



Queensland Audit Office  
*better public services*

# Investing for Success

**Report 12: 2017–18**

**Summary**



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Front cover image is an edited photograph of Queensland Parliament, taken by QAO.

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## Reference to comments

In accordance with section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, we provided a copy of this report to the Acting Director-General of the Department of Education. In reaching our audit conclusions, we have considered her view and represented them to the extent we deemed relevant and warranted when preparing this report.

A response was received from the Department of Education. It is in Appendix A.

## Report cost

This audit report cost \$370 000 to produce.



Your ref:  
Our ref: 2017-9163P



20 March 2018

The Honourable C Pitt MP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Speaker

**Report to Parliament**

This report is prepared under Part 3 Division 3 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, and is titled *Investing for Success* (Report 12: 2017–18).

In accordance with s.67 of the Act, would you please arrange for the report to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Worrall', is positioned above the typed name.

Brendan Worrall  
Auditor-General

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## KEY FACTS



**Australia is ranked 39th out of 41 countries in achieving quality education<sup>1</sup>**



**\$794.4 million of Commonwealth funding was available to Queensland state schools to improve student outcomes during 2014–2017<sup>2</sup>**



**1 261 Queensland state schools and education centres received Investing for Success funding in 2016<sup>3</sup>**



**Funding allocation was based on similar student/school characteristics of disadvantage as used in the Gonski review<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Source: <https://www.unicef.org.au/about-us/media/june-2017/Australia-scores-overall-average-in-latest-unicef>.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Department of Education.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Department of Education.

<sup>4</sup>Source: Queensland Audit Office, from information provided by the Department of Education and the Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review).

## Audit objective and scope

The objective of the audit was to assess the economy and effectiveness of the 'Investing for Success' initiative in supporting students, particularly those most in need, to achieve improved education outcomes.

We assessed whether the Department of Education (DoE, formerly the Department of Education and Training) managed the initiative in a way that effectively empowered schools to improve student outcomes (Chapter 2).

We also assessed whether schools have used Investing for Success funding to improve student outcomes in an economical manner (Chapter 3).

This audit focused only on state schools, including independent public schools (which operate more independently, with a school council).

As part of the audit we distributed an online survey to 61 principals and received 49 responses. These results are summarised in Appendices H, I and J. In this report, we refer to the results of this survey ('principal survey respondents') as well as the documents and interviews from visits to 17 state schools and four regional offices.

In addition to principals, teachers and DoE management, audit stakeholders include peak representative bodies for teachers and principals (Queensland Association of State School Principals, Queensland Secondary Principals' Association, Queensland Teachers Union, Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders Inc.) and P&Cs QLD (Parents and Citizens' Associations).

# Summary

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## Introduction

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Australia's student performance has been declining on international scales since 2000. Over the last 10 years, federal and state governments have delivered several reform initiatives to address this (as well as other issues). Education ministers across the country have documented their commitment to working together to achieve equity and improvements in Australian student performance.

School funding arrangements is one area governments have focused on to improve student outcomes. In 2011, the Australian Government commissioned David Gonski AC to chair a panel of experts in a national review of funding for schooling, known as the Gonski Review. The review found that Australia needed new funding arrangements to reduce the widening gap in student outcomes. It emphasised that funding should reflect principles of equity, where funds should be directed to students and school communities with greater potential to experience disadvantage.

Queensland schools benefit from needs-based funding to reduce the risk of educational disadvantage for:

- students from low socio-economic communities
- students from rural and remote areas for whom geographic isolation may be a potential barrier to achievement
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students for whom English is an additional language or dialect, including refugees and students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

### Students First federal funding

In 2013, the Australian Government introduced its 'Students First' national policy initiative. It included a new needs-based funding model for all Australian schools, reflecting key principles from the Gonski Review. This 'needs-based' model was intended to improve student performance by reducing the potential impact of disadvantage on students' ability to learn. States and territories now receive federal funding for schools using a revised model that recognises a range of potential disadvantage factors (such as disability and remoteness of locations).

Queensland's share of the extra available Students First funding was an additional \$794.4 million for state schools over four years from 2014 to 2017.

### Great Results Guarantee

In 2014, the then Queensland Government approved the Department of Education (DoE) distributing Queensland's additional \$794.4 million in federal funding to over 1 200 state schools under a state-based initiative called 'Great Results Guarantee'. The initiative was designed to address potential disadvantage for Queensland students and schools. DoE instructed schools to use the funding to improve literacy and numeracy across the early years of schooling. This was to help students reach national minimum standards.

The Australian Government did not put any conditions on how DoE should allocate or report on the outcomes of the additional Students First funding. A key feature of the Great Results Guarantee initiative was that it gave school leaders and teachers independence to make decisions and develop programs to best meet the needs of their students. In line with this, DoE gave schools the autonomy to determine their own school improvement targets and evidence-based strategies. They were expected to meet their targets and be accountable to their school community. Schools received 12 months funding in 2014, and a further 12 months funding in 2015.

### Investing for Success

In 2016, DoE changed the name of its state-based initiative from Great Results Guarantee to 'Investing for Success' and revised the needs-based funding model to reflect a change in state government policy. It strengthened how it targeted student disadvantage and allocated the remaining \$480 million of federal funding to schools over two years to give principals greater certainty about their schools' resourcing.

DoE removed the requirement for schools to focus on meeting minimum standards in literacy and numeracy and instead gave schools the flexibility to determine what school improvement strategies were required at their school. Once again, DoE did not prescribe what type of school improvement initiatives to fund.

DoE did not require schools to report back to it on how the funds were spent or whether they achieved the school improvement outcomes planned. Schools were instead required to demonstrate to their school community how the extra funding was helping to maximise student learning. It supported community reporting processes by creating an optional reporting template.

### Improving student performance

The initiative (under both names) has been running for four years. Given Investing for Success only represents part of the total funding schools receive (less than 3 per cent), it is difficult to assess its impact on improving performance in isolation from other school improvement initiatives. We also acknowledge that external factors beyond the school context, such as family and cultural backgrounds, impact on student performance.

The Queensland Government has extended Investing for Success in 2018. Longer-term funding is subject to current negotiations with the Australian Government.

## Audit conclusions

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DoE has effectively used the additional federal funding to reinforce its strategic commitment to building a culture of continuous improvement in student and school performance. State schools across Queensland have had the benefit of the Great Results Guarantee and Investing for Success funding for four years. Schools have valued the opportunity to design targeted improvement initiatives made possible by greater access to performance analysis tools and additional funding.

While schools are now focusing on performance improvement, they are still maturing their skills in implementing and evaluating improvement initiatives. Many need more support and guidance in building evidence-based improvement programs that can be linked to measurable targets.

DoE effectively targeted the additional federal Students First funding for schooling to reduce the potential for disadvantage consistent with the Australian Government's policy intent. It did this by designing a needs-based funding allocation model that addressed factors of disadvantage identified in the Gonski Review. However, the Queensland Government's commitment that no school will receive less funding using the revised Investing for Success model detracts from the purpose and needs-based intention of the model. Top-up payments to enable schools to be 'no worse off' can erode the intended equity principles of a needs-based funding approach.

Investing for Success provided schools with the flexibility to determine what school improvement strategies best suited the needs of their students and communities. But its flexible design and short timeframe has made it difficult for schools and DoE to measure the impact of the funding on student outcomes in isolation from broader school improvement initiatives. While the schools we audited have generally directed their Investing for Success funds towards improving school/student performance, and in some cases achieving improvement, they have not been able to demonstrate a clear link between improved results and Investing for Success funding.

DoE's aim was to use the funding to encourage greater school autonomy within state schools and move away from historical centralised control over how schools operate. To balance greater school autonomy, DoE required principals to be held accountable by their communities (rather than by DoE) for spending the funding wisely. This model also encouraged greater engagement between school leaders, parents and the local community (such as parents and citizens' associations) about school improvement decisions.

However, the schools we audited did not always comply with community accountability or engagement requirements well. The community accountability models should only support, not replace, DoE's responsibility to monitor how schools are spending Investing for Success funding and improving student outcomes. DoE will need to refine its governance structures to balance ongoing school autonomy with accountability and monitoring of how government funding is spent. DoE will also need to consider the implications of future federal funding requirements that tie school funding to reforms that will improve student outcomes and strengthen accountability mechanisms. These future changes provide an imperative for schools (and DoE) to more clearly demonstrate how needs-based funding for disadvantaged students is linked to measurable outcomes, and to address the lack of compliance with reporting progress and outcomes.

Now that schools have further developed their understanding of school improvement, DoE has the opportunity to integrate future Investing for Success funding as part of schools' broader planning, budgeting, and reporting processes. An integrated approach would reflect, and continue to encourage, how schools are now repositioning school improvement as 'core business'. But it needs to be balanced with building greater confidence and capability in principals to make evidence-based expenditure decisions and be held accountable for how their initiatives improve performance outcomes. Integrated school improvement processes would also strengthen schools' ability to measure the overall impact of improvement initiatives and inform DoE's monitoring of system-level performance.

## Summary of audit findings

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### Design and oversight

#### Establishing the funding initiative

At the time DoE established Great Results Guarantee in 2014, most schools did not have very well-developed school improvement strategies. Separating the initiative from core school funding was an important feature of DoE's cultural change across state schools to support local decision-making and focus attention on lifting school and student performance in the early days. DoE has used the additional funding to reinforce the importance for schools to develop a continuous improvement agenda.

However, DoE's decision to structure Investing for Success as a separate independent initiative with flexible targets and a broad objective has made it difficult for schools and DoE to measure its impact on student outcomes in isolation from broader school improvement initiatives. Currently, Investing for Success runs in parallel to other whole-of-school strategic planning, budgeting, and review processes. This has resulted in:

- the potential for duplication of administrative processes
- a lack of clarity about how schools should apply requirements and guidelines for targeted funding separate from other core funding processes
- challenges for schools in identifying the effectiveness and/or cost-effectiveness of the individual school improvement strategies
- challenges for DoE in evaluating the consolidated outcomes and cost-effectiveness of each of the various school improvement strategies across schools.

DoE now has the opportunity to consider integrating the Investing for Success funding into existing planning processes and budgeting systems to encourage a whole-of-school improvement focus. This approach assumes that DoE intends to continue to provide schools with flexibility and autonomy in how they use improvement funding. An integrated approach would enable future evaluations to measure all initiatives contributing to school performance collectively. It would also recognise that school leaders have further developed their thinking about school improvement over the last four years and are already demonstrating how it fits into the core business of running a school.

#### Funding formula and commitment

DoE has strengthened the Investing for Success needs-based funding model using extensive consultation to inform the revised approach. The model now has a much higher correlation to potential educational disadvantage than the earlier models because it focuses less attention on meeting national minimum standards and more on addressing disadvantage.

However, in 2016 when DoE revised its funding model, it adopted an approach set by the Queensland Government that no state school would be worse off than in 2015.

Therefore, where a school's allocation (calculated using the revised model) resulted in a lesser amount, a top-up amount was added to reach the school's previous funding levels. Top-up payments have undermined the purpose and equity of the allocation model and meant that two schools with similar student populations and community contexts may have received different allocations.

Some schools were not aware of the allocation formula for their total funding amount, despite DoE making a funding planner tool available. DoE does not require schools to take the loadings (based on factors of disadvantage) into account when making school improvement decisions. Schools and regions visited as part of the audit are still not always sure what they can spend the money on. They need clearer guidance from DoE on this, and on meeting their financial accountability requirements.

#### Guiding and supporting schools' investment decisions

DoE's move to a more autonomous and independent model for schools meant that principals developed a wide range of approaches to planning, budgeting, and reporting. Although DoE has progressively improved the detail and breadth of its guidance materials, we identified further opportunities for improvement. For example, some principals from schools we audited, and their assistant regional directors, were not clear about how to allocate Investing for Success expenditure based on the guidance materials they received.

Principals have different interpretations of what is an appropriate use of the funds and have demonstrated different degrees of compliance with DoE's requirements. They identified several areas in which they would benefit from more structured, targeted, professional support in delivering Investing for Success outcomes, including:

- managing and evaluating programs, and monitoring and reporting progress
- engaging with external stakeholders including the community.

