

**Evaluation of the 2001  
Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7  
Testing Program**

**Final Report**



QUEENSLAND  
SCHOOL  
CURRICULUM  
COUNCIL

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Any inquiries should be addressed to:

Queensland School Curriculum Council  
PO Box 317  
Brisbane Albert Street, Q 4002

Telephone: (07) 3237 0794  
Facsimile: (07) 3237 1285  
Email: [inquiries@qscq.qld.edu.au](mailto:inquiries@qscq.qld.edu.au)  
Website: [www.qscq.qld.edu.au](http://www.qscq.qld.edu.au)

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## Executive summary and conclusions

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program in aspects of literacy and numeracy (hereafter called the 2001 Testing Program or Program).

The evaluation focuses on three periods of the 2001 Testing Program:

- February 2001, when the trial on-line 2001 Teacher Advisory Panel (TAP) provided feedback on draft 2001 test items. Officers of the Council interviewed members of the TAP and officers responsible for the development of test items and analysed advice provided.
- August 2001, when the tests were administered in schools. At this time, an evaluation survey was distributed to schools with the test materials, just prior to the test dates.
- November 2001, when the student report was distributed to parents/caregivers by schools. A brief evaluation survey was sent to schools and another was sent home with each student's report to parents/caregivers of a stratified random sample of schools.

The evaluation asked six major questions. A summary of the responses to these questions, together with the conclusions based on the findings, appears below.

### Focus Question 1

#### How appropriate and effective was the trial of the 2001 on-line Teacher Advisory Panel?

In response to Focus Question 1, the evaluation found the following:

- The scope and purposes of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel (called also Panel or TAP) adopted by the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council were supported by Panellists, with unanimous support being given to the continuation of the Panel.
- Suggestions made to improve the scope and purposes of the TAP included the following: an expansion of the size and composition of the Panel; making the purposes of the TAP more explicit in terms of the part it plays in item development; and having Panel members advise from more than one perspective.
- The TAP processes utilised by the Office for the trial were considered by the Panellists to be appropriate and supportive. The guidelines and instructions were clear, the teleconference was of assistance, the presentation of the stimulus materials was appropriate and the on-line proforma was easy to use.
- Suggestions made to improve Panel processes included the following: adding to the guidelines information about health and safety in respect of computer use and also information about the reasons for having linking items across two year levels; improving the quality of copies of the materials or perhaps sending materials to Panellists in a more advanced state; and enlarging the comments box in the on-line proforma so that all text would be visible when printed.
- Most feedback from Panellists related to the inclusivity and appropriateness of the language used in draft items.
- A little under one half of the comments received from the panel impacted positively on the test development process. Other comments made were either not relevant to the Panel brief (the brief was cultural appropriateness) or were not able to be acted upon for various

reasons. Other comments were related to items that had already been deleted in the meantime by Office in-house Panels.

#### Conclusion 1

The trial on-line Teacher Advisory Panel was appropriate and effective and warrants continuation and further development, taking into consideration the suggestions of trial TAP members in respect of improving the scope and purposes of the Panel and Panel processes.

#### Conclusion 2

Future Teacher Advisory Panels should be made more aware of the fact that, for various reasons, not all advice will be able to be accepted. Panels should also be made more aware of the multiple advisory processes used in item development and of the existence of many competing (sometimes conflicting) views including those within the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel itself.

#### Focus Question 2

**Overall, how do schools rate 2001 pre-test information and 2001 Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials?**

The pre-test material on which opinions were canvassed were the wall chart, the *2001 Test Preparation Handbook*, the parent/caregiver brochure and the practice materials for Years 3, 5 and 7.

The test materials on which opinions were canvassed were the 2001 Years 3, 5 and 7 tests in aspects of numeracy and literacy and the test administration handbooks.

In response to Focus Question 2, the evaluation found the following:

- Overall, the majority of schools rated the pre-test materials as 'good' or 'very good' with percentages varying from 54 per cent (wall chart) to 79 per cent (*2001 Test Preparation Handbook*). A large minority (32 per cent of schools) either didn't know or didn't provide an opinion on the wall chart. This may indicate lack of exposure to, or utility of, the wall chart.
- A large percentage of parents/caregivers (35 per cent of parents/caregivers) didn't recall receiving the parent/caregiver brochure before the administration of the tests, however, most (86%) of those parents/caregivers who indicated receiving it felt that it was helpful and that it should be continued. It is possible that the method of distribution (schools were requested to send it home with the student) may have affected the brochure's distribution. Some respondents suggested that it should be sent closer to the distribution of, or with, the student report while others suggested alternative methods of distribution e.g. mailing.
- All tests apart from the Year 3 Numeracy Test were rated either 'good' or 'very good' by a majority (54% to 62%) of schools. The *Test Preparation Handbook* was rated in this manner by most respondents (74%). Overall, the Year 3 Tests were rated less favourably than the Year 5 and 7 Tests.

- Schools were not invited directly to comment on their ratings, but comments received in an open-ended 'other feedback' question at the end of the survey revealed various issues of concern from small numbers of schools. The most frequently mentioned issues of concern in relation to the pre-test and test materials included the following: the relatively low level of difficulty of the practice materials as compared to the test materials (it was felt the practice materials should match the difficulty of the actual test materials), the perceived inadequacy of specific questions and the writing task, the poor quality of the pencils supplied, general criticism of the test questions (but no reference to specific questions) and concerns about the participation of Year 3 students.

#### Conclusion 3

In general, schools rated 2001 pre-test and test materials well. In all but one set of material (the Year 3 Aspects of Numeracy Test), the materials received either a 'good' or 'very good' response from a majority of schools and the parent/caregiver brochure was viewed similarly by most parent/caregivers who had seen it.

#### Conclusion 4

Attention is warranted in respect of the utility of the wall chart as a vehicle for communicating the Testing Program, the content, timing and method of distribution of the parent/brochure and the easy difficulty level of the practice material; and in relation to the test materials, reported issues of concern are worthy of investigation, particularly the concerns associated with the 2001 writing task and the need for Year 3 students to take the tests.

#### Focus Question 3

**What are school views on the major changes to pre-test and test materials since the 2000 Testing Program?**

The three major changes on which opinions were canvassed were:

**Change 1:** The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered together in one session.

**Change 2:** The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered before the reading and viewing items.

**Change 3:** The *2001 Test Preparation Handbook* (formerly known as the Information for Schools booklet) was reorganised around activities to be undertaken by the principal or principal and teachers.

In response to Focus Question 3, the evaluation found the following:

- Most schools (over 85 per cent) supported the three major changes to the test materials. Between 1 per cent and 7 per cent did not support the changes while another minority didn't give an opinion.
- A small number of schools gave reasons for supporting or not supporting **Change 1**. These included the following:
  - o *Supported:* The session was not too long or the right amount of time; all activities were done at once; and it was a better organisation of activities.
  - o *Not supported:* The session was too long; children need a break; another organisation of activities was preferred; there were timetabling difficulties in multi-age situations; and it was stressful for children.

- A small number of schools gave reasons for supporting or not supporting **Change 2**. These included the following:
  - o *Supported*: Writing should be done first and it was a better organisation of activities.
  - o *Not supported*: Writing should be done last or reading and viewing done first; children tired during reading; another organisation of activities was preferred; and it was stressful for children.
- A small number of schools gave reasons for supporting or not supporting **Change 3**. These included the following:
  - o *Supported*: The Handbook was easier to use; it clarified roles and responsibilities and it provided good information.
  - o *Not supported*: The Handbook was too wordy and there were timetabling difficulties with implementing instructions.
- School views on ways in which the *Test Preparation Handbook* might be further improved included the following: make the Handbook less wordy, simpler and clearer; assist with locating Handbook content; and change aspects of various sections of the Handbook.

#### Conclusion 5

The three major changes to the test materials warrant retention despite the lack of support by a small minority of schools. An exploration of the issues raised by this minority is worthy of investigation as are the suggestions for improving the *Test Preparation Handbook*.

#### Focus Question 4

##### What do schools think about the administration times of the tests?

In response to Focus Question 4, the evaluation found the following:

- The overwhelming majority of schools (80% to 84%) indicated support for the current time allocations in all tests. In respect of the minority of schools that indicated insufficient time, this was more frequently mentioned for literacy tests than numeracy tests. The Year 3 tests were more frequently mentioned than their respective tests in Years 5 and 7.
- There was no agreement between those schools that nominated alternative time allocations for the tests.

#### Conclusion 6

In general, most schools felt that the current time allocations were appropriate. These allocations warrant continuation although the time allocated for the literacy and the Year 3 tests could be further explored.

#### Focus Question 5

##### How do school and parents/caregivers rate the 2001 reports?

In response to Focus Question 5, the evaluation found the following:

- Both parent/caregivers rated the student report positively with 68 per cent of parents/caregivers and 80 per cent of schools giving a rating of either 'good' or 'very good'. Most parents/caregivers (71%) also felt that the amount of information was 'about right' and most (91%) considered that it had been of either of 'some' or 'great' help in

understanding their child's performance. Ninety-two per cent felt similarly about the letter in the front of the report.

- Of the various aspects of the student report listed in the survey (letter, graphs, item descriptions, spelling words, writing standards and layout), most schools and parents/caregivers (between 84% and 91%) felt that they should be kept for inclusion in next year's report. A minority wanted changes and additions to the student report.
- Of the various aspects of other reports listed in the surveys (these being class and school report format and footnotes and *Test Reporting Handbook* report information, report activities, marking keys, curriculum links and writing task information), most schools (between 87% and 90%) felt that they should be kept. A minority wanted changes and additions to these reports.
- Changes and additions suggested by respondents to the student, class and school reports and *Test Reporting Handbook* were very varied and sometimes implied opposing views. Although not subject to generalisation, these suggestions have been categorised and included in the evaluation report.
- Most schools preferred the issuing of reports in print form over the other alternatives listed (secure Internet, floppy disk and other including CD-ROM). Seventy-seven per cent gave 'print' their first preference.

