

Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework

Queensland. Department of Education and the Arts, 2005

Overview of the document

17 page document outlining a new curriculum, assessment and reporting framework for P-10, and setting out seven actions to be taken to put the scheme into effect.

Keywords

P-10; assessment; reporting; essential learnings; standards; key learning areas.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND THE ARTS

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE QUEENSLAND CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK?

WHY THE NEW FRAMEWORK?

BUILDING ON CURRENT REFORMS

Education and Training Reforms for the Future

Schools Reporting

Queensland Certificate of Education

Smarter Learning: Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework

DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK

Curriculum

Assessment

Reporting

Making it happen

THE WAY FORWARD

A step-by-step approach to change

When will changes happen in schools?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX

Summary of Contents

INTRODUCTION

- Notes that the QCAR Framework “is a key component of Stage 2 of the Smart State Strategy announced in April 2005” (p. 1).
- Argues that it will “set standards and help parents understand what their children know and can do, and how well they can do it” (p. 1).
- Argues that “It will: define the essential learnings to be taught from the Preparatory Year to Year 10 (P–10), support teachers’ everyday assessment practices, introduce statewide assessments in the middle years, and provide easy-to-read reports for parents.” (p. 1)

WHAT IS THE QUEENSLAND CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK?

- States that the framework will:
 - make clear statements about the essential learnings that must be taught in Queensland schools;
 - provide a common frame of reference and a shared language for communicating student achievement;
 - equip teachers with high-quality assessment tools for collecting evidence of student achievement;
 - promote teachers' professional learning, focused on good assessment practices and judging the quality of student achievement against statewide standards;
 - introduce statewide assessment of student learning in Years 4, 6 and 9; and
 - provide more meaningful reports of student achievement. (p. 2)
- Argues that there will be more cohesive learning programs and greater consistency across classrooms and greater continuity across year levels in what is taught and how it is assessed and reported.
- Proposes that the framework will support teachers and teaching that is tailored to meet the unique needs of students.
- States that the framework "presents a way of achieving more commonality in what is taught while supporting diversity in how it is taught...takes into account the distinctive needs of students and school communities across Queensland". (p. 2)

WHY THE NEW FRAMEWORK?

- Notes that concerns have been raised about "the amount of material required to be covered in the early and middle years curriculum" and "a lack of clarity around what must be taught across schools and what standards of student achievement are expected". (p. 3)
- States that "The framework will focus the P-10 curriculum on essential learnings and the measurement of student achievement against agreed standards." (p. 3)

BUILDING ON CURRENT REFORMS

- Notes that the QCAR builds on several initiatives implemented across all schools in recent years, including:
 - Education and Training Reforms for the Future, through which the Government has taken action to: provide a universally available non-compulsory Preparatory Year from 2007; "improve engagement and achievement in the middle years of learning"; and establish new "learning or earning" laws. (p. 3)
 - Schools Reporting, changes which include: a student report at least twice a year; parent-teacher meetings each semester; reports for Year 3, 5 and 7 literacy and numeracy tests; and yearly publishing of outcomes by schools.
 - Queensland Certificate of Education which will replace the Senior Certificate in 2008.
 - Smarter Learning: Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework, a new framework for P-10 which will "support successful transitions and ongoing progress in students' learning across the early, middle and senior years"; complement the government's reforms in senior schooling; and build on "earlier changes to schools reporting by ensuring that reporting of student achievement is reliable and comparable across schools". (p. 3)

DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK

Curriculum:

- States that “Curriculum refers to everything a school does to support student learning including what is taught, and the knowledge and skills acquired by students. Across Queensland, each school develops its own curriculum plan.” (p. 5)
- Outlines the following actions:
 - Action 1: “All Queensland school students learning the essentials.” (p. 5)
 - Notes that the new framework will “define what is essential for all students in Years P-10 to have the opportunity to learn.” (p. 5)
 - States that the essential learnings will encompass knowledge, skills and attributes that are: specific to content areas such as English, maths and science; required for complex, real-life challenges; and needed for good communication and ongoing learning. (p. 5)
 - States that “All schools will build their curriculum around the essential learnings” while “a school’s learning program will continue to reflect the values of its community”. (p. 5)
 - States that “Queensland’s eight KLA syllabuses will be the primary information source for the essential learnings related to specific content areas.” (p. 6)
 - Action 2: “Setting new standards to measure student achievement.” (p. 6)
 - Notes that within the QCAR Framework, “standards will provide the unifying device for connecting the essential learnings to assessment and reporting practices.” (p. 6)
 - States that “standards will mean a common reference point, and a shared language for describing what is expected of students [= progress] and the quality of student achievement at key points along the P-10 learning continuum.” (p. 6)
 - Notes that “Standards are descriptors of student achievement used to monitor growth in student learning [= progress] and provide information about the quality of student achievement.” (p. 6)