A new stronger level of support reflects the changing role of school leaders, particularly their need to be more externally-focused and to improve school performance. DoE's School Improvement Unit is well-positioned to lift the quality of school improvement planning for all schools and provide more guided oversight for lower performing schools.

### Monitoring school performance and expenditure

We found that DoE's monitoring and review processes covering Investing for Success did not provide it with sufficient visibility and assurance about schools':

- compliance with internal controls and requirements
- efficient and effective delivery of school improvement objectives
- financial management errors, irregularities and fraud risk management (in the context of Investing for Success funds)
- financial and performance management obligations being met in a timely, reliable, and accurate way.

Although DoE's four-yearly internal audit program covers school compliance with broad DoE accountabilities, it does not specifically address the extent that schools comply with Investing for Success-related funding requirements.

Many audit stakeholders, including principals from schools we audited, peak representative bodies and DoE senior executives, expressed a view that there needs to be more accountability and scrutiny over how schools are spending Investing for Success funding.

### Evaluating Great Results Guarantee/Investing for Success funding outcomes

Queensland's student performance results across state schools have improved in some areas in recent years, particularly reducing the gap in meeting national averages for early years reading and numeracy. This aligns with the initial objectives of the funding initiative. But without evaluations and evidence to support it, DoE cannot attribute specific student and school performance outcomes to Great Results Guarantee or Investing for Success. DoE has not been able to provide clear advice to its minister about whether school improvement results are linked to the funding initiative. It also cannot provide advice on how Investing for Success has contributed to the range of other school improvement initiatives introduced over the same funding period from the past four years.

This ongoing limitation is due to the design of the initiative and timing of evaluations. Separately administering the additional federal funding to schools created the need to separately measure outcomes at a school level and system level. But DoE has reported that it could not evaluate effectiveness or cost-effectiveness/value for money of the first two years of the funding initiative (2014 and 2015) because it was too early to see discernible changes in performance indicators such as NAPLAN results. It also identified challenges in assessing impact because, due to the broad objective and flexibility, schools have implemented various strategies and did not collect consistent data. Many of the early evaluation limitations are unlikely to be completely addressed in DoE's current evaluation strategy covering all four years.

## School implementation

### How funds are invested

The 17 schools we audited are using the funds to implement a range of school improvement strategies reflecting the individual needs of their school. The flexibility of Investing for Success has enabled schools in vastly different circumstances to target funding to improve their students' achievements beyond meeting national minimum standards. Despite the broad objective of the initiative, over 90 per cent of principal survey respondents reported their key focus area is to improve English results.

Many initiatives are aimed at improving student learning by improving the quality of teaching practices in classrooms. This is consistent with DoE's broader teaching quality reforms that recognise the greatest lever for system improvement is developing the capabilities of teachers.

In 2016, most Investing for Success funds (\$300 million allocated; \$288 million spent) across all state schools were invested in staff (84 per cent: \$242 million). Our survey of principals reinforced this, with 92 per cent reporting they directed their Investing for Success funds towards employing staff to implement student learning programs (particularly literacy), improve student engagement, or professionally develop and support their teachers.

Although the highest expenditure category was staff costs, we found little evidence of schools taking a strategic approach to procuring human resources. Using Investing for Success funds to employ additional temporary staff has created a reliance on the future availability of the funds in some schools and creates industrial and budget risks for DoE should the funding not continue longer term.

### Identifying school improvement opportunities

A large quantity and variety of student data underpins schools' and DoE's evidence-based approach to selecting school improvement strategies. Data literacy of school staff was an area of strategic importance for many of the schools and regions we audited. Since 2016, schools have received comprehensive performance data reports by DoE's School Improvement Unit, and audited schools referred to these reports when making Investing for Success decisions. But there was a lack of consistency in data collection and analysis practices. Schools use data to identify ways to improve student and school performance, but they use multiple collection tools to collect the same or similar information.

There are unique challenges for special schools in consistently comparing outcomes of student performance at a school and system level, but they have benefited from access to new performance indicator reports.

While schools have benefited from comparative data analysis reports over the last two years, DoE did not provide specific tools to help guide principals' access to appropriate research and evidence for the first three years of the initiative. DoE has now created the 'Evidence Hub', which is intended to help schools comply with the requirement to use evidence or research to inform investment decisions. Based on our audit, most principals do not appear to be using the Evidence Hub or attribute high value to using evidence or research to inform decision-making.

### Investing for Success planning processes

Investing for Success planning, review, and reporting tools and processes are currently separate from whole-of-school tools and processes. This has led to duplication of effort. Some schools reported difficulties in preparing separate plans and felt this was inconsistent with a whole-of-school integrated approach to improvement.

Even though the separate process creates more work, some principals saw value in it. They appreciated the separate conversations with their school communities and regions about ways of targeting school improvement that were not dependent on 'business as usual' school operation resources.

The current Investing for Success template does not require schools to demonstrate alignment to other school strategic planning documents. The schools we audited were unable to clearly demonstrate how their Investing for Success initiatives aligned to their broader school improvement plans. Although we did not note major inconsistencies, we noted conflicts/misalignment between school improvement objectives and those of central and regional DoE offices.

Investing for Success plans we examined vary significantly in quality. The most common deficiencies include non-specific targets; difficulty demonstrating links between individual target areas, strategies and actions; and lack of cited research. Survey respondents reflected these deficiencies as identified gaps in principals' capability, who reported they are not confident in setting targets and would benefit from greater support in this area.

## Consultation

Schools do not effectively obtain community input to their Investing for Success plans prior to having them approved. Many see consultation with their community as a symbolic step only. This is demonstrated by the schools who received approval of their plans from DoE before they tabled them with their community forums.

While DoE's community engagement requirements provide opportunities to increase parental involvement in their child's learning, some schools do not have community forums to consult with and others do not consider it valuable. Principal survey respondents placed less importance on consultation with their communities than on internal (school staff) stakeholder contributions. The culture of school independence and autonomy has resulted in some assistant regional directors (who are the principals' supervisors) taking a hands-off approach to their review of schools' Investing for Success initiatives. This limits the opportunity for robust consultation and continuous improvement, and impacts on accountability.

## Demonstrating value for money

Most school principals at the schools we audited were conscious of value for money (spending the funds efficiently, effectively and economically). There were examples across schools of creativity and efforts to maximise value for money, such as creating multi-functional roles to promote efficient use of resources or employing strategic procurement approaches to make sure services were procured economically.

However, not all principal survey respondents separately included value for money or return on investment as a key consideration in their decision-making. Others identified difficulties in achieving value for money because of the design of the initiative as a separate funding stream/source.

We noted a few opportunities for improvement in financial management by schools we audited. Some had errors and areas of non-compliance with financial management requirements that we reported back to DoE.

## Monitoring and reporting progress

DoE's accountability model for Investing for Success required schools to communicate progress to their school communities throughout the year, and to report on the results of their investment decisions at the end of the year.

Respondents from the principal survey indicated they increased the level of communication about school improvement progress to local parents and citizens' associations (P&Cs)/school councils from 2016 to 2017. But they reduced their level of end-of-year reporting about the results of their Investing for Success decisions.

We found similar findings at schools we audited—they provided limited reporting to the community about progress and outcomes achieved with the funding. Some did not have community forums, such as a P&C, and did not have an alternative community engagement and reporting strategy in place.

DoE's role in monitoring is not clear to all schools and regions we interviewed. There are conflicting views of the role of assistant regional directors within schools, and different approaches to monitoring principals. Most assistant regional directors proactively monitor Investing for Success, but some do not due to confusing interpretations of what increased autonomy for principals means.

Principals separately reported that they do not have the appropriate level of skill to set targets, monitor, and report on performance.

### Measuring the impact of investments

We found that the schools we audited generally directed their Investing for Success funds towards improving school/student performance. They reported achieving their improvement targets in some cases but not all. They were not able to demonstrate a clear link between improved results and the Investing for Success funding.

Most schools we audited reported improvement outcomes as the actions or programs implemented with Investing for Success funding—in effect, they reported outputs rather than outcomes. There are many difficulties for schools in measuring long-term impact, in part due to the short time frame of the initiative, the unavailability of robust outcomes data and the broad nature of the outcomes sought by the initiative.

Schools can demonstrate that they have spent the funds on school and student-related items but not whether they have improved student outcomes. This is partly because many things influence student outcomes. It is not a one-for-one relationship with Investing for Success initiatives. In addition, schools did not always base their Investing for Success initiatives on evidence or set specific targets against which to measure success.

It is important to note that despite schools' inability to measure impact, the initiative received overwhelming support from surveyed Queensland state school principals. They assessed the initiative as either very important (98 per cent) or important (2 per cent) to supporting their school improvement work.

# Recommendations

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## Department of Education

We recommend the Department of Education (formerly Department of Education and Training):

1. considers integrating future Investing for Success funding into broader school funding, improvement strategies and processes. (Chapter 2)
2. reviews the Investing for Success allocation model to ensure ongoing transparency, equity and continuous improvement of the needs-based approach (Chapter 2).

This should include:

- regular reviews of schools' funding needs and categories of disadvantage
- clear communication of future changes to funding categories and amounts.

3. clarifies Investing for Success governance structures (Chapters 2 and 3).

This should include:

- accountabilities and responsibilities of assistant regional directors and principals
- the appropriateness of community accountability models (parents and citizens' associations and school councils)
- oversight mechanisms for temporary school staffing employment decisions.

4. strengthens monitoring, reporting, and evaluation processes to better link investment decisions to school improvement outcomes. (Chapter 2)
5. provides more targeted guidance to schools in need of additional support to further lift the quality of school improvement plans, targets, and measures. (Chapter 2 and 3)
6. provides greater support and training to principals and assistant regional directors in the areas identified by surveyed principals during the audit, including strategic financial management, program evaluation, monitoring and reporting, and stakeholder engagement/community consultation. (Chapter 2)

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## Appendix A—Full responses from agency

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As mandated in Section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, the Queensland Audit Office gave a copy of this report with a request for comments to the A/Director-General of the Department of Education.

The head of this agency is responsible for the accuracy, fairness, and balance of their comments.

This appendix contains their detailed responses to our audit recommendations.

## Comments received from Acting Director-General, Department of Education



Office of the  
Director-General

Department of  
Education

12 MAR 2018

Mr Brendan Worrall  
Auditor-General  
Queensland Audit Office  
Email: [gao@gao.qld.gov.au](mailto:gao@gao.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Worrall

Thank you for your letter dated 19 February 2018 regarding the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) Performance Audit on the *Investing for Success* initiative.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed report and the courtesy QAO has provided officers of the Department of Education to provide input and comment on the report throughout its development.

This initiative has been a signature program for the Queensland state schooling system, providing schools with additional funding and the autonomy to allow them to invest these funds in supporting the learning needs of their students. This local decision making allows for the targeting of these funds, where they will make the greatest difference for each school community.

The allocation of funding under this initiative was designed to target those schools and students with the greatest needs and required schools to share with their communities where these funds were best invested to enhance student learning.

Education stakeholders have applauded the approach taken under the current *Investing for Success* initiative and the previous *Great Results Guarantee* program.

The department accepts the report's six recommendations and will work with stakeholders to consider and plan their implementation to help refine the *Investing for Success* initiative. Please find attached our response to the recommendations and the associated implementation timeframe.

The department maintains a deliberate, sustained and relentless focus on improvement. Queensland has been recognised nationally and internationally for the statistically significant improvements in performance that have been recorded over the past decade.

While the *Investing for Success* initiative represents just 3% of the department's revenue and is just one of the many programs that played a role in achieving these results, it has

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been extensively acknowledged by schools and their communities as making a significant difference to the programs and services available to support students.

It is pleasing to note the performance audit determined that the department has effectively used additional funding to reinforce its strategic commitment to building a culture of continuous improvement in student and school performance.

This report will allow the department to continue to build on our broader school improvement work.

I thank you and the performance audit team for the approach taken during this process and their engagement with departmental staff throughout the audit.