#### Conclusion 7

Overall, the student, class and school reports and the *Test Reporting Handbook* rated well and should be continued in their present form, but the various suggested changes and additions are worthy of consideration when improvements are being made, particularly those associated with additional information requests and presentation format.

#### Conclusion 8

The distribution of printed reports should continue but school opinions on the method of distribution of any report enhancements should be canvassed in future evaluations.

#### Focus Question 6

##### How do schools plan to use the data included in the 2001 reports?

In response to Focus Question 6, the evaluation found the following:

- Most schools planned to use the data included in student, class and school reports. A small minority (3%) indicated that they didn't plan to use the reports at all.
- The most frequently noted planned use for the reports was assisting in the diagnosis of individual student needs (80% of schools), while assisting teacher accountability was the least frequently ticked (by 51% of schools).
- Unsolicited comments from some schools and parents/caregivers indicated that the utility of the reports is reduced because of the time of year the reports become available – at the end of the school year.

#### Conclusion 9

Schools' planned use of the reports indicates high potential utility, but this is reduced by the time of year in which the reports become available, particularly Year 7 reports.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Background

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program in aspects of literacy and numeracy (hereafter called the 2001 Testing Program or Program).

The 2001 Testing Program comprised a census Year 3 Test, a census Year 5 Test and a census Year 7 Test in aspects of:

- Literacy (*Reading and Viewing, Spelling and Writing*)
- Numeracy (*Number, Measurement and Data, and Space*).

The Program was administered in all state and most non-state Queensland primary schools on 21 and 22 August 2001. In some schools some test administrations occurred after these two dates. Variations were sometimes required to cater for absences and other circumstances.

## 1.2. Evaluation focus

The overall purposes of the evaluation were to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the 2001 Testing Program.

In fulfilling these purposes, the evaluation asked the following focus questions:

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>How appropriate and effective was the 2001 trial of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel?</b></li><li>2. <b>Overall, how do schools rate 2001 pre-test information and 2001 Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials?</b></li><li>3. <b>What are school views on major changes to pre-test and test materials since the 2000 Testing Program?</b></li><li>4. <b>What do schools think about the administration times of the tests?</b></li><li>5. <b>How do school and parent/caregivers rate the 2001 reports?</b></li><li>6. <b>How do schools plan to use the data included in the 2001 reports?</b></li></ol> |
|--|

## 1.3. Evaluation approach

The main focus of the evaluation was to elicit responses from a school and parent/caregiver perspective on the testing materials. The evaluation focuses on three periods of the 2001 Testing Program:

- February 2001, when the trial on-line 2001 Teacher Advisory Panel (TAP) provided feedback on draft 2001 test items. Officers of the Council interviewed available members of the TAP and officers responsible for the development of test items and analysed advice provided. This provided data for Focus Question 1.
- August 2001, when the tests were administered in schools. At this time, an evaluation survey was distributed to schools with the test materials, just prior to the test dates. This provided data for Focus Questions 2, 3 and 4.
- November 2001, when the student report was distributed to parents/caregivers by schools. A brief evaluation survey was sent to schools which provided data on Focus

Questions 5 and 6. Another survey was sent home with each student's report to parents/caregivers of a stratified random sample of 5 per cent of schools. This provided data for Focus Question 5 and part of Focus Question 2.

In respect of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel (evaluation Focus Question 1), twelve of the sixteen Panel members were interviewed regarding scope, purposes and processes of the Panel and Project Officers (Testing – Literacy, Testing – Numeracy, and Equity) were interviewed regarding the impact of Panel advice.

In respect of the three surveys, the response rates are presented in Display 1:

**Display 1: Survey Response Rates**

Survey	Number distributed	Number returned	Response rate
<b>School Survey</b> August 2001	1417 [all participating schools]	1250	88%
<b>School Survey 2</b> November 2001	1417 [all participating schools]	455	32%
<b>Parent/Caregiver Survey</b> November 2001	Stratified random sample of approx. 5% of schools (73 schools - 8494 students)	1192	14%

The above percentages should be regarded as approximate because:

- there is evidence that a small number of schools returned more than one survey. As it was not possible to determine which of these surveys represented the school view, all returned surveys were received in good faith and were included in the analysis. It is probable therefore that the response rates for the school surveys are slightly inflated
- it is not possible to know whether all schools sampled distributed the surveys to their parents/caregivers
- the response rate for the parent/caregiver survey is based on the numbers of students, not the number of parents/caregivers, which is unknown.

An analysis of the postcode origin of the surveys (the only background identifier used) indicates that there was a fair representation of respondents from across the State for all surveys. The very clear trends in the survey responses give confidence that these trends would probably be similar if more surveys had been returned.

The survey instruments are contained in Appendix 1.

#### **1.4. Evaluation reporting**

The remainder of the report devotes a section to the findings on each Focus Question.

In reporting survey data, please note that only the opinions of relevant respondents are counted in the analyses. For example, when reporting the opinions of schools on the Year 3 Test materials only those schools that reported administering a Year 3 test are counted. The findings therefore reflect an informed a view as possible.

The Executive Summary and Conclusions in the front of the report provides a succinct summary of the evaluation findings.

## 2 Appropriateness and effectiveness of the trial on-line TAP

### Focus Question 1

How appropriate and effective was the 2001 trial of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel (TAP)?

#### 2.1. Description of on-line Teacher Advisory Panel Trial

The on-line Teacher Advisory Panel was established on a trial basis for 2001 in order to enhance the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.

In respect of test item and task development, both the test contractor and the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council carry out in-house review panelling and other quality assurance processes. It was felt, however, that the addition of an on-line panel comprising in-school teachers would be a further improvement.

Late in 2000, school authorities were requested to nominate teachers who had current or recent experience teaching students in either Years 3, 5 and/or 7 and additionally had expertise with students who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, students from rural or remote areas and/or students for whom English is their second language. Informal requests were also made to personnel who played a coordinating role in these areas. This resulted in the formation of a sixteen-member panel.

Panel members were requested to advise on one test each (e.g. Year 3 Aspects of Literacy) and provide advice on the cultural appropriateness of draft test stimuli and items from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, rural and remote or English as a second language perspective. All materials were provided in monochrome, not colour. Advice was received from various locations in Queensland on 22 and 23 February 2001, utilising mainly on-line processes.

It should be noted that at this time, most but not all of the test items had been developed. While all available stimuli and items were distributed to the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel for advice, the Panel did not have the opportunity to advise on all items.

Prospective Panel members were requested to sign a Confidentiality Agreement form prior to the materials being viewed. *Panellist Tasks and Guidelines* and the test materials themselves were sent a few days prior to the 22 February. The materials for the aspects of literacy tests consisted of the stimulus materials and the test items. The aspects of numeracy materials consisted of the test items and the draft artwork. The test items were set out one per page with information regarding the year level, item coding, and links to syllabuses and benchmarks for each item.

A teleconference was held on the morning of 22 February during which Panel members provided feedback on any concerns they had on using an on-line proforma. Following the Panel's provision of on-line feedback on 22 and 23 February, draft test materials were then returned to the Office.

The data generated from this feedback were then collated and reported to the Senior Project Officer (Quality Assurance), Project Officer (Testing – Literacy), Project Officer (Testing – Numeracy) and Project Officers (Equity). Where feasible, this advice was integrated into the draft test items prior to their trial.

In evaluating the appropriateness and effectiveness of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel, three aspects were focused on:

- scope and purposes of the Panel
- processes of the Panel
- impact of advice on item development and selection for trial.

## **2.2. Scope and purposes of the trial on-line Teacher Advisory Panel**

Evaluation interviews with Panel members took place between 30 March 2001 and 6 April 2001, approximately five to six weeks after the receipt of feedback. Twelve of the panel members were interviewed.

All respondents supported the concept of teachers providing feedback on test items with many explicitly expressing appreciation for the opportunity to be involved in the process. They perceived that it contributed to improved communication between schools and the Office of the Council, and felt that the Council appeared sincere in its efforts to apply Panel members' points of view.

There were a number of suggestions for improvement, including:

- the expansion of Panel membership in a variety of ways, including the involvement of literacy personnel from Education Queensland Central Office, principals, and teachers from more schools including more from remote locations
- the timing of Panel advice, namely that the Panel process could occur earlier, and a second round of consultation might be considered.

A number of respondents found the assignment of perspectives problematic. Comments fell into two broad categories:

- the assignment of perspectives could be more fine-grained. The responses revealed a reluctance to respond from perspectives where the panellist felt insufficiently authoritative, for example, to comment from an Aboriginal perspective without the opportunity to consult Elders or members of specific communities.
- the intersections of the various perspectives needs to be accounted for. Some respondents indicated that they had difficulty separating the perspectives arguing that often it was a combination of factors that impacted on students' experiences (i.e. Indigenous issues, remoteness and language).

## **2.3. Trial on-line Teacher Advisory Panel processes**

The interviews with Panel members explored a number of issues with the following results:

- Most respondents stated that the Office support was appropriate, with many stating that the processes adopted assisted in clarifying the Teacher Advisory Panel tasks.
- The majority of respondents stated that the guidelines and instructions provided were appropriate with a number describing the information as 'clear'.
- Most respondents indicated that that three days between receipt of materials and on-line feedback was sufficient with some respondents suggesting that more time (approximately a week) would be ideal.
- Most respondents indicated that the teleconference on the morning of on-line feedback served its purpose in clarifying outstanding issues, canvassing fresh matters and permitting panel members to hear and consider other panellists' points of view. There were two complaints about technical difficulties with the teleconference itself and one respondent indicated that participation in the teleconference was unnecessary.
- The coding, format and presentation of the stimulus materials and items were found to be appropriate and useful. In particular, the coding system used in association with each

test item was appreciated because it readily assisted panel members to cross-check with a relevant syllabus if desired.

