

Queensland Independent Education Union

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Independent or Public? Opt for what is best for the child.

Friday 18th January 2002 Brisbane, Qld:

Parents should not take a simplistic view of recent research which indicates independent school students score higher tertiary entrance marks than public school students, the Queensland Independent Education Union (QIEU) says.

The ACER report, "Tertiary Entrance Performance: The Role of Student Background and School Factors", released yesterday, reported that on average, independent schools outperformed state schools in tertiary entrance scores.

Terry Burke, QIEU secretary general warned the federal government against taking the easy option and pointing parents to independent schools on the basis of this survey.

"It would be naïve for parents to take a simplistic view of this research and opt, without much consideration, for an independent school," Mr Burke said.

"The key question for parents is what is right for their child.

"The right school for any child is the school which develops the child's potential in a safe and caring environment."

The survey also highlighted literacy and numeracy levels in Year 9 and the socio-economic status of families as predictors to tertiary success.

Mr Burke said this was an issue to be addressed with schools in less affluent areas and those with students requiring learning support receiving enhanced resource levels.

"Students in need require high levels of resource to realise their full potential.

"The real issue highlighted by this survey is the critical need to support all schools with appropriate resources as they try to provide a high quality of education to their students."

The report comes at a crucial time as school-leavers applying for tertiary entrance scramble for places in courses where OP cut-off levels have dropped this year, demanding a higher OP than last year.

Some education degree OP cut-offs in Brisbane-based universities have dropped by up to two places.

Mr Burke said the more demanding tertiary entrance level for education courses and the increase in school-leavers applying for teaching degrees was a pleasing development as it reflected a greater demand for entry into teaching.

“Government initiatives for Smart State and international competitiveness will come to very little without outstanding teachers in our schools.

“With a rapidly ageing teaching workplace it is essential to attract greater numbers of high quality students into pre-service education courses.”

For further comment, contact:

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The QIEU is the organising Union for nearly 11 000 staff in the non-government education sector, including teachers, school officers, ELICOS teachers, principals, kindergarten and preschool teachers and assistants, business college teachers and instructors, services staff, associate members (retired members and undergraduate students).

The QIEU has reported a 53 per cent growth in membership over the past seven years, with a consistent member increase of up to seven per cent each year.