If you require further information or assistance, please contact Ms Leanne Nixon, Acting Deputy Director-General, State Schools, by email at [leanne.nixon@ged.qld.gov.au](mailto:leanne.nixon@ged.qld.gov.au) or on (07) 3513 5803.

Yours sincerely



**ANNETTE WHITEHEAD**  
Acting Director-General

Ref: 18/106163

Enc

## Responses to recommendations

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### Department of Education Investing for Success Performance Audit (2017–18)

Response to recommendations provided by the Acting Director-General, Department of Education on 12 March 2018.

Recommendation	Agree / Disagree	Timeframe for implementation	Additional comments
1. The Department of Education (DoE) considers integrating future Investing for Success funding into broader school funding, improvement strategies and processes	Agree	Semester 2, 2019	DoE will work with its stakeholders to explore options for future arrangements.
2. DoE reviews the Investing for Success allocation model to ensure ongoing transparency, equity and continuous improvement of the needs-based approach. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regular reviews of schools' funding needs and categories of disadvantage</li> <li>clear communication of future changes to funding categories and amounts</li> </ul>	Agree	Periodic review	DoE will work with its stakeholders to explore options for future arrangements, taking account of any Australian Government funding requirements.
3. DoE clarifies Investing for Success governance structures. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accountabilities and responsibilities of assistant regional directors and principals</li> <li>the appropriateness of community accountability models (parent and citizen associations and school councils)</li> <li>oversight mechanisms for temporary school staffing employment decisions</li> </ul>	Agree	Semester 2, 2019	DoE will work with its stakeholders to explore options for continuing to strengthen future governance arrangements.
4. DoE strengthens monitoring, reporting, and evaluation processes to better link investment decisions to school improvement outcomes	Agree	Semester 2, 2019	DoE will continue to support schools increasing the precision of their investments to affect improved outcomes.
5. DoE provides more targeted guidance to schools in need of additional support to further lift the quality of school improvement plans, targets, and measures	Agree	Currently under development	DoE continues to actively support the collection and use of evidence in school planning processes and ongoing development and publication of material on the Evidence Hub.
6. DoE provides greater support and training to principals and assistant regional directors in the areas identified by surveyed principals during the audit, including strategic financial management, program evaluation, monitoring and reporting, and stakeholder engagement/ community consultation	Agree	Semester 2, 2020	DoE continues to strengthen the capability of principals and assistant regional directors in leading the management of the school.

## Appendix B—Audit objectives and methods

### Audit objective and scope

The objective of the audit was to assess the economy and effectiveness of the Investing for Success initiative in supporting students, particularly those most in need, in achieving improved outcomes.

We assessed the audit through the following sub-objectives, lines of inquiry, and criteria:

**Figure B1**  
Sub-objectives, lines of inquiry, and criteria of the performance audit

Sub-objective 1: The Department of Education (DoE) designs and manages the Investing for Success initiative to effectively empower schools to invest in initiatives that improve student outcomes.			
Lines of inquiry		Criteria	
1.1	Does DoE equip schools to effectively plan and invest Investing for Success funding in initiatives that maximise student outcomes?	1.1.1	DoE provided effective guidance and support to schools on how to plan and invest the Investing for Success funding to improve student outcomes.
1.2	Does DoE allocate funding in an equitable and transparent, needs-based method to schools and students requiring the most support?	1.2.1	DoE allocates Investing for Success funding in an equitable and transparent, needs-based method.
		1.2.2	DoE invests Investing for Success funding in students requiring the most support to improve student outcomes.
1.3	Does DoE effectively evaluate its design, implementation, and delivery practices to guide decisions and continuous improvement of the Investing for Success initiative?	1.3.1	DoE effectively monitors schools' implementation of the Investing for Success initiative.
		1.3.2	DoE conducts timely initiative evaluations and uses evaluation results to inform policy development and implementation.

**Sub-objective 2: Schools use Investing for Success funding to effectively improve students' outcomes in an economical manner.**

Lines of inquiry		Criteria	
2.1	Do schools use Investing for Success funding to effectively provide students with appropriate support in line with DoE guidance and other school strategies?	2.1.1	Schools have processes in place to prioritise initiatives on which to use Invest for Success funding.
		2.1.2	Schools invest Investing for Success funding in well planned strategies.
2.2	Can schools demonstrate that Investing for Success funding helps maximise outcomes for students, particularly those in most need of support?	2.2.1	Schools consult and disclose within their school communities what they intend to spend the funding on.
		2.2.2	Schools monitor and report progress on outcomes achieved, with the initiatives implemented in a timely manner.
2.3	Do schools procure the support for students using the Investing for Success funding economically?	2.3.1	Schools apply strategic procurement principles in obtaining support for students.
		2.3.2	Schools' procurement processes support value for money decisions.

Source: Queensland Audit Office.

## Reason for the audit

Australia's education system has delivered several reform initiatives over the last 10 years to address the increased focus on students most in need. In Queensland, this includes:

- low socio-economic communities and developmentally vulnerable children (for example, school-based language and cognitive skills, as reported in the Australian Early Development Census, 2015)
- geographic diversity that requires education to be delivered across many remote and rural areas
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments.

The Queensland Department of Education (the department or DoE) established a four-year funding initiative in 2013–14, known as Great Results Guarantee, to deliver \$794 million of Commonwealth funding from its Students First policy to over 1 200 state schools—to improve student outcomes. The funding model was based on student and school characteristics calculated according to enrolment data and was initially focused on early years literacy and numeracy.

The Australian Government did not put any conditions on how DoE should allocate the Students First funding. Part of the focus of the Students First policy was to give leaders and teachers independence to make decisions and develop programs that best meet the needs of their students. In line with this, DoE gave schools the autonomy to determine their own targets and evidence-based strategies to meet their students' needs, and to be accountable to their community.

In 2016, the department changed the name of the funding initiative from Great Results Guarantee to Investing for Success to reflect a new needs-based funding model for allocating the remaining two years of funding, totalling \$480 million. Investing for Success was refocused to assist students in need of support at all levels of schooling up to Year 12.

## Performance audit approach

We conducted the audit in accordance with the Auditor-General of Queensland Auditing Standards, which incorporate Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards.

We commenced the audit in May 2017.

Our scope included:

- the then Queensland Department of Education and Training
- a sample of 17 Queensland state schools.

In addition, we conducted a survey of principals to determine the effectiveness of the planning, implementation, and reporting of the Investing for Success initiative, as detailed in Appendix H.

## Appendix C—Other jurisdictions’ distribution of Students First funding

New South Wales		Western Australia	Victoria
NERA participation	Participating	Non-participating	Non-participating
Gonski/NERA funding allocation	<p>It has been distributed through the Resource Allocation Model (RAM), the sole funding model in NSW.</p> <p>The model is made up of three components: base school allocation; equity loadings (e.g. Aboriginal background); and targeted (individual student) funding (for students who require a high or moderate level of adjustment for disability, specific support, or are new arrivals or refugees).</p>	<p>It has been distributed through the Student-Centred Funding Model. Under this model, schools receive a one-line budget made up of a salaries component and a cash component. There is capacity for resources to be moved between these two components, subject to legislative and industrial requirements. The amounts are calculated using base rates (different for K, P–3, 4–6 and 7–12 year levels) and needs-based loadings (e.g. Aboriginal students).</p>	<p>It has been distributed to state schools by increasing the Student Resource Package (SRP), which was introduced in 2005.</p> <p>The Student Resource Package is made up of the following components: student-based (driven by the levels of schooling of students and their family and community characteristics); school-based (providing for school infrastructure and programs specific to individual schools); and targeted initiatives.</p>
Governance approaches	<p>This is a highly centralised system. Shifts towards greater autonomy started in 2012 with the Local Schools, Local Decisions education reform, giving schools more decision-making power over resource allocation (both staffing and operational funding). It also provided a comprehensive school planning and reporting framework and tools to allow schools to determine their own strategic direction.</p>	<p>The Independent Public School (IPS) initiative, which began in 2010, was designed to give principals of participating schools greater autonomy, particularly over resource allocation matters such as their schools’ budgets and staff hiring.</p> <p>The model also provides some flexibility for principals to develop locally tailored policies and processes, while adhering to core legislative and curriculum requirements.</p> <p>In effect, an IPS principal operates more like the CEO of a company, working closely with an elected school board (akin to a board of company directors) that is usually made up of parents, community members, and business representatives.</p>	<p>Victorian public schools have operated as Independent Public Schools for a number of years without being labelled as such. School councils in Victorian government schools have been at the centre of the governance framework since 1872 and have more extensive powers than in other Australian jurisdictions, including Western Australia.</p>

	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
Autonomy over resource allocation	<p>Prior to 2017 schools had been receiving detailed information in their RAM funding advice outlining each targeted and equity component. There was a clear understanding of how the allocation for each of the loadings was determined with an expectation that the funding be allocated to students in line with the formula.</p> <p>In 2017 the RAM funding became a streamlined package of operational funding, with multiple line items rolled into a single allocation. This has given schools increased operational flexibility.</p>	<p>From 2015 onwards, funding for all schools (including non-IPS) has been delivered through one-line budgets. Each school's one-line budget consists of a salaries component and a cash component, with capacity for resources to be moved between these two components. Certain items like capital works, maintenance and security services are still managed centrally. Only specific Commonwealth programs (e.g. national partnership funding) and key state government election commitments (e.g. Independent Public Schools' administration funding) have remained as separate funding lines.</p> <p>The model enables resources to be used flexibly to best meet the learning needs of students.</p>	<p>Schools have high degree of autonomy over the allocation of funds through the Student Resource Package including over some staff appointments.</p>
Reporting requirements	No separate reporting requirements.	No separate reporting requirements.	No separate reporting requirements.

Note: In this table the following terms have been used:

Gonski—Based on the report authored by David Gonski.

NERA—National Education Reform Agreement.

K—Kindergarten.

P—Prep.

## Appendix D—Summary of Queensland needs-based funding models 2014 to 2017

2014 Great Results Guarantee method	2015 Great Results Guarantee method	2016 and 2017 Investing for Success method
Base per-student rate (adjusted to distribute all available funding)	Base per-student rate (adjusted to distribute all available funding)	Base per-student rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$508 per enrolment Prep–Year 2</li> <li>▪ \$95 per enrolment Years 7–12</li> <li>▪ \$400 per enrolment in special schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$535 per enrolment Prep–Year 2</li> <li>▪ \$235 per enrolment Years 7–12</li> <li>▪ \$415 per enrolment in special schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$220 per enrolment for all year levels and all school types</li> </ul>
<b>Loadings</b>	<b>Loadings</b>	<b>Loadings</b>
Low Socio-economic Status National Partnership (NP) schools—\$800 per student for duration of former NP agreement in place of other base and per-student loadings. Some ceased at the end of 2014.	Low Socio-economic Status National Partnership schools—\$800 per student for duration of former NP agreement in place of other base and per-student loadings. All ceased by the end of 2015.	Discontinued—All former Low Socio-economic Status National Partnership agreements ended. Socio-economic Status loading—\$400 per student in Quintile 1 Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSED) \$225 per student in Quintile 2 IRSED
Indigenous enrolments—\$110 per Prep–Year 12 Indigenous student	Indigenous enrolments—\$110 per Prep–Year 12 Indigenous student	Indigenous enrolments—\$300 per Prep–Year 12 Indigenous student
English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) (non-refugees)—\$2 300 per non-refugee student in Australia less than a year—not provided to schools with an EAL/D unit	EAL/D (non-refugees)—\$2 300 per non-refugee student in Australia less than a year—not provided to schools with an EAL/D unit	EAL/D—\$2 300 per EAL/D non-refugee student with less than a 'C' in English achievement—provided to all schools
Refugees—\$6 250 for each student who is a refugee in their third year in Australia	Refugees—\$6 250 for each student who is a refugee in their third year in Australia	Refugees—\$6 250 for each student who is a refugee in their third year in Australia
		Student with Disability (SWD)—\$300 per SWD with a verified Education Adjustment Program (EAP) Profile in Quartiles 3 or 4 enrolled in a mainstream school; \$200 per special school enrolment

2014 Great Results Guarantee method	2015 Great Results Guarantee method	2016 and 2017 Investing for Success method
		School location: \$70 per student in very remote areas; \$35 per student in remote areas; \$15 per student in outer provincial areas
	English foundations—\$150 per student for those in Years 3–12 who have lower than a ‘C’ standard in English	Discontinued.
	Mathematics foundations—\$150 per student for those in Years 3–12 who have lower than a ‘C’ standard in mathematics	Discontinued.
School administrative support—\$26 627 per school for medium- to larger-sized primary schools to ensure capacity and capability to manage finances and support autonomy	School administrative support—\$26 627 per school for medium- to larger-sized primary schools to ensure capacity and capability to manage finances and support autonomy	School size—administrative support—\$26 627 per school for medium- to larger-sized primary schools to ensure capacity and capability to manage finances
Top-up to ensure each school receives minimum funding of \$5 000 and final adjustment limited to 10% or \$10 000 different (whichever is smaller) from the school’s predicted amount	Top-up to ensure each school receives minimum funding of \$5 000 and non-low SES schools receive at least 2014 funding	Top-up to ensure each school (including OEECs) receives minimum funding of \$5 000 and at least 2015 funding

Source: Queensland Audit Office from DET.