- It was indicated that the quality of the copies of the materials could be improved and that it would be desirable to see the items in a more advanced draft state, or at least have a draft format that allowed explanations of any further planned modifications of the item.
- Most respondents indicated that the time allocation (two days) was appropriate or, in some cases, more than what was required for the task. Any difficulties associated with timing were generally as a result of technical problems.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents found the on-line proforma appropriate and easy to use. Suggestions for improvement included a larger box for comments for panellists' own reference and printing purposes and the inclusion of an 'overall comments' section for both the stimulus item and the questions.
- Some respondents advocated for the option of working in small groups rather than individually.

#### **2.4. Impact of Teacher Advisory Panel advice on item development**

Most feedback from the Teacher Advisory Panel was related to the inclusivity and appropriateness of the language used in draft items, specifically for students for whom English is their second or subsequent language. Issues included:

- instructional design of items needing to ensure final instructions were clear and unambiguous, and colloquialisms and inconsistencies in phrasing were removed;
- layout of items needing to be more appealing;
- examples needing to be within the likely range of experience of the intended student population.

In many cases, the feedback from Panellists served to confirm the in-house professional judgment. Other feedback was related to aspects not connected with cultural appropriateness. Some comments focused on curriculum while others were about the perceived difficulty of an item.

In making judgments on the impact of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel advice, it is important to note that the advice of the Panel was sought while many of the test items were in draft format. The advice of the Teacher Advisory Panel was sought therefore at a reasonably early stage in the item development process.

As they examined the compiled and categorised comments received from the Teacher Advisory Panel, the Project Officer (Testing – Literacy) and Project Officer (Testing – Numeracy) noted on each comment the action required. These notes allow some judgments to be made on the impacts of the Panel advice. The comments were able to be categorised into three categories of impacts, as indicated in Display 2.

**Display 2: Summary of impact of TAP advice**

Type of Impact	Comments on Literacy material			Comments on Numeracy material		
	Year 3 F Col %	Year 5 F Col %	Year 7 F Col %	Year 3 F Col %	Year 5 F Col %	Year 7 F Col %
<b>Comment confirmed a change already made or prompted a change to be made.</b>	42 46%	27 47%	4 24%	30 40%	42 49%	38 59%
<b>Comment either was not relevant to cultural appropriateness or suggested a change not able to be made.</b>	31 34%	17 29%	2 12%	33 45%	38 44%	19 29%
<b>Comment was related to an item already deleted by Office in-house panels (Comments were redundant and therefore had no impact).</b>	19 21%	14 24%	11 65%	11 15%	6 7%	8 12%
<b>Total</b>	92 100%	58 100%	17 100%	74 100%	86 100%	65 100%

As can be seen from Display 2, a little under one half of the comments impacted positively on the test development process.

Of the remaining comments, some were not related to the Teacher Advisory Panel brief (cultural appropriateness) or for various reasons were not able to be accommodated. Still other comments became redundant as in-house panels had deleted these items during the time between the distribution of material to Panel members and the receipt of their comments. This latter aspect points to the need to consider carefully the timing the feedback period. Ideally, the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel should operate a suitable period after the Office in-house panels have completed their deliberations and changes have been made to test items based on their feedback.

When considering the issue of 'redundant' comments, it can also be observed from Display 2 that there were fewer 'numeracy' comments than 'literacy' comments that were made redundant due to item deletion by Office in-house panels. The major reason for this is that at the time of the Panel, the numeracy items were at a more advanced stage of development than the literacy items. Indeed, some literacy items had not been through Office in-house panels prior to distribution to the Teacher Advisory Panel. Consequently, fewer numeracy items than literacy items were required to be deleted by Office in-house panels. Ideally, it would have been better to have the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel provide advice at a later date, but this was not possible given the very tight test development timeline.

In relation to those Teacher Advisory Panel comments that were noted but not acted upon, some major reasons were the following:

- Comments were associated with item difficulty, the validity of which was to be assessed empirically during the trialling process and/or the advice would have made the overall tests too easy. It was necessary to have sufficient items at all difficulty levels.
- For copyright reasons, some material could not be changed.
- Some comments would not be able to be applied or adapted meaningfully for Queensland students as a whole.
- There were technical reasons why some comments could not be acted upon.
- Conflicting advice was received across panels and within the Teacher Advisory Panel.

While Display 2 presents in quantitative form the various impacts of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel on the test item development process, interviews with members of the test development team revealed also a more qualitative impact. Interviewees indicated that the advice received from practitioners in the field had the effect of making the test development process more grounded in reality. Although not all comments were able to be acted upon, the receipt of advice from the Panel had the overall effect of 'stopping you in your tracks' and thinking twice before proceeding along a particular path. For this and other reasons, it was felt that the Teacher Advisory Panel should continue and be developed further, taking into account the findings of this evaluation.

## 2.5. Summary and conclusions regarding Focus Question 1

### **Focus Question 1**

**How appropriate and effective was the trial of the 2001 on-line Teacher Advisory Panel?**

In response to the Focus Question 1, the following conclusions can be made:

- The scope and purposes of the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel (called also Panel or TAP) adopted by the Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council were supported by Panellists, with unanimous support being given for the continuation of the Panel.
- Suggestions made to improve the scope and purposes of the TAP included the following: an expansion of the size and composition of the Panel; making the purposes of the TAP more explicit in terms of the part it plays in item development; and having Panel members advise on more than one perspective.
- The TAP processes utilised by the Office for the trial were considered by the Panellists to be appropriate and supportive. The guidelines and instructions were clear, the teleconference was of assistance, the presentation of the stimulus materials were appropriate and the on-line proforma was easy to use.
- Suggestions made to improve Panel processes included the following: adding to the guideline information about health and safety in respect of computer use and also information about the reasons for having linking items across two year levels; improving the quality of copies of the materials or perhaps sending materials to Panellists in a more advanced state; and enlarging the comments box in the on-line proforma so that all text would be visible when printed.
- Most feedback from Panellists related to the inclusivity and appropriateness of the language used in draft items.
- A little under one half of the comments received from the Panel impacted positively on the test development process. Other comments made were either not relevant to the Panel brief (cultural appropriateness) or was advice not able to be acted upon for various reasons. Other comments were related to items that had already been deleted in the meantime by Office in-house Panels.

### **Conclusion 1**

**The trial on-line Teacher Advisory Panel was appropriate and effective and warrants continuation and further development, taking into consideration the suggestions of trial TAP members in respect of improving the scope and purposes of the Panel and Panel processes.**

### **Conclusion 2**

**Future Teacher Advisory Panels should be made more aware of the fact that, for various reasons, not all advice will be able to be accepted. Panels should also be made more aware of the multiple advisory processes used in item development and of the existence of many competing (sometimes conflicting) views including those within the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel itself.**



### 3 Ratings of pre-test information and test materials

#### Focus Question 2

Overall, how do schools rate 2001 pre-test information and 2001 Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials?

#### 3.1. Description of pre-test information and test materials

Display 3 lists pre-test information provided to schools by the Queensland School Curriculum Council. The evaluation sought opinions on the four documents bolded in the display, considered to be the most important pre-test information provided to schools.

**Display 3: Pre-test information provided to schools**

Publication	Distribution date	Purpose
Memorandum to schools	October 2000	To inform schools of the dates for the administration of the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.
Memorandum to schools	February 2001	To confirm the dates for the administration of the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.
<b>Wall chart: 2001 Timeline</b>	June 2001	To inform schools of the overall purposes and key dates of the 2001 Testing Program.
Letters to schools regarding 2001 Equating Study	June 2001	Letters to all schools to inform them of their involvement in the 2001 Equating Study.
<b>2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Test Preparation Handbook</b>	August 2001	To provide information to assist schools in their preparation for the administration of the 2001 tests.
<b>2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Your children and the 2001 Testing Program (parent/caregiver brochure)</b>	August 2001	To provide test information to parents/caregivers of students participating in the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.
<b>Year 3 practice materials Year 5 practice materials Year 7 practice materials</b>	August 2001	To help students to understand and experience the types of responses required in the tests and to practise filling in the cover page.

Display 4 lists the test materials provided to schools. The evaluation sought opinions on the documents bolded in the display, the main body of test material for the 2001 Testing Program.

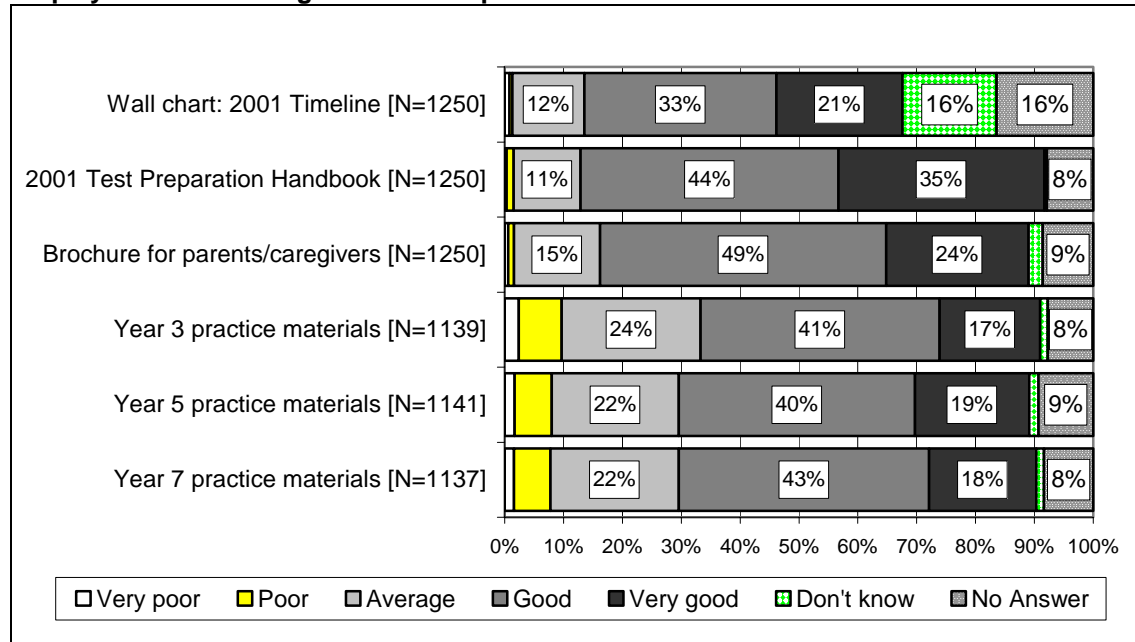
**Display 4: Test materials provided to schools participating in tests**