Assessment:

- States that “Assessment refers to the collection of information about student achievement.” (p. 7)
- Notes that everyday classroom assessment provides “authentic and valid feedback for ongoing improvement in teaching and student learning” and that “statewide point-in-time assessment provides reliable and comparable information about student achievement across schools.” (p. 7)
- Outlines the following actions:
 - Action 3: “Supporting teachers’ everyday assessment practices.” (p. 7)
 - Notes that “A central assessment bank will be a valuable resource to support teachers in their everyday assessment practices.” (p. 7)
 - Notes that “An assessment bank is a collection of high-quality assessment tools that are standards-referenced against the essential learnings that teachers can access as needed.” (p. 7)
 - States that “The assessment bank will complement school-based assessment practices currently used in Queensland schools.” (p. 7)
 - Provides some details about the tools in the bank (marking guides, samples of student work etc.) and how they may be used.

- Action 4: “Statewide assessment in Years 4, 6 and 9.” (p. 8)
 - Notes that “With rigorous comparable assessment, student achievements of a similar standard are recognised as equivalent, irrespective of the school attended.” Notes that because of this there is: comparable results assigned to student achievement across schools; increased confidence in the reliability of reported results; and more information about whether a student’s progress is above, below or on par with expectations. (p. 8)
 - States that “Student achievement on the new point-in-time assessment can be compared with their achievement in ongoing school-based assessment, and statewide tests of numeracy and literacy which occur in Years 3, 5 and 7.” (p. 8)
 - Notes that the new statewide assessment will “focus on English, mathematics and science. In addition to these core areas of assessment, one other area of the essential learnings will be covered at each assessment point.” (p. 8)
 - Notes that a quality assurance process will be used for collection of evidence and reporting of teacher judgments of student achievement.
- Discusses the assessment tasks and notes that:
 - QCAR will develop the assessment tasks.
 - They will be completed “under common conditions”. (p. 9)
 - They will “avoid the flavour of point-in-time tests”. (p. 9)
 - State schools must use the common statewide assessment tasks; non-state schools may use locally devised tasks as monitored by the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA).
- Provides some notes on strategies to be used to maximise consistency of teacher judgments.

Reporting:

- States that “Reporting is about communicating information on the results of assessment of student achievement to a range of audiences in a range of styles for a range of purposes. What is reported and how it is reported vary according to the audience.” (p. 10)
- Outlines the following action:
 - Action 5: “Meaningful reports of student achievement” (p. 10)
 - Notes that “Reports provide a summary of student progress and achievement at the end of each semester or unit of work” and that they “complement feedback received during the learning experience”. (p. 10)
 - Notes that parents want “reliable, regular and easy-to-read reports” and information on “whether their child is achieving above, below, or on par with expectations”. (p. 10)
 - Notes that a common reporting framework is to be introduced to enhance the reports issued twice yearly and identify the elements that need to be included.
 - Notes that the reports will include a common 5-point results scale for describing student achievement across all areas of learning from Prep to Year 10, though the scale to be used is yet to be decided.
 - Notes that student results on the statewide assessment conducted in Years 4, 6 and 9 will be included in the twice-yearly reports using the 5-point results scale.

- Notes that parents of students in Years 3, 5 and 7 will continue to receive a report from the QSA (results from statewide tests in literacy and numeracy) and that the QSA will make public summary reports on student achievement in Years 4, 6 and 9.

Making it happen

- Outlines the following actions:
 - Action 6: “Managing the project.” (p. 12)
 - Notes that a QCAR Reporting Board will oversee the initiative and provides details of its membership.
 - Notes that the QSA will develop each of the elements of the framework and that the Governing Body of the QSA will be the key consultative body.
 - Action 7: “Evaluating outcomes.” (p. 13)
 - States that “An evaluation strategy will be in place from the start.” (p. 13)

THE WAY FORWARD

- Notes that there will be a step-by-step approach to change and argues that a gradual approach is needed.
- Advises that in terms of when change will happen in schools, trials will start as early as 2006 and all elements will be ready for use by 2008.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX

- Provides a table summarizing assessment and reporting arrangements for Queensland schools with the introduction of the QCAR Framework.