## Appendix E—State School Division’s school improvement model

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The Queensland State Schools’ research-based change strategy, called the School Improvement Model, was launched at the 2017 Principals’ Conference.

The School Improvement Model brings together the existing frameworks of the School Improvement Hierarchy and the Standards of Evidence with a generic learning process known as the Inquiry Cycle. These are explained in the following paragraphs.

The lens of the School Improvement Hierarchy provides guidance on next steps for schools. Inquiry cycles help school staff sustain and refine next improvement steps and improvement practices over time. The Standards of Evidence provide a consistent way of discussing and assessing evidence, including evidence of impact.

### School Improvement Hierarchy—Identifying need

The School Improvement Hierarchy guides what needs to happen next in a school’s improvement journey. It is based on the nine domains of the National School Improvement Tool, which was developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in consultation with states and territories, including Queensland. It is the basis of the Department of Education and Training’s (DET) School Improvement Unit (SIU) review methodology.

The hierarchy model asks schools to start their school’s improvement journey by discussing and analysing data and creating a culture that promotes learning. The next steps to improve performance rely on delivering curriculum and designing new teaching and learning practices (pedagogical practices) through targeted use of school resources and school–community partnerships.

### Standards of Evidence—Linking actions to outcomes

The standards provide ways for a school to assess the link between what they’ve done and what they’ve achieved. They help to identify high quality strategies with a view to scaling them up across the system. Strategies are rated on design, impact, scalability, and investment. Where schools consider they have evidence of high quality actions and outcomes, DET encourages them to share their learnings with other schools online using the Evidence Hub portal that was launched in late 2015.

### Inquiry Cycle—Sustaining improved performance

The Inquiry Cycle provides schools with tools to sustain their improvement results by:

- analysing data (scan and assess)
- collaboratively identifying key issues and restating them as improvement priorities (prioritise)
- developing well-designed, detailed, realistic, and actionable initiatives based on research (develop and plan)
- implementing activities with support and resources, including documenting data to measure improvement and ongoing monitoring and refinement (act)
- assessing whether the activities delivered improved performance (review).

As with the School Improvement Hierarchy, the use of data analysis and evidence-based practices are at the core of the cycle.

## Appendix F—State schools’ performance

### NAPLAN results in key areas from 2011 to 2017

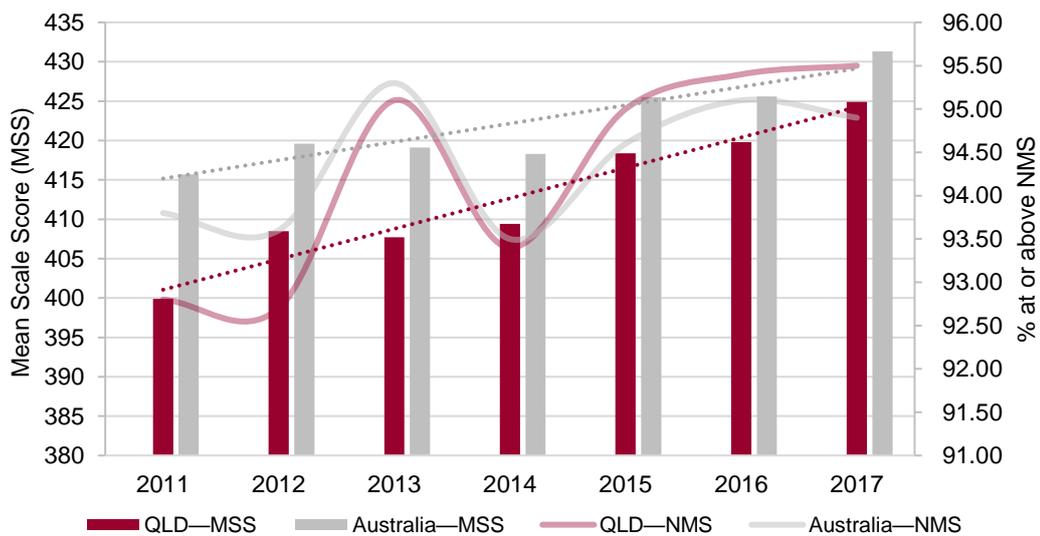
NAPLAN assesses domains such as reading, writing, spelling, grammar/punctuation and numeracy against standardised measures including:

- National minimum standards (NMS) that describe some of the skills and understandings students can generally demonstrate at year level.
- Mean scale score (MSS) is the average score of a cohort in a particular domain.

Examples of historical Queensland results are included below to illustrate progress since 2011:

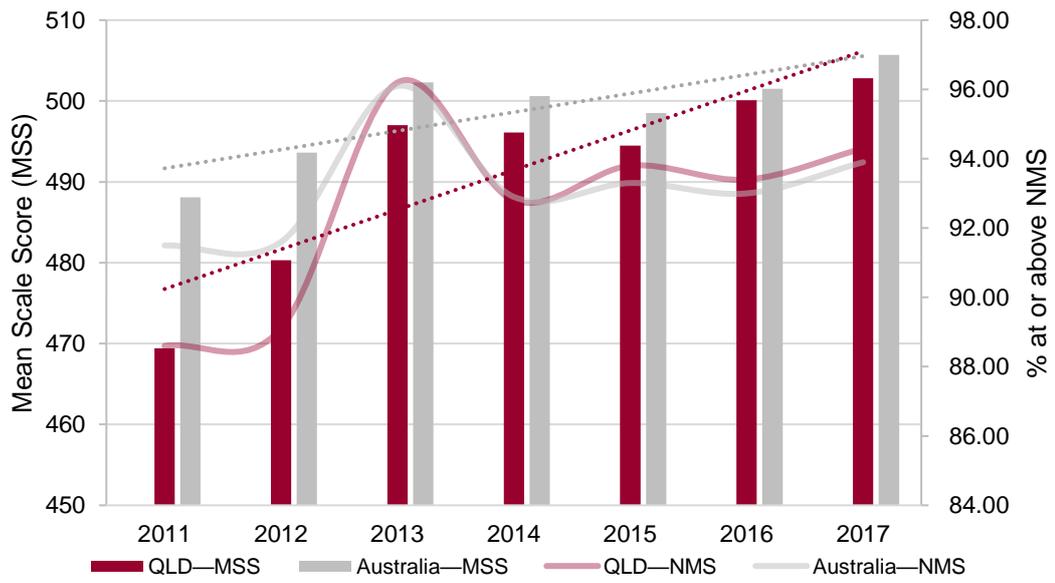
- Improvements in NMS and MSS measurements in reading (years 3, 5, and 7) and numeracy (years 3 and 5) where the gap to meet the national average is closing (Figures F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5). Year 12 outcomes are also improving (Figure F8).
- Gaps remain between Queensland and Australian national averages in years 7 and 9 writing (Figures F6 and F7).

**Figure F1**  
NAPLAN results—Reading: Year 3



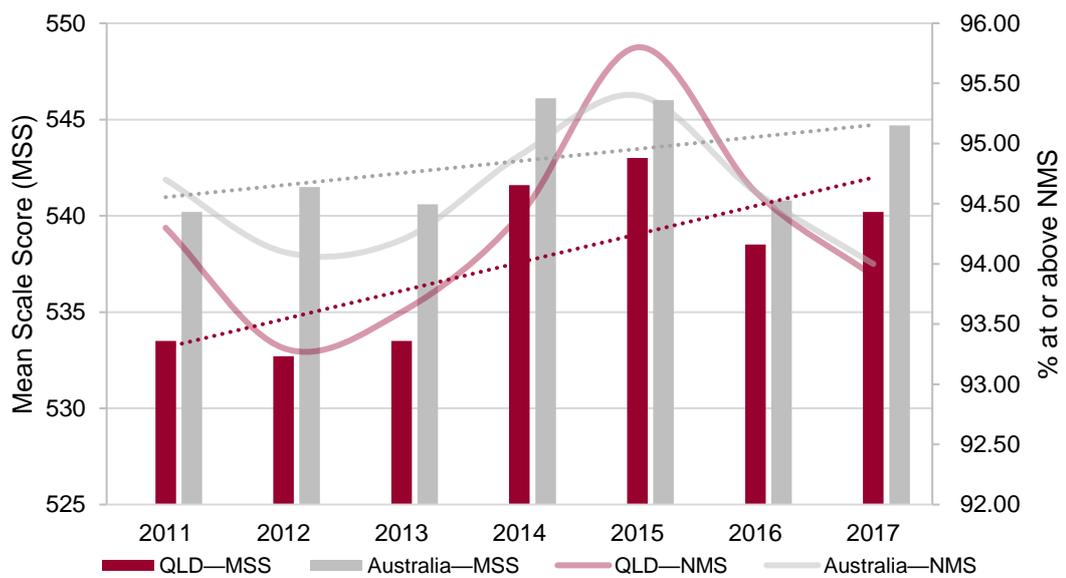
Source: Queensland Audit Office from [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

**Figure F2**  
NAPLAN results—Reading: Year 5



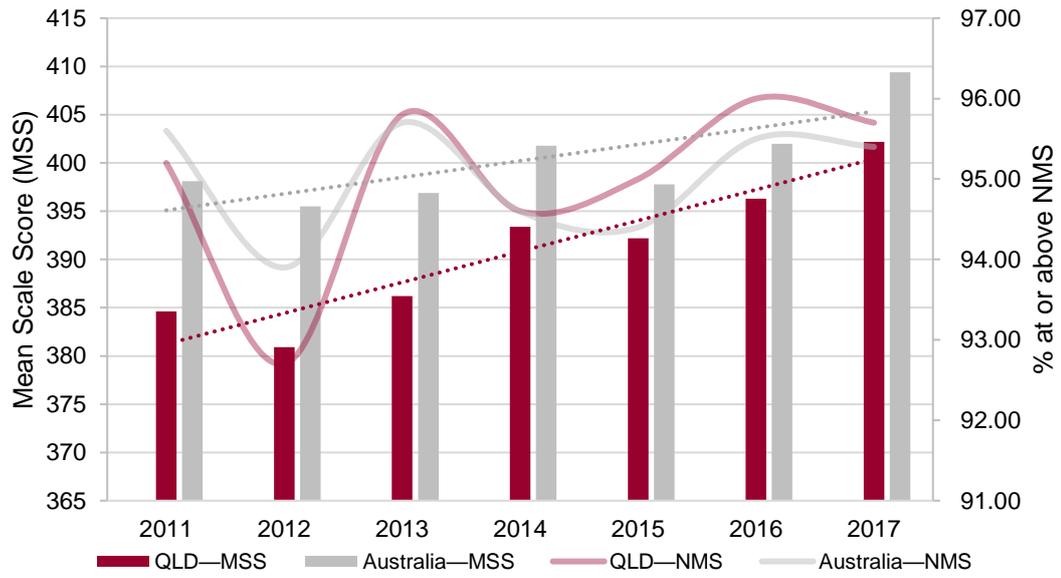
Source: Queensland Audit Office from [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