Publication	Distribution date	Purpose
<b>Literacy and Numeracy Tests and colour magazines of stimulus material for Years 3, 5 and 7</b>	August 2001	To assess the students' abilities in aspects of literacy and numeracy.
<b>Administration handbooks for the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program</b>	August 2001	To provide instructions for the teachers administering the tests.
2000 tests in aspects of literacy and aspects of numeracy and colour magazines of stimulus materials for students in Years 3, 5 and 7 participating in the 2001 Equating Study	August 2001	To enable the results of tests taken in 2001 to be placed on the Queensland common scale.
Administration handbooks for the 2000 tests in aspects of literacy and aspects of numeracy for teachers of students in Years 3, 5 and 7 participating in the 2001 Equating Study	August 2001	To enable the results of tests taken in 2001 to be placed on the Queensland common scale.

### 3.2. Ratings of 2001 pre-test information

At the time of administering the 2001 Testing Program (August 2001), schools were asked to rate the major pre-test materials provided through the Program. Display 5 summarises these ratings and shows that the provided pre-test information was regarded very highly by schools. Overall, the majority of schools rated the pre-test materials as 'good' or 'very good'. The parent/caregiver brochure and *2001 Test Preparation Handbook* rated particularly well in these categories (73% and 79% respectively) while the wall chart received the lowest rating (54%). It should be noted, however, that a large minority (32%) either didn't know about the wall chart or didn't provide an opinion on it in the survey.

**Display 5: School ratings of selected pre-test information**

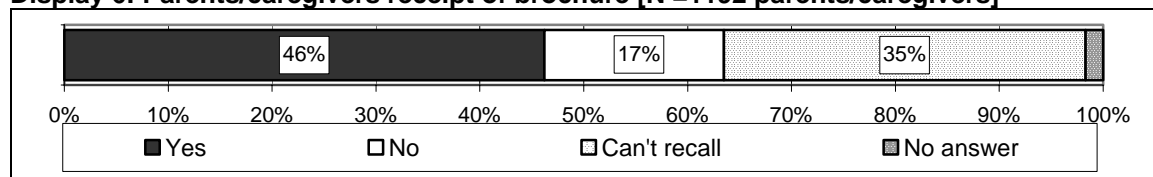


Because of space constraints on the questionnaire, schools were not invited directly to comment on their ratings, but in response to an open-ended 'other feedback' question at the end of the survey, there were a number of comments (29 total) received that indicated that the practice materials should contain questions of the same difficulty as the actual test items as they gave a false sense of security to some students. [The *2001 Test Preparation Handbook* states, 'The purpose of the practice session is to help students understand and experience the types of responses required in the tests.' For this reason the difficulty level is set so that most students should have no difficulty practising each item type.]

In November 2001, parents/caregivers were also asked to rate the parent/caregiver brochure that schools were requested to distribute prior to their child sitting the tests.

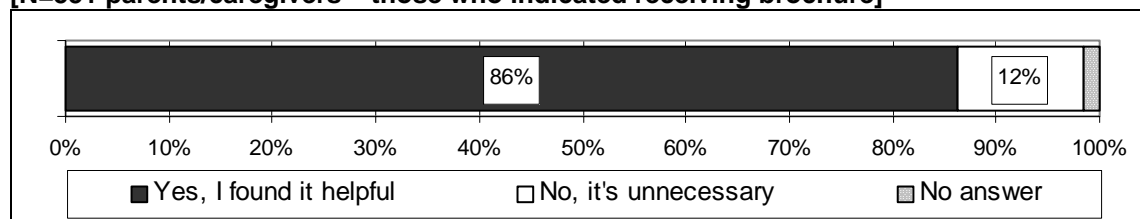
Parents/caregivers were first of all asked whether they had received the brochure. As can be seen from Display 6, less than one half of the schools reported having received the brochure and a majority responded either 'No' or 'Can't recall'.

**Display 6: Parents/caregivers receipt of brochure [N =1192 parents/caregivers]**



Parents/caregivers were then asked whether they would recommend that a parent/caregiver brochure continue to be provided to parents/caregivers of Years 3, 5 and 7 students. Display 7 shows the responses of those who indicated that they had received the 2001 brochure (and therefore were in a position to give an informed recommendation. It can be seen that most answered 'Yes, I found it helpful'.)

**Display 7: Parents/caregivers recommendation regarding continuation of brochure [N=551 parents/caregivers – those who indicated receiving brochure]**



In a final question about the brochure, parents were asked whether they wished to provide any other feedback. A summary of the responses received from the minority who choose to give feedback is presented in Display 8.

**Display 8: General feedback from parents/caregivers about the brochure [N=1192 parents/caregivers]**

Type of feedback	F	%
Positive comments e.g. Excellent, thank you; Ok; keeps parents informed; good, clear, uncomplicated; very helpful; thanks	26	2
Negative comments unnecessary, get rid of it – start again!; not relevant as explanatory letter comes with report	3	<1
Didn't receive one e.g. I would have found it helpful; did not receive this; can't recall; didn't get one	29	2
Send closer to or with report e.g. Send out closer to the time of report; send with report; sent long before reports – tend to file away and forget	6	<1
Make simpler or easier to understand e.g. more in plain English please; needs to be more clear/honest explanation; more concise...less detailed....	5	<1
Ensure it is received e.g. Make sure people get one; to be sent by mail...; follow-up to ensure information arrives home	4	<1
Suggested content e.g. results only a guide; keep to minimum; explanation of results and implications; include only notice of time/date etc.; be a little more elaborate and include as much information as possible; include test; they may perform differently in other situations; more information regarding differences between Qld and other States	8	<1

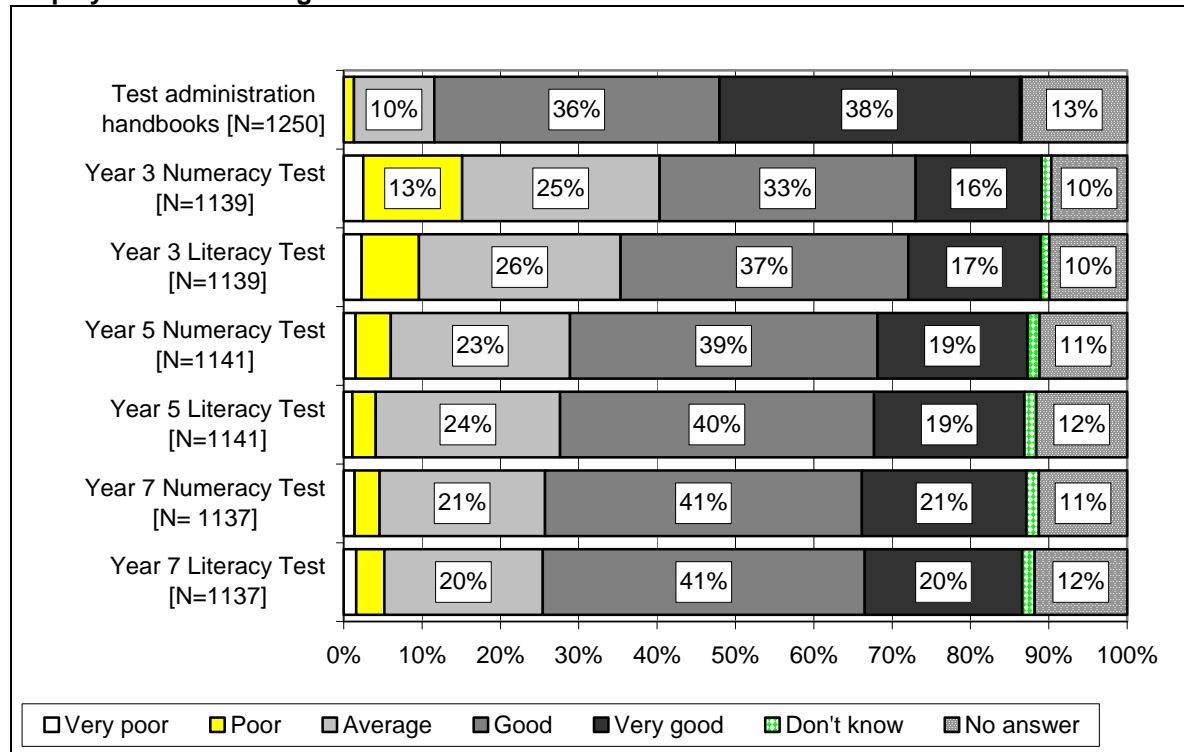
As can be seen, apart from the positive comments received, the issue regarding the non-receipt of the brochure was prominent. Noteworthy also was the wish to have steps taken to ensure delivery of the brochure and still others who felt that the brochure should be sent with the reports.

### 3.3. Ratings of Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials

Schools who participated in administering the respective Years 3, 5 and 7 tests were asked to rate the test materials. Display 9 summarises the responses. All test materials were

generally received positively by schools participating in the respective tests. The test administration handbooks were rated either 'good' or 'very good' by most respondents (74%) and the most frequent ratings of the tests themselves were 'average' and 'good'. Ratings tended to increase with the year level. All but the Year 3 Numeracy Test was rated either 'good' or 'very good' by a majority of respondents.

