# Investing for Success (Report 12: 2017–18). Tabled 20 March 2018.

**Slide 1: Welcome**

This is a presentation about the performance audit report on Investing for Success—a state school funding initiative designed to improve learning outcomes.

Please note that this is a summary. The full report can be read on our website.

**Slide 2: Audit objective**

We audited 17 state schools from across four regions to assess:

* how effectively Investing for Success is supporting students most in need to achieve better educational outcomes
* and whether the Department of Education, and its state schools, can demonstrate value for money.

**Slide 3: Context—National school funding reform**

Australia’s student performance has been declining since 2000. In 2011, a national review (known as the ‘Gonski Review’) recommended that funding be targeted to students and schools at risk of educational disadvantage—a ‘needs-based’ approach.

In 2014, Queensland received an additional $794.4 million over four years from the federal government to allocate to state schools. Queensland designed a needs-based allocation model using specific student characteristics (for example, students with disability or refugee status) and school characteristics (for example, rural locations). Over 1200 state schools received funding amounts ranging from $20 000 to over $1 million annually, depending on each school’s student population and location.

**Slide 4: Context—School improvement**

The Department of Education allocated the federal funding as a state-based initiative called ‘Great Results Guarantee’ from 2014 to 2015. It was revised in 2016 and renamed ‘Investing for Success’.

The model has been an important part of Queensland’s focus on improving school performance. Schools have been able to make their own decisions about how to spend the money based on the needs of their students.

Investing for Success has been extended for 2018. The Department of Education is still negotiating longer-term funding arrangements with the federal government.

**Slide 5: Our conclusions—design and oversight**

In terms of design and oversight, we concluded that Investing for Success supports the department’s strategic commitment to creating a culture of school and student improvement. The needs-based model is aligned to levels of disadvantage, but ‘top-up payments’ to schools have undermined the principles of the model.

Further, the design and structure of Investing for Success has limited the ability of schools and the department to demonstrate a clear link to improved student outcomes or value for money.

We also concluded that integrating future funding into whole‑of‑school planning processes may better support schools to think about school improvement as ‘core business’.

**Slide 6: Our conclusions—how funding was used**

In terms of how the funding was used, we concluded that the audited schools have benefited from designing initiatives targeted to local needs. However, they are still maturing their approach to implementing and evaluating improvement initiatives.

Principals need more support and training on how to measure and report on school improvement initiatives. They also need more clarity about how to balance flexibility and independence with accountability about how they spend government funds.

**Slide 6: What we recommend**

We recommend that the Department of Education:

* considers integrating future Investing for Success funding into whole‑of‑school improvement processes
* reviews the funding model regularly
* clarifies governance requirements (including temporary employment decisions, the role of community representative groups, and reporting to the department/regions)
* strengthens links between investment decisions and student outcomes
* provides more guidance to schools in need of additional support
* provides greater support and training for principals and assistant regional directors (for example, program evaluation, monitoring and reporting, and strategic financial management).

**Slide 7: For more information**

For more information on the issues, opportunities and recommendations highlighted in this summary presentation, please see the full report on our website.

Thank you.