**Figure F3**  
NAPLAN results—Reading: Year 7



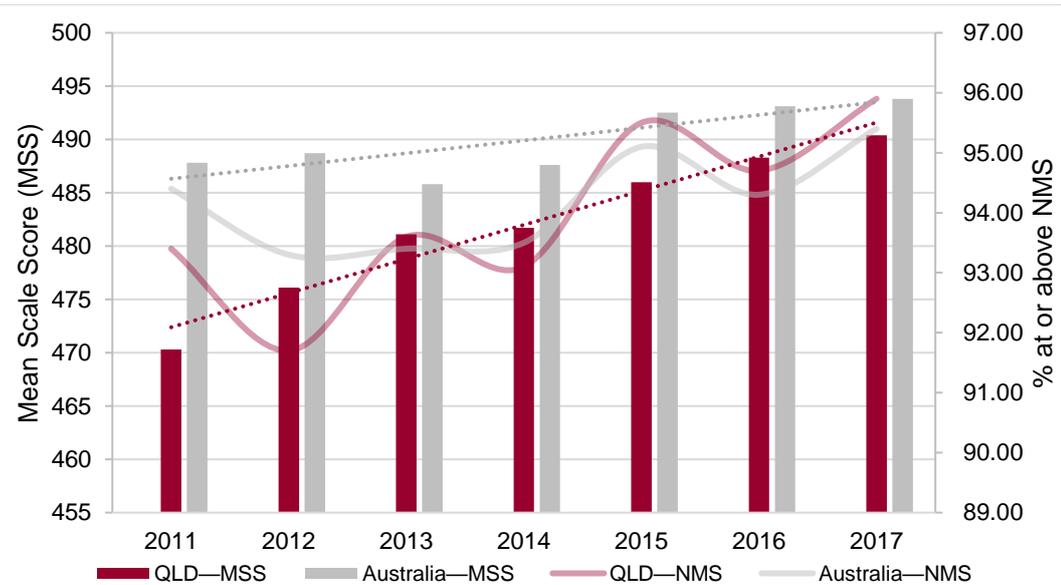
Source: Queensland Audit Office from [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

**Figure F4**  
**NAPLAN results—Numeracy: Year 3**



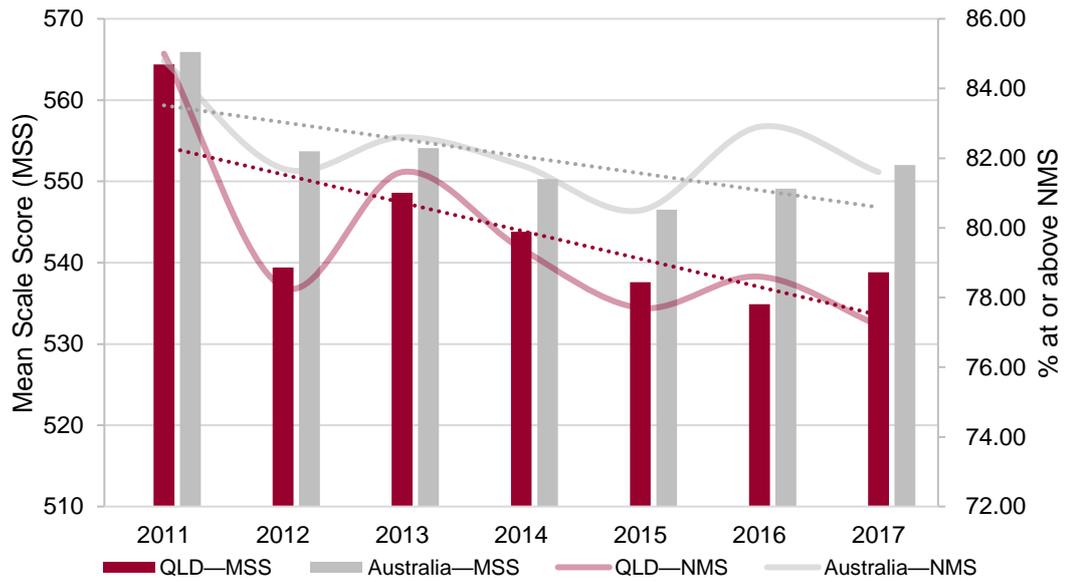
Source: Queensland Audit Office from [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

**Figure F5**  
**NAPLAN results—Numeracy: Year 5**



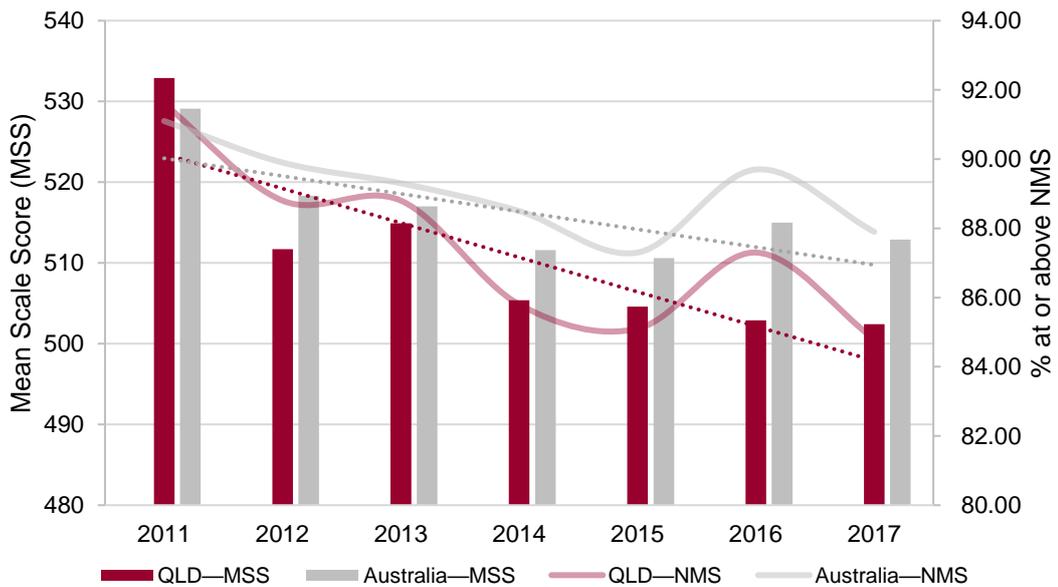
Source: Queensland Audit Office from [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

**Figure F6**  
NAPLAN results—Writing: Year 9



Source: Queensland Audit Office from [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

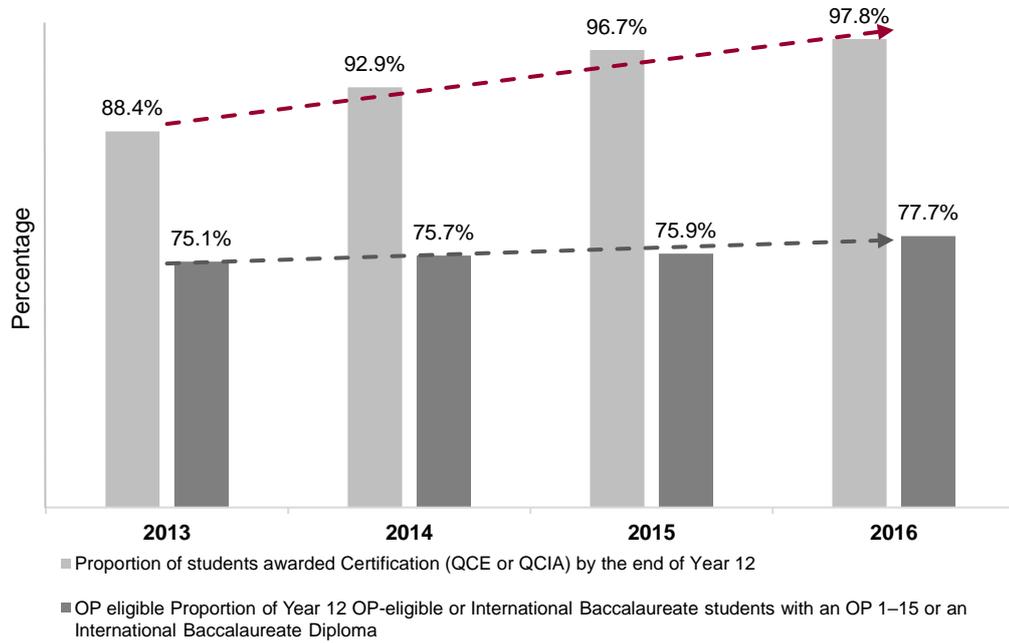
**Figure F7**  
NAPLAN results—Writing: Year 7



Source: Queensland Audit Office from [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au).

Year 12 outcomes 2013–2016

**Figure F8**  
**Queensland state school Year 12 outcomes**



Source: Queensland Audit Office from DoE's Annual Report.

## Appendix G—Case studies

### Case study 1

#### Investing for Success—improving teaching practices and student literacy results

##### School profile

The school is a large (around 1000 students) primary school in a low socio-economic area with an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage score in the low 900s. It has a significant proportion of Indigenous, Pacific Islander, and other groups, which are considered to be disadvantaged.

##### Planning

The school was a participant in the Low-socio-economic status (SES) National Partnerships funding initiative. Great Results Guarantee and Investing for Success funding is seen by the school as a continuation of the earlier initiative. Accordingly, a lot of its strategies originated under the Low-SES National Partnership. The planning process involved data review, brainstorming, and a strategy-selection session by the school's senior leadership team. The Department of Education and Training's (DET) School Improvement Unit (SIU) had conducted a 12-monthly priority review of the school and its recommendations heavily informed the strategy selection.

##### Consultation and review

The Investing for Success strategy was:

- presented to all staff for feedback
- tabled at a parents and citizens' (P&C) meeting for feedback
- reviewed by the assistant regional director (ARD) for broad alignment with DET strategies and guidelines.

##### School investments

The school used the Investing for Success funding on:

- two literacy and numeracy coaches
- more teachers—to provide release time for teacher professional development
- an increase in teacher aide hours.

##### Measuring and reporting on the outcomes of the funding

The school measures and reports its whole-of-school progress in its annual report, which includes extracts from the school data profile and a link to school NAPLAN results. The school does not use the optional snapshot report template to report specifically on Investing for Success initiatives and targets in isolation.

The school manages its budget as a one-line budget and reallocates amounts of unspent funds between cost centres as needed. It makes Investing for Success funding go further by charging graduate staff salaries to the Investing for Success cost centre and promoting existing experienced teachers (allocated by DET) into the coaching roles. A review of the school's Investing for Success expenditure report shows that its transactions are consistent with the agreement.

##### Evaluations

Although it hasn't met its 2016 targets, the school's literacy results have been improving overall. The school performed an internal evaluation of one of the teaching methodologies trialled in a limited number of classrooms and, having found it effective, is implementing it across the school.

Although Investing for Success funding is a significant contributing factor to this improvement, it is not possible to attribute the improvement solely to the initiative and view it in isolation from all other improvement initiatives and measures such as the former Low-SES National Partnership, the SIU review, and many other regional and state initiatives.

## Case study 2

### Investing for Success—improving student engagement and wellbeing

#### School profile

The school is a medium-sized (around 500 students) secondary school in the outer suburbs of Brisbane, located within the metropolitan region.

#### Planning

The appointment of a new principal coincided with the new strategic planning cycle for 2016–2019. This enabled the new principal to take ownership of the Investing for Success plan. The school listed its high-level strategies from the school plan as its Investing for Success targets and reflected recommendations from its 2015 SIU review. None of the school's Investing for Success targets meet the SMART criteria (for example 'developing and maintaining a highly skilled and capable workforce'). However, the 2016–2019 school plan contains seven SMART targets concerning Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) attainment, attendance, student and parent satisfaction, and NAPLAN results.

#### Consultation and review

In 2016, the school began the process of becoming an Independent Public School (IPS). Until the school council is fully constituted, the P&C committee has been acting in a de facto school council role, approving the school's 2017 annual implementation plan and Investing for Success agreement. This is beyond the scope of its function and expertise. The school's inconsistent performance data, along with the appointment of the new principal, has resulted in the assistant regional director (ARD) giving the school more guidance. The school had limited ARD consultation about its Investing for Success plan in 2016 and none in 2017. There was reported confusion about the respective roles of the principal and ARD due to the school's pending IPS status.