**Display 9: School ratings of 2001 Test materials**



While schools were not invited directly to comment on their ratings, in an open-ended 'other feedback' question at the end of the survey, many schools responded with one or more comments on the test materials. While these comments were very varied, upon analysis, some discernible overall issues were revealed. The most frequently mentioned of these issues were about:

- specific suggestions and/or responses to particular questions or aspects of the test (111 comments)
- the writing genre, the writing stimulus and task, and the time to engage with the writing task (83 comments)
- the poor quality of the pencils provided - they kept breaking (74 comments)
- general (rather than specific) criticism of the test questions e.g. ambiguous, unclear, difficult language, bad wording etc. (66 comments)
- concerns about Year 3 students undertaking the tests e.g. stress, developmentally inappropriate, unfamiliarity of multiple choice format etc. (65 comments)
- the use of link items across tests (42 comments)
- perceived difficulty of the tests with a number of references to Year 3 (42 comments)
- beliefs about the inappropriateness of the test for some groups of students, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the lack of catering for diversity (42 comments)
- the perceived mismatch of the test items with the curriculum (40 comments)
- the appropriateness and/or value of the test, test format and its relationship to classroom practice (30 comments).

In making judgments about the legitimacy of some of these concerns, it is important to note the following:

- The reasons for the placement of common items in different year levels was outlined in the *2001 Test Preparation Handbook* which was provided to all schools. It enables tests from different levels to be placed on the same scale.
- The Testing Program aims to cater for a wide range of student ability and it is expected that not all students will be able to answer all questions. (This was also outlined in the *Test Preparation Handbook*.) All items and tasks are required to be trialled successfully prior to their inclusion in the tests.
- A major feature of the item development process is to use items and tasks that are as culturally appropriate, inclusive and accessible as possible. For the 2001 Testing Program, in-house advice on equity issues was utilised as well as advice received from the on-line Teacher Advisory Panel (see section 2 of this report for details).
- All items and tasks are referenced to the current Queensland syllabuses during their development.

A full list of the categorised issues emerging from an analysis of school responses to the open-ended 'other feedback' survey question is contained in Appendix 4.

### 3.4. Summary and conclusions regarding Focus Question 2

#### **Focus Question 2**

**Overall, how do schools rate 2001 pre-test information and 2001 Years 3, 5 and 7 test materials?**

The pre-test material on which opinions were canvassed were the wall chart, the *2001 Test Preparation Handbook*, the parent/caregiver brochure and the practice materials for Years 3, 5 and 7.

The test materials on which opinions were canvassed were the 2001 Years 3, 5 and 7 tests in aspects of numeracy and literacy and the test administration handbooks.

In response to Focus Question 2, the evaluation found the following:

- Overall, the majority of schools rated the pre-test materials as 'good' or 'very good' with percentages varying from 54 per cent (wall chart) to 79 per cent (*2001 Test Preparation Handbook*). A large minority (32% of schools) either didn't know or didn't provide an opinion on the wall chart. This may indicate lack of exposure or utility of the wall chart.
- A large percentage of parents/caregivers (35% of parents/caregivers) didn't recall receiving the parent/brochure before the administration of the tests, however, most of those parents/caregivers (86%) who indicated receiving it felt that it was helpful and that it should be continued. It is possible that the method of distribution (schools were requested to send it home with the student) may have affected the brochure's distribution. Some respondents suggested that it should be sent closer to the distribution of, or with, the report while others suggested alternative methods of distribution e.g. mailing.
- All tests apart from the Year 3 Numeracy Test were rated either 'good' or 'very good' by a majority (54% to 62%) of schools. The Test administration handbooks were rated in this manner by most respondents (74%). Overall, the Year 3 tests were rated less favourably than the Year 5 and 7 tests.

- Schools were not invited directly to comment on their ratings, but comments received in an open-ended 'other feedback' question at the end of the survey revealed various issues of concern, each of which was from a small number of schools. Approximately half of all respondents raised an issue or a number of issues in the general feedback section. The most frequently mentioned issues of concern in relation to the pre-test and test materials included the following: the easy level of difficulty of the practice materials (it was felt they should match the difficulty of the test materials), the perceived inadequacy of specific questions and the writing task, the poor quality of the pencils supplied, general criticism of the test questions (but no reference to specific questions) and concerns about the participation of Year 3 students.

**Conclusion 3**

**In general, schools rated 2001 pre-test and test materials well. In all but one set of material (the Year 3 Aspects of Numeracy Test), the materials received either a 'good' or 'very good' response from a majority of schools and the parent/caregiver brochure was viewed similarly by most parent/caregivers who had seen it.**

**Conclusion 4**

**Attention is warranted in respect of the utility of the wall chart as a vehicle for communicating the Testing Program, the content, timing and method of distribution of the parent/brochure and the easy difficulty level of the practice material; and in relation to the test materials, the reported issues of concern of respondents are worthy of investigation, particularly the concerns associated with the 2001 writing task and the need for Year 3 students to take the tests.**

## 4 Opinions on major changes to 2000 Testing Program materials

### Focus Question 3

What are school views on the major changes to pre-test and test materials since the 2000 Testing Program?

#### 4.1. Degree of support for changes

The survey included the following:

The 2001 Testing Program contained a number of **changes** to the 2000 Testing Program.

Does your school **support** the changes listed below?

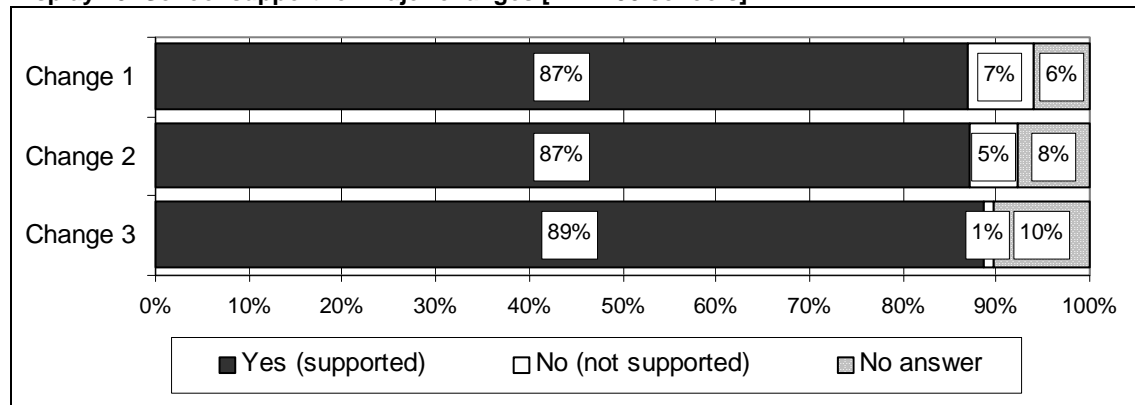
- o The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered together in one session.
- o The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered before the reading and viewing items.
- o The *2001 Test Preparation Handbook* (formerly known as the *Information for Schools* booklet) was reorganised around activities to be undertaken by the principal or principal and teachers.

In respect of the above changes, the 2000 Testing Program had the following characteristics:

- the dictation, proofreading and reading and viewing items were administered in a first session and this was followed by a second session on the same day in which the writing was administered;
- the 2000 *Information for Schools* document was organised around topics rather than activities and was 58 pages compared to 44 pages in the 2001 document.

Display 10 indicates that the majority supported the changes:

Display 10: School support for major changes [N =1250 schools]



**Change 1 =**

The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered together in one session.

**Change 2 =**

The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered before the reading and viewing items.

**Change 3 =**

The 2001 Test Preparation Handbook was reorganised around activities to be undertaken by the principal or principal and teachers.

Categorisation of major reasons for supporting or not supporting the three changes are provided in Displays 11 to 13.

As can be seen from the displays, only a small minority of schools gave reasons for their support or otherwise. Those that did sometimes provided quite opposite reasons for supporting or not supporting the changes.

In respect of Change 1, Display 11 shows that major reasons for support were that the one session was not too long, that all activities were able to be completed in one session and that the session was now better organised with related activities. Contrary reasons from those not supporting the change were that the session was too long, that children needed a break and that the session could be better organised.

Display 12 reveals a similar situation with Change 2.

Some of the reasons given in Displays 11 and 12 for not supporting Changes 1 and 2 are reflected in the comments received from some schools in relation to a final survey request which invited 'other feedback'. Comments were received about:

- a desire for a longer spread of time for test administration e.g. 3 days, 4 days, separate weeks for literacy and numeracy, over a whole week, separation of the writing task and additional breaks (19 comments)
- timetabling difficulties encountered in small schools, one teacher schools, multi-age environments (17 comments).

A full categorised list of the 'other comments' received is provided in Appendix 4.



