

The Ministers for Education and the Arts, Anna Bligh, and Public Works and Housing, Rob Swarten, and the Director-General of Education recently showed member of QASSP and the QTU through a 'prototype' of a new prep classroom.

The prototype has recently been assembled as part of a range of concept designs for new preparatory facilities and stakeholders have provided positive feedback to date. Once development has been completed, these new facilities and refurbishments of existing facilities will be trialled throughout prep schools prior to full implementation of the prep year in 2007.

Minister's Early Education Reference Group

At the second meeting of the reference group members had the opportunity to view the 'prototype' of a new preparatory classroom and they will provide feedback through their respective associations.

The Early Education Reference Group provides strategic

advice to the Minister on the preparatory year and promotes interagency collaboration and networking to improve children's educational outcomes before Year 1 and across the early schooling years.

A list of representatives on the reference group can be found at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/ecrefgrp.html#ecrefgrp>.

Meetings are held quarterly. Contact with members of the reference group should be made through their organisations.

Evaluation of 2004 Preparing for School trial

Trial school reports of progress for Term 1 2004 have been received by Strategic Implementation Branch and data analysis completed. Specific information has been obtained from trial schools about:

- Challenges for trial schools in implementing a preparatory year and how these have been addressed; and
- Successful strategies that trial schools are using to implement a preparatory year.

A collation of these school reports is being finalised for the Minister.

Update on Early Years Curriculum Guidelines

The Early Years Curriculum team from the Queensland Studies Authority has recently been visiting trial schools in regional areas. They have been discussing the curriculum and the learning and assessment framework with teachers and principals. This has provided useful feedback and information on the way the documents are being used.

The team has also been gathering advice from Year 1 teachers on the way they would like information provided to them about the learning progress of children transitioning from the preparatory year.

For more information

- Email etrfimplementation@qed.qld.gov.au
- Phone 1300 650 220
- Visit the website at:

<http://www.education.qld.gov.au/etrf>

(click on the Preparing for School link) or

Subscribe to Education Queensland's email updates at:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/community/service/news/>