#### School investments

Of the seven initiatives in the agreement, two were aimed at improving teaching practices and the remaining five related to: a remedial program; data practices; student wellbeing and engagement; a program targeting high performing students; and one targeting transition out of the school into the workforce or tertiary studies.

The school's main strategy for implementing student wellbeing and engagement programs was to appoint a community liaison officer (CLO). Some of the Investing for Success funding was spent on converting a storage area into an office for the role. The CLO oversees four areas: student and staff wellbeing; attendance; community events; and marketing and communication.

The school was unable to appoint a literacy and numeracy coach due to a lack of suitable candidates. It decided to use funding to improve student wellbeing and engagement, including expanding the hours of the school chaplain to full time (pastoral care and social and emotional support) and leasing a 21-seat bus (used for school activities and events).

A review of the school's 2015 expenditure showed a significant unspent Investing for Success surplus for 2015 (when the school did not have a permanent principal).

Investing for Success funding is considered part of the overall budget and is sometimes used to relieve budget pressures by covering unexpected/unbudgeted expenditure within core funding areas.

#### Measuring and reporting on the outcomes of the funding

The school does not report specifically on Investing for Success initiatives and believes it is artificial to separate the initiative from its overall improvement agenda. The school data profile reports improvement in student attendance and inconsistent NAPLAN results, with improvement in some areas and deterioration in others. The school values data analysis and it reports progress widely within the school. Its annual report includes progress against each of the annual implementation plan's objectives (for example 'to develop and implement a whole-school plan that supports student and staff wellbeing'). It does not report academic performance results, but references external website links to its NAPLAN academic results.

#### Evaluations

The school achieved two out of the seven targets (QCE and Year 7 NAPLAN results for numeracy) but did not achieve the other five. Of the five targets it did not achieve, there was an improvement in two cases, and deterioration in three. The school does not attribute its results to Investing for Success funding and initiatives.

### Case study 3

#### Investing for Success—improving teaching practices

##### **School profile**

This school is a medium-sized primary school with approximately 700 students. It has an average socio-economic status. It is in a regional centre and has students from a wide range of backgrounds.

##### **Planning**

In the early stages of Great Results Guarantee, the regional office exercised significant control over strategy selection and required the school to justify certain proposed initiatives and actions. However, with Investing for Success, it subsequently limited its role to ensuring the school's processes had broad alignment with regional strategies. The school considers school performance and improvement collectively.

The school's data analysis showed low performance in writing and this was therefore chosen as the school's main improvement area. The regional focus was reading, but the school was able to justify its different focus by using data to demonstrate its decision.

##### **Consultation and review**

The school has an active and supportive P&C. The initial draft of the Investing for Success agreement, prepared by senior school leadership, was tabled at a P&C meeting for feedback.

##### **School investments**

The school has spent most of its funding on teacher aide support and staff professional development, and in purchasing additional classroom resources.

The school has allocated its teacher aide resources to implementing a literacy intervention program that is commercially available and widely used. The program required a significant investment in physical and human resources to set up. It is facilitated by a number of teacher aides, who allocate their time between running the program and other classroom duties, effectively boosting teacher aide support in the classroom and providing a link between the program and classroom activities. Diagnostic tests are administered to all students at all year levels several times throughout the year to identify the students in need of support. The school can clearly demonstrate the success of the program with short cycle student performance data as well as NAPLAN results.

The school's separate focus on improving teaching quality has been achieved through appointing an external consultant to train and support teachers, particularly younger, less experienced staff. The consultant delivers a structured formal induction program and ongoing mentoring. Staff attendance is facilitated through release time funded partially by Investing for Success. Staff reported that the investment has created a culture of openness and continuous improvement and ensured consistency of practice throughout the school.

The school has strived to maximise value for money by conducting professional development on site and integrating it, as much as possible, into its day-to-day activities, enabling staff to develop a personal relationship with the consultant. The school has effectively reduced additional costs for teacher relief and minimised class disruption that would have otherwise been incurred by releasing all teachers from classrooms to attend coaching and training off site.

##### **Measuring and reporting on the outcomes of the funding**

The school manages its budget as a one-line budget and considers separate Investing for Success processes as duplicating its whole-of-school planning, monitoring, and reporting. It generates community engagement and celebrates successes through its newsletter, Facebook page, and other public forums, and does not prioritise reporting separately on Investing for Success strategies.

##### **Evaluations**

The school has publicly reported meeting its target to 'improve teacher capability' but is unable to provide any data or measurements to support it. Staff feedback during the audit provided qualitative support for the investment. Of the seven measurable targets, the school met four, made an improvement on one, and recorded a deterioration on two.

## Appendix H—Survey and sample results

We distributed an online survey to 61 principals, randomly selected within various subsets/strata of schools based on a number of characteristics. We ensured there was proportionate representation within each subset/stratum for each characteristic.

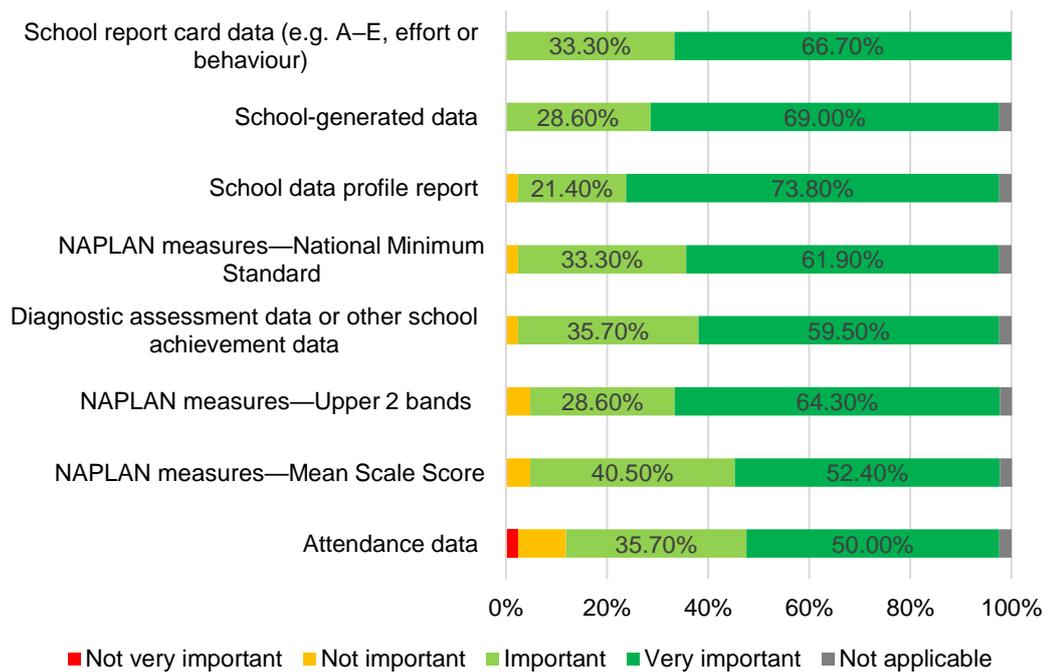
Forty-nine principals completed the survey, representing a response rate of 80.3 per cent.

The schools that responded belong to the following categories:

- type: state school (38), state high school (9), special school (1), other (1)
- region: South East (11), North Queensland (4), North Coast (7), Metropolitan (7), Far North Queensland (4), Darling Downs South West (9), Central Queensland (7)
- zone group: metropolitan (17), provincial city (8), remote (5), rural (19)
- size: extra small (13), small (11), medium (17), large (8)
- IPS status: IPS (11), non-IPS (38)
- Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA): below 900 (5), 900–999 (27), 1000–1099 (10), 1100 and above (2), no ICSEA (5).

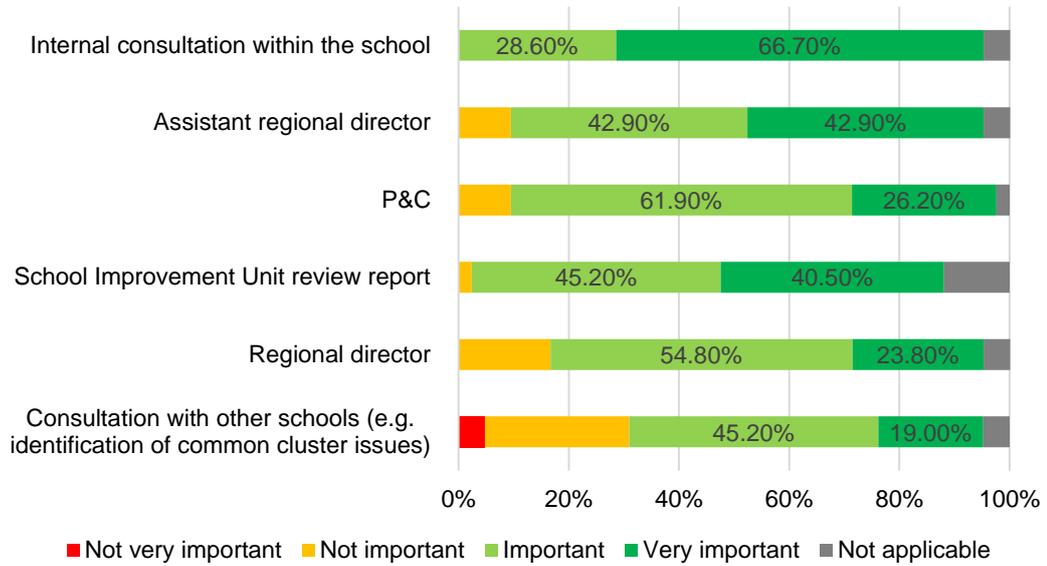
The survey was made up of questions about how schools use Investing for Success funds, and how they make decisions and report outcomes of the funding.

**Figure H1**  
Data types in order of importance



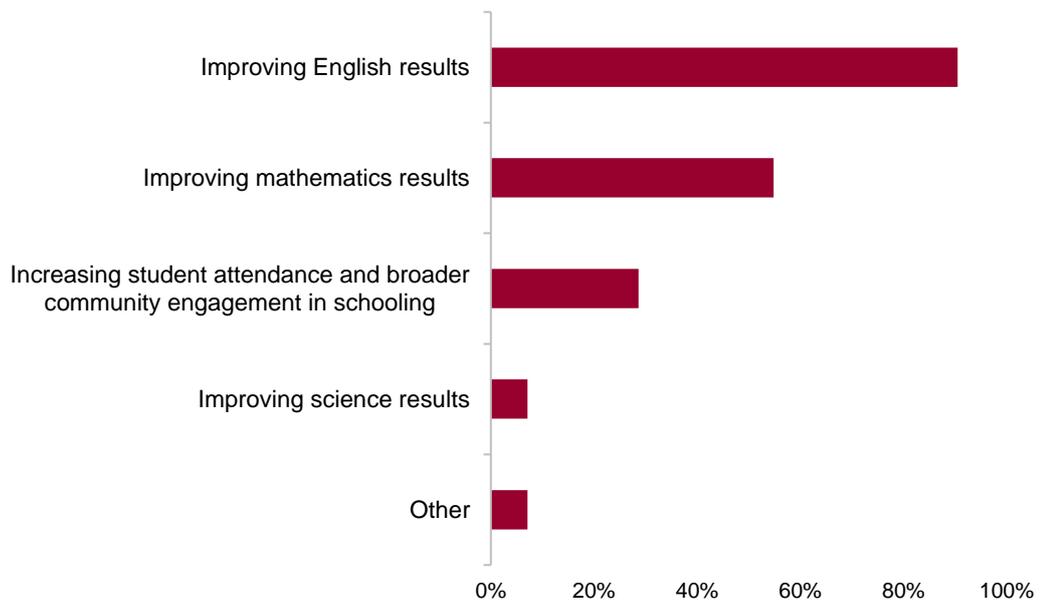
Source: Queensland Audit Office.

**Figure H2**  
**Consultation in order of importance**



Source: Queensland Audit Office.