**Display 11: Major reasons given by schools for supporting or not supporting Change 1:  
‘The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered together in one session.’  
[N=1250 schools]**

<b>Reasons for supporting change 1</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Reasons for not supporting change 1</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Not too long or the right amount of time</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. not too long; plenty of time; nice amount to chew in one go</li> </ul>	14	1	<b>Too long</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. too long; too much on one go; too big; too much sitting down (general statement)</li> <li>e.g. fatigue experienced in Year 3 (specific reference made to Year 3 students)</li> </ul>	37	3
<b>All activities done at once</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. all done at once; all over within one go</li> </ul>	7	<1	<b>Children need a break</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. activities need separating; separate writing session; time needed between tests</li> <li>e.g. prefer literacy task over two days (specific reference to two days)</li> </ul>	19	2
<b>Better organisation of test activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. smooth; flowed well; improved flow of testing; easier; easier to administer; same pencil required</li> <li>e.g. tasks are related; all teacher-directed tasks; same type of thought processes involved</li> </ul>	29	2	<b>Other organisation of activities preferred</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. dictation, proofreading and reading together; e.g. dictation then reading then proofreading</li> </ul>	3	<1
<b>general or miscellaneous positive comment</b>	7	<1	<b>Timetabling and administrative difficulties in multi-age situations</b>	6	<1
<b>Supported with qualification</b>	8	<1	<b>Stressful for children</b>	1	<1
<b>Other reason</b>	14	1	<b>Other reason</b>	19	2

**Display 12: Major reasons given by schools for supporting or not supporting Change 2: 'The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered before the reading and viewing items' [N=1250 schools]**

<b>Reasons for supporting change 2</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Reasons for not supporting change 2</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Writing should be first</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. easier to complete writing task first; children are fresher to do writing task; children fresh, not tired; good to finish writing first</li> </ul>	37	3	<b>Writing should be last or reading and viewing first</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. writing last would be more appropriate; writing is a better culminating activity; reverse the order; reading could help children get in the mood before attempting writing task; prefer reading and viewing first</li> </ul>	22	2
<b>Supported with qualification</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supported with qualifications related over tiredness of children</li> <li>supported with qualification related to possibility of literacy being tested over two days</li> <li>supported with other qualifications</li> </ul>	15	1	<b>Children tired during reading and viewing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. children were tired during reading; student fatigue; difficulty in concentrating during reading session</li> <li>e.g. prefer literacy tasks over two days or whole test over 3 days</li> <li>e.g. younger children lost concentration and were more tired after writing task (reference to Year 3 students)</li> </ul>	12	1
<b>Better organisation of test activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. good to have oral before written; gets teacher-directed work done first; a soft lead into more difficult work; good prelude</li> <li>e.g. tasks are related; they belong together; same type of thinking and processes</li> </ul>	21	2	<b>Other organisation of activities preferred</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. dictation, proofreading and reading together</li> <li>e.g. difficulties related to timetable; would like the flexibility to schedule for our own needs; timetabling/multi-age constraints</li> </ul>	7	1
<b>General or miscellaneous positive comment e.g. excellent</b>	3	<1	<b>Stressful for children; nervous children</b>	2	<1
<b>Other reason</b>	13	1	<b>Other reason</b>	7	1

In respect of Change 3 (a change to an activities-based format for the *Test Preparation Handbook*), Display 13 shows that major reasons given for support were related to ease of use and the clarification provided by the Handbook. For some not supporting the change, however, the document was too wordy and for some others, a wish was expressed for the test timetable to be more flexible.

**Display 13: Major reasons given by schools for supporting or not supporting Change 3: 'The 2001 Test Preparation Handbook was reorganised around activities to be undertaken by the principal or principal and teachers.'**  
[N=1250 schools]

Reasons for supporting change 3	F	%	Reasons for not supporting change 3	F	%
<b>Easier to use</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. easier to use; very well organised; easy to follow; clearer setting out of tasks</li> </ul>	21	2	<b>Too long or wordy</b>	4	<1
<b>Clarified roles and responsibilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. clarified roles and responsibilities; easy for me to identify my responsibilities; clear understanding of roles; knew what was expected</li> </ul>	10	1	<b>Timetabling difficulties</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e.g. difficulties related to timetable; would like the flexibility to schedule for our own needs; difficulties related to timetabling in small schools</li> </ul>	3	<1
<b>Provided good information</b>	1	<1			
<b>Supported with qualification eg yes but very wordy</b>	5	<1			
<b>Other reason or comment</b>	9	1	<b>Other reason or comment</b>	5	<1

#### 4.2. Opinions on how the Test Preparation Handbook might be improved

Display 14 provides a summary of suggestions made in relation to improving the *2001 Test Preparation Handbook*. Most of the small number of suggestions related to a desire for less words, more simplicity and greater clarity. The actual responses related to various sections of the Handbook (Row 5 in Display 14) are contained in Appendix 5.

**Display 14: School suggestions on ways to improve Test Preparation Handbook [N=1250 schools]**

Categorised comments	F	%
<b>No suggestion provided but a general positive comment offered</b> e.g. effective; it was fine; it was user friendly; we were happy in all respects	23	2
<b>Make Handbook less wordy (general statement made)</b> e.g. more compact; less repetition; condense to point form; too wordy; make shorter	14	1
<b>Make Handbook simpler and/or clearer (general statement made)</b> e.g. make it clearer; some bits are a little vague; Make it simple	5	<1
<b>Assist easier location of Handbook content</b> Colour code sections (4 schools), add an index (3 schools), cut tabs into pages (1), provide more detailed table of contents (1)	9	1
<b>Specific suggestions related to various sections of Handbook (See Appendix 5)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part A Test Information section</li> <li>Activity 4 section – Finalise participation in the tests</li> <li>Activity 5 and 6 sections – Finalise exemptions and special considerations</li> <li>Activity 7 section – Familiarise students with testing processes</li> <li>Activity 9 section – Prepare materials and physical resources</li> <li>Activity 10 – Become familiar with test administration procedures</li> </ul>	33	3
<b>Miscellaneous other</b> send the correct answers to schools after the tests are finished (1 school), Send Handbook earlier (1), Send less wasted copies (1)	3	<1

### 4.3. Summary and conclusions regarding Focus Question 3

#### Focus Question 3

**What are school views on the major changes to pre-test and test materials since the 2000 Testing Program?**

The three major changes on which opinions were canvassed were:

**Change 1:** The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered together in one session.

**Change 2:** The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered before the reading and viewing items.

**Change 3:** The *2001 Test Preparation Handbook* (formerly known as the *Information for Schools* booklet) was reorganised around activities to be undertaken by the principal or principal and teachers.

In response to Focus Question 3, the evaluation found the following:

- Most schools (over 85%) supported the three major changes to the test materials. Between 1 per cent and 7 per cent did not support the changes while another minority didn't give an opinion.
- A small number of schools gave reasons for supporting or not supporting **Change 1**. These included the following:
  - *Supported:* The session was not too long or the right amount of time; all activities were done at once; and this was a better organisation of activities.
  - *Not supported:* The session was too long; children need a break; another organisation of activities was preferred; there were timetabling difficulties in multi-age situations, and it was stressful for children.
- A small number of schools gave reasons for supporting or not supporting **Change 2**. These included the following:
  - *Supported:* Writing should be done first and it was a better organisation of activities.
  - *Not supported:* Writing should be done last or reading and viewing done first; children tired during reading; another organisation of activities was preferred; and it was stressful for children.
- A small number of schools gave reasons for supporting or not supporting **Change 3**. These included the following:
  - *Supported:* The Handbook was easier to use; it clarified roles and responsibilities and it provided good information.
  - *Not supported:* The Handbook was too wordy and there were timetabling difficulties with implementing instructions.
- School views on ways in which the *Test Preparation Handbook* might be further improved included the following: make the Handbook less wordy, simpler and clearer; assist with locating Handbook content; and change aspects of various sections of the Handbook.

#### Conclusion 5

**The three major changes to the test materials are worthy of retention despite the lack of support by a minority of schools. An exploration of the issues raised by this minority is worthy of investigation as are the suggestions for improving the *Test Preparation Handbook*.**

## 5 Opinions on test administration times

### Focus Question 4

What do schools think about the administration times of the tests?

#### 5.1. Summary of test administration time information provided

In the *2001 Test Preparation Handbook*, information was provided about the suggested test administration time. A summary of this information is contained in Display 15.

**Display 15: Information about test administration time contained in *2001 Test Preparation Handbook***

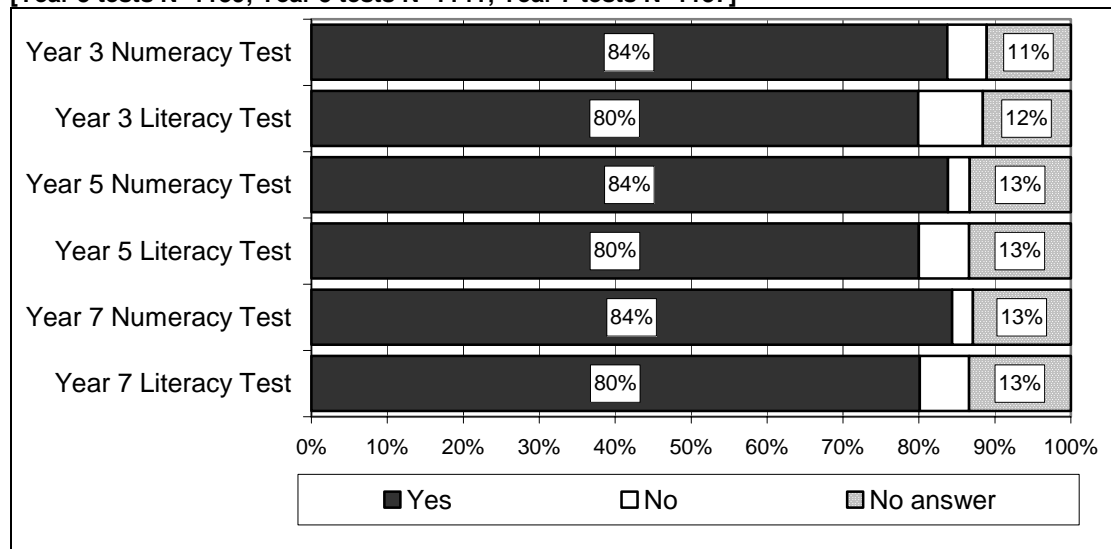
Test	Testing time and comments
Year 3 Numeracy	<p><b>Session 1 Cover details, practice items, mental calculations, calculator items and data items</b> Testing time: 25–35 minutes (excluding time for completing cover details and practice items)</p> <p><b>Session 2 items using press-out materials and other items</b> Testing time: 45–55 minutes</p> <p><b>[Total: 70 – 90 minutes]</b></p> <p>Note: Because of extra working time required for the items using press-out materials, the Year 3 students have been given more time than students in Years 5 and 7 to complete the Test in Aspects of Numeracy</p>
Year 3 Literacy	<p><b>Session 1 Cover details, dictation and proofreading, writing task</b> Testing time: 50–65 minutes (excluding time for completing cover details)</p> <p><b>Session 2 Reading and Viewing</b> Testing time: 50–55 minutes</p> <p><b>[Total: 100 – 120 minutes]</b></p>
Years 5 and 7 Numeracy	<p><b>Session 1 Cover details, practice items, mental calculations, calculator items, measurement mat and protractor items</b> Testing time: 25–35 minutes (excluding time for completing cover details and practice items)</p> <p><b>Session 2 Other items</b> Testing time: 40–45 minutes</p> <p><b>[Total: 65 – 80 minutes]</b></p>
Years 5 and 7 Literacy	<p><b>Session 1 Cover details, dictation and proofreading, writing task</b> Testing time: 50–65 minutes (excluding time for completing cover)</p> <p><b>Session 2 Reading and Viewing</b> Testing time: 50–55 minutes</p> <p><b>[Total: 100 – 120 minutes]</b></p>
Special considerations	<p>Additional working time may be given for students who have been given Special Considerations to complete tests. This additional working time should not exceed 30 minutes per hour of testing time.</p> <p>Students for whom Special Considerations have been given may have short breaks between sections of the test. This is in addition to the extra working time of up to 30 minutes per hour of testing time.</p>