**Figure H3**  
**Areas of focus—subject areas**



Source: Queensland Audit Office.

Figure H4 summarises our analysis of reporting practices at schools we audited.

**Figure H4**  
**Method of reporting outcomes**

Method of reporting	Number of schools	Percentage of schools
Snapshot report, prepared using the suggested template, published on the school's website (as at 12 June 2017)	4	24%
Snapshot report, prepared using the suggested template, made available to the school community by other means	5	29%
Reported by other means (annual report, newsletter or similar)	8	47%
Total sample	<b>17</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Queensland Audit Office.

Figure H5 summarises our analysis of the nine schools we audited that used the Department of Education's snapshot report template.

**Figure H5**  
**Analysis of snapshot reports (where used)**

Snapshot report reported on	Number of schools	Percentage of schools
All actions/strategies, and none of the targets	1	11%
Some, but not all actions/strategies, and none of the targets	3	33%
All targets (and all or some actions/strategies)	2	22%
Some, but not all targets (and all or some actions/strategies)	3	33%
Total number of schools in the sample that used the snapshot report	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Queensland Audit Office.

## Appendix I—Summary of Investing for Success initiatives at schools we audited

The following table is a summary (with names removed) of key Investing for Success initiatives/actions/expenditure, targets, and outcomes from the 17 schools we audited. Information sources include Investing for Success plans, annual reports, annual implementation plans, and outcome reports (for example, newsletters and snapshot reports).

The table uses the following abbreviations: EAL/D—English as an additional language/dialect; GRG—Great Results Guarantee; I4S—Investing for Success; MSS—mean scale score; NAPLAN—National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy; NMS—national minimum standards in NAPLAN; OP—Overall position related to tertiary entrance scores; PAT–R—Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading; QCE—Queensland Certificate of Education; SMART criteria—specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-related; U2B—upper two bands in NAPLAN; VET—Vocational education and training.

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
A	\$519 320	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering professional development to support implementing whole-of-school literacy and numeracy programs</li> <li>Employing a community liaison officer to monitor and foster student and community engagement and implement attendance strategies</li> <li>Extending the chaplaincy program to promote student wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school used its high-level strategies from the school plan as its Investing for Success targets. For example: 'Enhancing communication and creating supportive and positive partnerships with parents/caregivers'.</li> <li>The school plan contained several SMART targets about QCE attainment, attendance, student and parent satisfaction, and NAPLAN results. None were specifically identified as Investing for Success targets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets were general (not SMART) and we were unable to assess progress against the stated Investing for Success targets.</li> <li>Whole-of-school targets were set out in the school plan (none were specifically identified as Investing for Success targets). It achieved two out of the seven targets (QCE and Year 7 NAPLAN results for numeracy) and did not achieve five. Of the five targets it did not achieve, there was an improvement in two cases, and deterioration in three.</li> <li>The school achieved 100% QCE, and year 7 U2B in numeracy of 17%. (The target was 15%.)</li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
B	\$1 275 035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employing a full-time specialist literacy teacher</li> <li>Employing a head of department—student engagement</li> <li>Employing a liaison officer, an industry liaison officer, teacher aides, and an administration officer</li> <li>Acquiring facilities, including a handball court, health hub, school bus, and stand-up desks</li> <li>Employing additional classroom teachers</li> <li>Implementing a peer instructional coaching program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve reading levels for all students (specific targets for each year level of NAPLAN).</li> <li>Improve the transition of primary school students into secondary.</li> <li>Improve attendance by 3% overall and 5% for Indigenous students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of the seven Investing for Success targets, one was not measurable. Only one of the remaining six targets was achieved (U2B in Year 7 reading of 13%. The target was 10%).</li> <li>Of the five targets the school did not achieve, there was an improvement in one case and deterioration in the remaining four.</li> </ul>
C	\$1 979 703	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employing two literacy and numeracy coaches, responsible for pedagogical practices, coordinating professional learning teams, and a literacy intervention program and other initiatives</li> <li>Offering professional development and meeting associated teacher release costs</li> <li>Acquiring information technology equipment and other physical resources</li> <li>Employing additional classroom teachers and teacher aides to increase all teachers' non-contact hours for professional development attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve NAPLAN results, including NMS and U2B, particularly in reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of the eight Investing for Success targets, seven were achieved. The remaining one was not achieved, and a deterioration was recorded compared to the prior year.</li> <li>The school exceeded its Year 3 reading results of NMS, achieving 94.2% (target of 90%), and U2B, achieving 21% (target of 20%).</li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
D	\$4 869 713	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employing literacy and numeracy coaches</li> <li>▪ Employing a community liaison officer to improve attendance</li> <li>▪ Employing a head of department—EAL/D</li> <li>▪ Employing an industry liaison officer</li> <li>▪ Implementing numerous other strategies targeting students pursuing non-OP pathways to help them transition into the workforce or further studies (e.g. school-based apprenticeships and traineeships)</li> <li>▪ Employing additional teacher aides</li> <li>▪ Targeted professional development to build staff capacity (including teacher release)</li> <li>▪ Acquiring resources, such as leasing demountable buildings to establish temporary classrooms, and buying information technology, software subscriptions, and teaching and learning resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the percentage of students achieving the NMS and U2B in reading, writing, and numeracy.</li> <li>▪ Increase attendance to more than 95%.</li> <li>▪ Increase the percentage of students achieving C or above in certain disciplines.</li> <li>▪ Some general targets, including 'increase intervention for EAL/D population'.</li> <li>▪ Increase the percentage of students achieving an OP 1–15.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Although formulated as 13 targets, 30 separate targets have been identified.</li> <li>▪ The school achieved mixed results, reaching 15 of their 30 targets. The remaining 15 were not achieved and the school recorded deterioration on all of them.</li> <li>▪ The school did not achieve all of its NAPLAN targets in reading. They achieved: Year 7 NMS 85% (target more than 91.2%); U2B 10.3% (target more than 7.7%); Year 9 NMS 80.9% (target more than 81.5%); and U2B 6.8% (target more than 6.3%)</li> <li>▪ The school did not achieve its attendance rate target (88.7% against the target of more than 95% and the prior year's rate of 89.1%)</li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
E	\$1 619 670	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating literacy and numeracy support classes to provide interventions</li> <li>Employing a literacy coach</li> <li>Employing a teacher librarian</li> <li>Employing a maths teacher</li> <li>Acquiring tools and resources (including software subscription)</li> <li>Offering professional development</li> <li>Providing additional teacher aide support</li> <li>Employing VET (vocational education) coordinator to provide pathways for senior students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve various specific NAPLAN-related targets (NMS and U2B) for different components and year levels.</li> <li>Maintain QCE achievement at 100%.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although formulated as 10 targets, 39 separate targets were identified. No data was available to measure the school's progress against one of them. Of the remaining 38, the school achieved 17, recorded an improvement on 10, and recorded a deterioration on 11.</li> <li>The school aimed to increase its MSS in all NAPLAN areas and year levels by five points. It was able to do that in six areas out of 10 and achieved an improvement on its prior year's score in the remaining four areas.</li> </ul>
F	\$1 041 238	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing a literacy intervention program, including human and physical resources</li> <li>Acquiring classroom resources (interactive panels, books, materials, phonics materials, and information technology (IT) resources)</li> <li>Offering professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve various NAPLAN-related targets (NMS and U2B) for reading for Years 3 and 5.</li> <li>Achieve PAT-R (school generated reading) targets for all year levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thirty-two separate targets were identified. No data was available for two of them. The school achieved 14 targets, recorded an improvement against seven, and recorded deterioration against nine.</li> <li>The school's target of achieving 100% NMS for all NAPLAN areas and year levels was not achieved for any of the 10 areas, but showed improvement on the prior year's score in four out of 10 areas.</li> <li>The school achieved its targeted 60% and 65% U2B for Years 3 and 5 respectively in five out of 10 areas and improved its prior year's result in two other areas.</li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
G	\$2 645 249	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offering professional development and meeting associated teacher release costs</li> <li>▪ Employing two heads of program (coaches)</li> <li>▪ Employing an additional speech language pathologist</li> <li>▪ Funding release time for teachers to attend professional development meetings.</li> <li>▪ Employing a behavioural management teacher</li> <li>▪ Employing additional teacher aides</li> <li>▪ Employing a youth support coordinator</li> <li>▪ Acquiring classroom resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achieve 100% NMS in reading.</li> <li>▪ Increase attendance rates.</li> <li>▪ Decrease disciplinary absences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There were eight separate targets, one of which was identified as not measurable. Of the remaining seven, the school achieved two, recorded an improvement on three, and recorded a deterioration on two.</li> <li>▪ The school's target of 100% NMS in reading for all year levels was not achieved, but it did report an improvement on the prior year's result in four out of five NAPLAN year levels.</li> </ul>
H	\$4 260 090	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employing a deputy principal</li> <li>▪ Employing a head of department—professional practice</li> <li>▪ Employing six coaches, covering various areas of practice, to increase staff capability and implement coaching programs. This included meeting associated teacher release costs to facilitate the coaching programs</li> <li>▪ Employing an employment connections officer</li> <li>▪ Employing a student support officer</li> <li>▪ Offering professional development and meeting associated teacher release costs</li> <li>▪ Acquiring physical resources, including refurbishing certain facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No specific outcome targets were set in the Investing for Success agreement.</li> <li>▪ The high-level improvement agenda items, set in the school's annual implementation plan, were included in the outcome target section of the agreement.</li> <li>▪ The school has set some targets in its annual implementation plan, which we deemed to be the school's Investing for Success targets. These targets related to reading, numeracy, behaviour, and post-school transition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There were 11 specific targets identified in the annual implementation plan. Of these, three did not have the data available to measure progress, three were achieved, and four were not achieved. Of the four that were not achieved, none recorded an improvement.</li> <li>▪ The school's NAPLAN results in reading were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Year 7: 91% NMS (against prior year's 93%);</li> <li>- Year 9: 77% NMS (against prior year's 72%).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
I	\$530 836	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employing a deputy principal</li> <li>▪ Acquiring additional speech therapy time</li> <li>▪ Acquiring additional guidance counselling time</li> <li>▪ Acquiring additional teacher aide time</li> <li>▪ Performing hearing screening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The targets related to Prep students achieving appropriate oral language standard and reading proficiency, and Year 3 NAPLAN performance in reading and numeracy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school achieved two of its five targets, recorded improvement on two, and recorded a deterioration on the remaining one.</li> <li>▪ The school's Year 3 NAPLAN NMS results in reading and numeracy were 86% (2015: 54.5%) and 81.8% (2015: 73%) respectively against the target of 85% in each, showing an improvement in both areas.</li> </ul>
J	\$410 190	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employing a full-time guidance officer</li> <li>▪ Employing a transition officer (part time)</li> <li>▪ Acquiring an additional head of curriculum time</li> <li>▪ Offering professional development</li> <li>▪ Acquiring physical resources, including leasing a school bus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school targeted NAPLAN performance (reading, writing, and numeracy), attendance, literacy for Prep students, and QCE achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eighteen specific targets were included. Two of them were not measurable. Of the remaining 16, the school met two, improved on six, and recorded a deterioration on eight.</li> <li>▪ The school improved NAPLAN NMS achievement in six areas/year levels out of 12. It was able to maintain 100% achievement of QCE or VET I or II qualifications.</li> <li>▪ It increased attendance from 85% to 86% but did not meet its target of 88%.</li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
K	\$1 528 454	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employing a numeracy coach</li> <li>Extending a literacy coach's hours</li> <li>Employing a higher order thinking coach (part time)</li> <li>Acquiring additional release time to engage in professional learning communities</li> <li>Employing a success coach</li> <li>Acquiring additional teacher aides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The targets are formulated in terms of NAPLAN performance in reading, writing, and numeracy, and A–E performance in mathematics, English and science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three overall targets were broken down into 30 separate targets (by NAPLAN area, subject, and year level).</li> <li>The school met 24 of its targets, made an improvement on three, and recorded a deterioration on three.</li> <li>The school achieved its NAPLAN U2B targets in numeracy for Years 7 and 9. It achieved 31% and 24% respectively against the targets of 25% and 20%.</li> </ul>
L	\$127 603	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquiring additional teacher aide time</li> <li>Offering professional development, including teacher release time</li> <li>Acquiring physical resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The plan did not include targets that meet the SMART criteria. For example, the target set in the agreement was to 'develop reading skills and increase students' benchmark reading levels across all year levels through individualised one on one time with a reading mentor on a regular basis'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students who accessed the reading program improved by at least one reading level. The school considered this target to be met.</li> </ul>
M	\$1 102 702	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging a literacy and numeracy consultant; providing coaching to teachers</li> <li>Employing additional teacher aides to facilitate a literacy intervention program</li> <li>Promoting three teachers into lead teacher roles</li> <li>Employing a curriculum teaching and learning coach</li> <li>Purchasing physical resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to a general target to 'improve teacher capability through focused coaching and professional development', the agreement contained a number of NAPLAN targets in the areas of numeracy and writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has reported having met the target to 'improve teacher capability' but has not reported any measurable data.</li> <li>Of the seven measurable targets, the school met four, made an improvement on one, and recorded a deterioration on two.</li> <li>The school was able to achieve 100% NMS in numeracy for Years 3 and 5.</li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
N	\$57 518	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering professional development and meeting associated teacher release costs</li> <li>Buying teacher aide time to facilitate a school-based playground for potential Prep students to help them and their families prepare for school</li> <li>Acquiring a speech language pathologist's time to assess Prep students and others as referred by teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school targeted A–E performance in mathematics and English for all year levels. It also set a target of increasing the percentage of early years students (Prep–3) performing at or above the regional benchmark in reading and writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of the seven targets, the school achieved two, improved on three, and recorded a deterioration on two.</li> <li>The school increased the percentage of early years students performing at or above the regional benchmark from 75% to 92%.</li> </ul>
O	\$83 772	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering professional development and meeting associated teacher release costs</li> <li>Implementing a commercially available literacy intervention program, including funding human and physical resources</li> <li>Acquiring additional teacher aide time during mathematics lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most of the targets did not meet the SMART criteria (e.g. 'improve numeracy pedagogy', 'improve teacher capabilities targeted at improving student outcomes') or were action- rather than outcome-oriented (e.g. 'implement early years' intervention strategies for literacy and numeracy'.)</li> <li>There were three measurable targets in A–E performance in mathematics for various year levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school reported achieving three targets that did not meet the SMART criteria.</li> <li>The school could not demonstrate evidence of outcomes for two of its targets ('improve numeracy pedagogy', and 'improve teacher capabilities targeted at improving student outcomes') despite recording improved NAPLAN results in most areas.</li> <li>Of the three measurable targets related to A–E performance in mathematics, the school met one, but recorded a deterioration in the other two.</li> </ul>