## 5.2. Opinions on amount time allowed for each test

Schools were asked in Survey 1, 'Was the amount of time allowed for each test sufficient for **most** students?' Display 16 shows that most respondents indicated that they thought there was sufficient time allocated in all six tests.

In respect of the respondents indicating insufficient time (those ticking 'No'), the literacy tests tended to be more notable than the numeracy tests, and there were higher percentages of Year 3 'No' respondents for the respective tests (Literacy: 9% for Year 3, 7% for Year 5 and 7% for Year 7; Numeracy: 5% for Year 3, 3% for Year 5 and 3% for Year 7).

**Display 16: Opinions of the sufficiency of time allowed for each test**  
**[Year 3 tests N=1139; Year 5 tests N=1141; Year 7 tests N=1137]**



Those who responded that that there was not sufficient time (those answering No) were asked what total testing time should be allowed. Very few schools indicated a preferred time allocation and sometimes their answer was difficult to interpret. This interpretation is provided in Display 17.

**Display 17: Range of times nominated by schooling indicating insufficient time**  
**N=1250schools**

Test	% of schools nominating an alternative time allocation	Current test time allocated minutes	Range of times nominated minutes	Mode of times nominated minutes
Year 3 Aspects of Numeracy	2	70 – 90	80 – 180	100 & 120
Year 3 Aspects of Literacy	6	100 – 120	45 – 240	120
Year 5 Aspects of Numeracy	2	65 – 80	60 – 140	95
Year 5 Aspects of Literacy	5	100 – 120	60 – 150	115
Year 7 Aspects of Numeracy	2	65 – 80	60 – 140	80
Year 7 Aspects of Literacy	5	100 – 120	60 – 180	120

As can be seen from Display 17, the range is quite large in terms of number of minutes nominated. Column 3 of Display 17 is particularly interesting in that some schools that felt there was insufficient time nominated **less** than the current allocation noted in the *2001 Test Preparation Handbook*. But as mentioned above, it needs to be recognised that some answers were difficult to interpret as it was not always clear whether the respondent was indicating their preference for a total amount of time or additional to what was already indicated in the *2001 Test Preparation Handbook*. (The question asked the total amount of time.) It also needs to be emphasised that the numbers of schools nominating amounts are very small.

### **5.3. Summary, discussion and conclusion regarding Focus Question 4**

#### **Focus Question 4**

**What do schools think about the administration times of the tests?**

In response to Focus Question 4, the evaluation found the following:

- The overwhelming majority of schools (80% to 84%) indicated support for the current time allocations in all tests. In respect of those small minority of schools that indicated insufficient time, this was more frequently mentioned for literacy tests than numeracy tests, and the Year 3 tests were more frequently mentioned than their respective tests in Years 5 and 7.
- There was no agreement between those schools that nominated alternative time allocations for the tests.

#### **Conclusion 6**

**In general, most schools felt that the current time allocations were appropriate. These allocations warrant continuation although the time allocated for the literacy and the Year 3 tests could be further explored.**

## 6 Appropriateness and effectiveness of reports

### Focus Question 5

How do school and parents/caregivers rate the 2001 reports?

#### 6.1. Description of reports

2001 reports were distributed to schools in late November 2001. Display 18 lists the 2001 Testing Program reports that were sent to schools.

Display 18: Reports sent to schools

Report	Recipient and Distribution	Summary of report contents
<b>Individual Student Report</b>	each parent / caregiver (one copy)	Explanatory letter from Director Graphical information of student's performance on each strand of tests and his/her relative standing in relation to cohort
	the school (one copy)	Writing standard achieved, brief descriptions of items indicating correct or incorrect
<b>Individual Class Report</b>	the school (one copy)	Scale scores for each student how each item was answered by students and percentages correct for each item (class, boys, girls, whole cohort) how each writing criterion was judged Explanatory footnotes
<b>School Report</b>	the school (one copy)	Individual strand reports for each level containing graphical representations of performances of students (whole school, boys, girls, LBOTE and Indigenous) Averages for school and cohort Explanatory footnotes
<b><i>Translations of student report (if requested)</i></b>	parents / caregivers (one copy)	Student report templates in 10 languages: Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Croatian, Filipino, Samoan, Serbian, Spanish, Torres Strait Islander Creole, Vietnamese
<b><i>Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: 2001 Test Reporting Handbook</i></b>	the principal (one copy)	Information about each report and contact information
	each teacher (one copy)	activities to be undertaken by principals and / or teachers in relation to receiving, distributing and using the reports Appendixes providing elaborating information

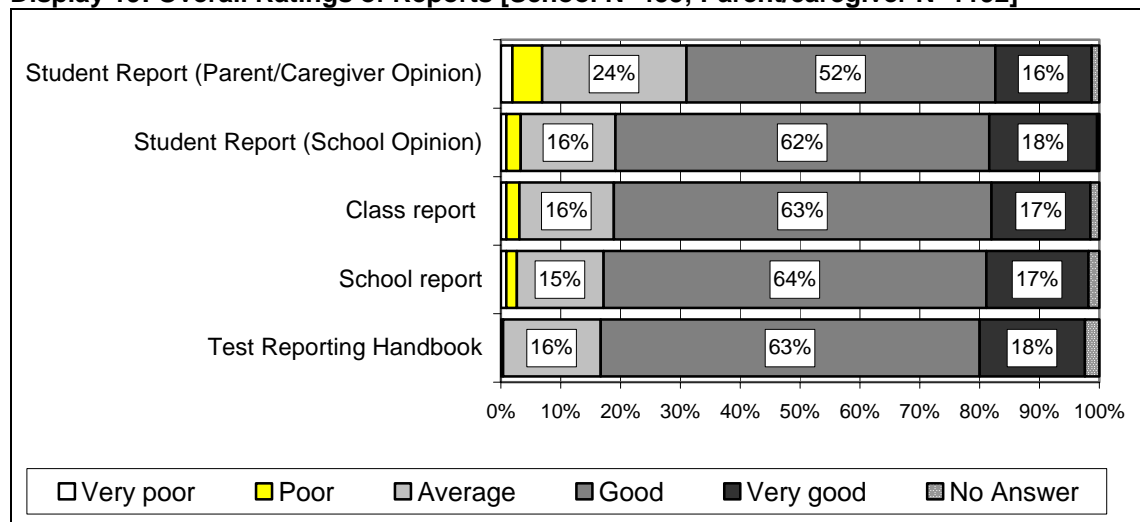


Further details on, and graphical displays of, the reports may be found in the Council publication *Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: 2001 Test Reporting Handbook*.

## 6.2. Ratings of 2001 reports

Schools were asked to give an overall rating of all the 2001 Testing Program reports and *2001 Test Reporting Handbook*, and parents/caregivers were asked to give an overall rating of the student report. These ratings are presented in Display 19.

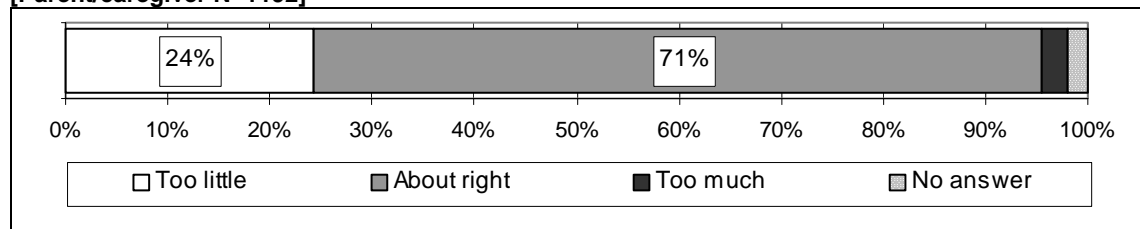
**Display 19: Overall Ratings of Reports [School N=455; Parent/caregiver N=1192]**



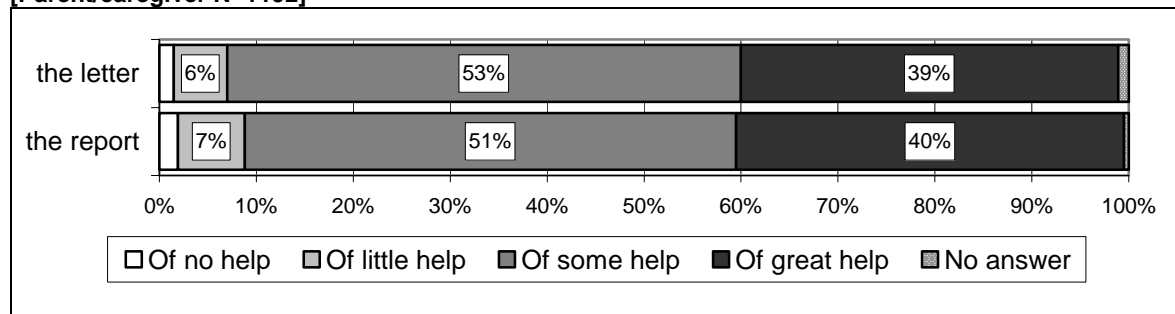
Display 19 shows that both parents/caregivers and schools rated the various reports positively with between 68 per cent and 81 per cent of respondents giving a rating of 'good' or 'very good'. In respect of the student report, parents/caregivers were less positive than were schools. Sixty-eight per cent of parents/caregivers rated the student report 'good' or 'very good' compared to 80 per cent of schools.