School	Combined GRG/I4S funding	Key initiatives/actions/expenditure	Key targets	Summary of 2016 results (the results cannot be attributed solely to Investing for Success)
P	\$568 834	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering professional development and meeting associated teacher release costs</li> <li>Acquiring physical resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a special school providing schooling to students with intellectual disabilities. The targets are formulated using different measures/scales and assumptions (e.g. maintaining a certain level of performance).</li> <li>The target areas are English (reading and writing) and mathematics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school met four out of five targets and recorded a deterioration on one.</li> <li>Thirty-eight percent of students gained or maintained a level within Concepts of Print (a scale for students with intellectual disability) against the target of 30%, and 27% of students achieved benchmarks (against the target of 25%).</li> </ul>
Q	\$20 000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing teacher aide support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school set two measurable targets for NAPLAN performance in reading and numeracy. It also set a general target that did not meet SMART criteria: 'to improve teacher capabilities through professional development and focused feedback, to achieve improved student outcomes'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school met all its measurable targets.</li> <li>100% of Year 3 and 5 students were in the U2B in reading and numeracy. (Note: the school has fewer than 10 students overall.)</li> </ul>

Source: Queensland Audit Office.



## Appendix J—Survey—Free-text comments

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These free-text comments from the principal survey provide further insight into the Investing for Success initiative (commonly referred to below as I4S) and have been reproduced here in full. Some of them have also been quoted, as appropriate, in the body of the report.

### Why I4S has been important

- It has allowed us to have the funds to employ more teacher time in delivering high quality practices with target groups of students.
- The I4S initiative has engendered successful student outcomes by allowing us to: purchase TRS to get all teachers together to complete cycles of inquiry for sustained improvement once per term; purchase hardware necessary to support students' digital literacy and ICT competence; purchase additional teacher aide time, deployed in the early years, to support students' oral language acquisition, reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- It has ensured that the money for extra teacher aide/professional development is there to support our students and help drive our explicit improvement agenda.
- The funding is significant and gives our school the capacity to implement a range of high yield strategies to improve student learning.
- This provides extra funds that can be used to support students.
- The high levels of support we are able to give students and staff would not occur without this funding.
- It provides additional funding to apply to school priorities identified in our Annual Implementation Plan.
- It has allocated additional support to be provided directly into the classroom.
- The I4S funding has enabled us to employ additional teaching and non-teaching staff to drive several key improvement agendas—including literacy and engagement.
- Allowed creation of role that directly and effectively impacted teaching and learning and improved outcomes.
- Funding provides release time for teachers and teacher aide support which allows a greater focus on the core priority of teaching and learning.
- The access to these funds allows us to focus in upon upskilling our staff with professional development that is directly related to the needs of the students at the school as well as providing us with the opportunities to purchase valuable resources and teacher aide time to support the implemented programs.
- The funding has enabled the school to target and fund key initiatives which support student learning and staff development.
- It has allowed us to improve practice of all staff with coaching.
- We have been able to fund initiatives that we could not before. It has allowed us the flexibility to focus on the Improvement Agenda for our school, which I am sure is different from other schools. This has been one of the most valuable funding initiatives to come out in years. I hope we keep it going.
- Funds provided have enabled the implementation of strategies for improvement in literacy and numeracy that have ensured progress for our students.
- This funding has enabled our school to purchase additional teaching staff to support students, which has directly improved our student learning outcomes.

- The funding allowed for the employment of staff to support the individual learning needs of our students to improve in reading and numeracy. It also supported valued professional development for our staff.
- The I4S initiative has enabled us to fund extra staffing and resources to assist with student improvement that aligned with our school's priority area.
- Have been able to create roles that support continued teacher growth (and subsequently learning improvement for children). These roles would not be able to be established and maintained through existing resourcing models. (Specifically Head of Curriculum, Maths Coach)
- I4S funding is approximately 3 to 4 times larger than the traditional 'School Grant' amount and is the most significant funding increase I have seen in my 25 year career. It allows my school to implement long term improvement strategies.
- Provided financial resources to enable employment of specialist staff (Lower School STLaN, behaviour coach, literacy coach, digital technology coach, speech language pathologist) and provision of professional development of teaching and non-teaching staff in targeted delivery of programs that are delivering improvements for our students.
- It has allowed us to focus more resources in regard to raising levels of reading and comprehension across the school.
- Critical element of employing a SLP has made significant positive impact upon Prep students to identify needs and apply early intervention.
- As a small school the funds have helped us meet the improvement agenda at our school significantly. We have improved learning environments and access to technology. But the most significant improvements have been to the achievement outcomes of our students — in particular their reading achievements.

## General comments

- The power and influence on state schooling due to this initiative cannot be overestimated. It has allowed schools with limited budgets to approach school identified areas for improvement with confidence.
- I4S funding enables schools to focus on specific areas with expected outcomes.
- I4S Funding has enabled our school to invest in initiatives that would not have been possible without these funds and this has given us amazing results that would not have been achievable without this large investment of money. For schools to have the ability to make decisions at a local level is pivotal to the success of this initiative.
- This has been a great initiative that has benefits for the whole school community.
- I4S has provided our school with a far greater ability to target and achieve individual student and school improvement.
- I4S funding has proved very successful in helping to deliver high quality outcomes in particular in the areas of staff development, purchasing resources and student results.
- I am very happy with the way it works now.

## Suggestions for improvement

### *Certainty and continuity*

- Certainty of continuation of the funding. Additional funds linked to further teacher capability development.
- We really need for this funding to continue as the School Grant cannot sustain or support an improvement in student learning progress that the injection of I4S funding achieves.
- Continuation to ensure consistency and certainty in terms of staffing and support for programs/initiatives.
- Keep giving schools advice re its longer-term viability. We need certainty to plan and implement improvement agendas. This funding is critical in making it happen.
- Certainty of funding that will allow permanent positions to be advertised.
- It would be great if the planning associated with I4S could span more than 1 year. Long term planning and actions are vital to ensuring continued student learning outcomes. It also ensures previous work doesn't simply get pushed aside when a new initiative or leader enters the setting.
- Ensuring enough lead in time regarding the budget allocation to adequately collect staff and community information, align with strategic plans and write agreement.
- Consistent application of the initiative for forward planning (5+ years).
- Continuation of the initiative and funding surety — schools need funding assurance to effectively plan and cater for school and student improvement in their School Plans as long term (2–3 year) priorities contained within these will be dependent upon the availability of this resource.
- I believe the improvement of I4S sits with individual schools and the actual use of the funds in direct assessment to learning outcomes. The funding "must" remain a school-based decision with obvious accountabilities attached and transparency. If the funding is too heavily dominated by external factors outlining what it can and can't be used for — I believe it will lose its real purpose and function.

### *Transparency and clarity; guidance and support*

- Several changes are critically necessary: ...
  - Prescribe the initiatives which can be funded from I4S and exclude structural management positions, facilities provision, etc.
- This funding should be used to improve teaching and learning for students. Not to employ people in promotional positions.
- Earlier advice on amount of funding to enable sufficient planning time.
- Knowing the availability of funding during Term 4 (year before implementation) as this is our critical planning phase.
- Each year, if there are changes to its intentions, that these be publicised early so that planning can occur.
- Our school is an ageing school with ICT infrastructure needs. We have been told by DET that our I4S money is to be used to maintain this infrastructure. This negates the benefits of the funding for improving student outcomes and DET should provide ICT infrastructure upgrades for older, low SES schools. Otherwise the gap between schools in high SES and low SES demographics will only widen.

*Allocation formula*

- I have concerns that lower socio-economic schools are not able to achieve the same growth as other schools, on average, as the current funding level does not allow them to implement all the programs they need. Needs based funding increases are still required for low ICSEA schools (below 950).
- Several changes are critically necessary:
  - Changing the per capita enrolment base to a graduated/stepped base.
  - Providing a quantum of base funds to allow significant strategies to be implemented.
  - Placing a cap on the funding to large schools so that large high schools do not receive the excessive amounts of \$3/4 million.

*Integration versus stand-alone approach*

- I4S is integrated in sitting parallel to other initiatives as a key development strategy of the whole school improvement agenda.
- I would be interested in the exploration of one-line budgeting, but that is not specific to I4S.
- Allow principals to integrate the outcomes and expenditure into the overall Annual Improvement Plan and not remain a stand-alone and separate document/plan
- The I4S initiative is a welcome support to our school programs and supports all children in our school. Extra funding would always be welcome. However we have met our budget expectations through thorough planning for student outcomes.
- The I4S should be wholly my specific improvement agenda.

# Auditor-General reports to parliament

## Reports tabled in 2017–18

Number	Title	Date tabled in Legislative Assembly
1.	Follow-up of Report 15: 2013–14 Environmental regulation of the resources and waste industries	September 2017
2.	Managing the mental health of Queensland Police employees	October 2017
3.	Rail and ports: 2016–17 results of financial audits	December 2017
4.	Integrated transport planning	December 2017
5.	Water: 2016–17 results of financial audits	December 2017
6.	Fraud risk management	February 2018
7.	Health: 2016–17 results of financial audits	February 2018
8.	Confidentiality and disclosure of government contracts	February 2018
9.	Energy: 2016–17 results of financial audits	February 2018
10.	Finalising unpaid fines	February 2018
11.	Queensland state government: 2016–17 results of financial audits	February 2018
12.	Investing for Success	March 2018

## Contact the Queensland Audit Office

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