To explore parent/caregiver perceptions a little further, parents/caregivers were asked about the amount of information that was included in the student report, about its helpfulness in assisting parents/caregivers to understand their 'child's performance' and also about the helpfulness of the letter at the front of the report, which was included for the first time in 2001. The responses are summarised in Displays 20 and 21. It can be seen that most parents/caregivers felt that the amount of information was 'about right', and that student report and its letter at the front had been of 'some' or 'great help'.

**Display 20: Parent/caregiver opinions of the amount of information in Student Report [Parent/caregiver N=1192]**



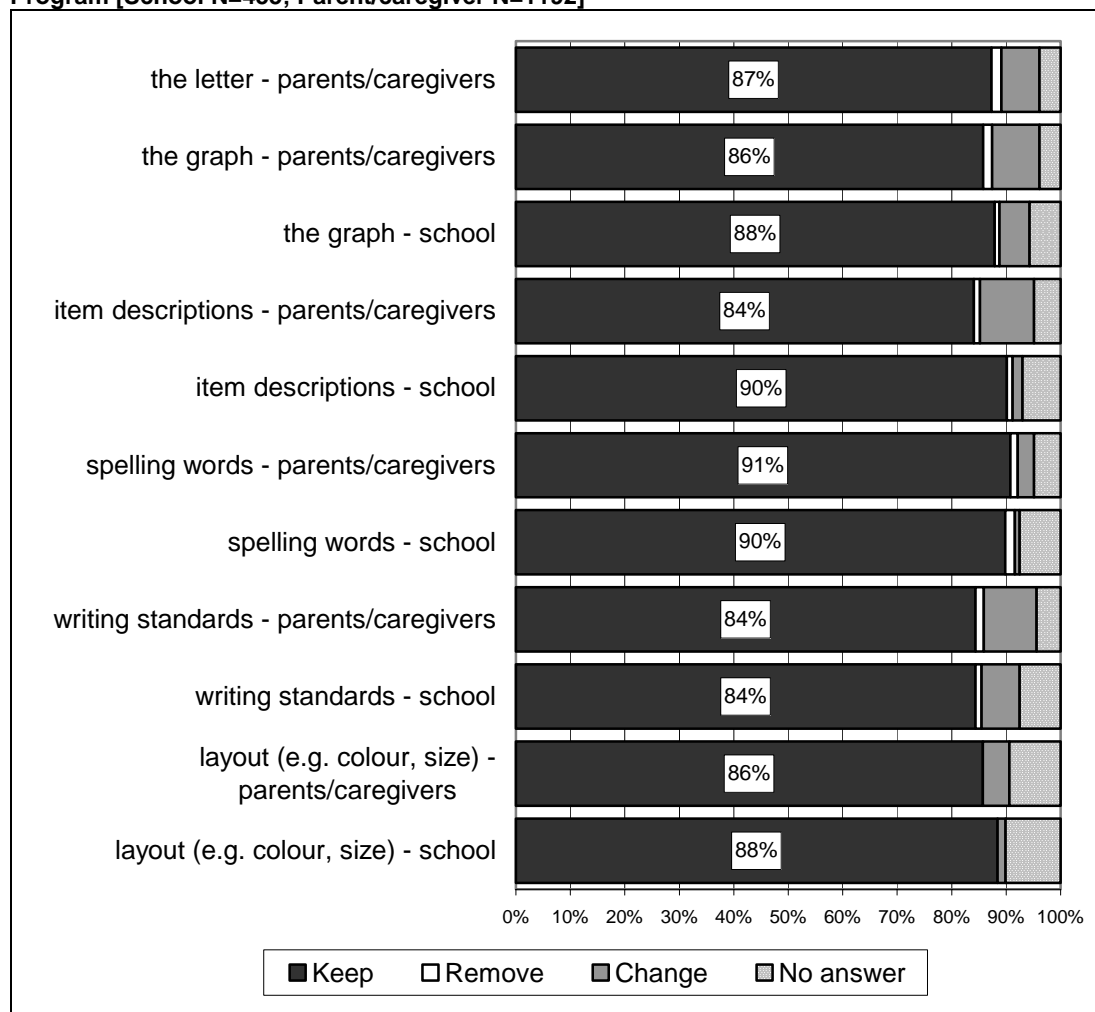
**Display 21: Parent/caregiver opinions of the helpfulness of Student Report in understanding child's report**  
**[Parent/caregiver N=1192]**



### 6.3. Opinions assisting designing of 'next year's' student reports

Both parents/caregivers and schools were asked how various listed aspects of the student report should be treated in 'next year's' reports (keep, remove or change). Responses are summarised in Display 22.

**Display 22: Opinions of how aspects of the Student Report should be treated in next year's Testing Program**  
**[School N=455; Parent/caregiver N=1192]**



As can be seen, most parents/caregivers and schools felt that the various listed aspects of the student report should be kept while a minority wanted removal or change. More

respondents ticked 'change' than 'remove' and overall, a higher percentage of parents than schools ticked 'change'.

The most frequent responses from parents/caregivers for changes were about item descriptions (10% of parents/caregivers), writing standards (10%) and graphs (9%) while for schools the most frequent responses were about writing standards (7%) and graphs (6%).

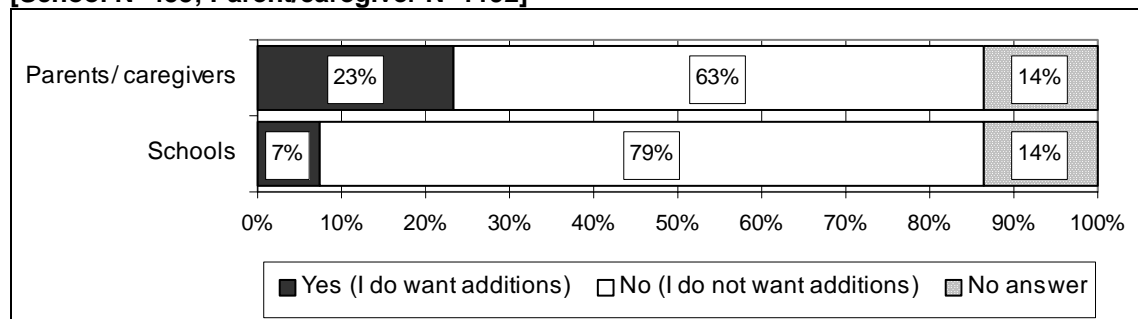
Where respondents ticked 'change', they were asked to specify what change was desired. Comparatively small numbers responded to this request, a summary of which appears in Display 23. As can be seen, there was a large variation in the changes suggested.

**Display 23: Types of changes suggested to aspects of the Student Report**  
**[School N=455; Parents/Caregivers N = 1192]**

Aspect of Student Report and Type of change suggested	Schools		Parents/ caregivers	
	F	%	F	%
<b>letter</b>				
• Simplify; clearer instructions needed; use plain English	Not asked		21	2%
• Include more detail; put data explanation near appropriate section; include information on process of testing; add percentage details			20	2%
• Other suggestions			15	1%
<b>the graphs</b>				
• Use less jargon; more friendly language; simplify; make clearer	6	1%	15	1%
• More information needed; more explanation needed; more detail	0	0%	19	2%
• Show percentages; add percentage results as well; use numerical rating/results	2	<1%	25	2%
• Mismatch between student results and where they are on the scale; more accurate; child gets all correct yet graph shows the dot near the middle; graph misleading; perfect score should be at the end of the graph	8	2%	13	1%
• Other suggestions	9	2%	28	2%
<b>item descriptions</b>				
• Make simpler; less technical; use lay terms; user friendly language; clearer description needed	3	1%	29	2%
• More detail; more explanatory notes; more information	0	0%	22	2%
• Include original tasks; copies of questions for review; specific examples; give examples; copy of the test	1	<1%	17	1%
• Other suggestions	0	0%	20	2%
<b>spelling words</b>				
• Simplify; explain better	0	0%	8	1%
• More information needed on nature of the item, way it is presented, purpose; more detail; more explanation	0	0%	4	<1%
• Like to see words, sentences, what student wrote	0	0%	6	1%
• Comments seeking change of a curriculum nature; level of difficulty; difficulty of words; wanting level of difficulty changed; relevance to curriculum; problematic nature of process, list; accept range of spelling types	3	1%	6	1%
• Other suggestions	0	0%	5	<1%
<b>writing standards</b>				
• Simplify; could be explained better; make easier for parents to understand; avoid jargon; describe the result in plain English	6		36	3%
• More explanation; more explanation needed; more detail and what is the purpose of the test; more information on contextual factors and textual factors	1	1%	21	2%
• Give examples; more examples of actual test; return marked work with test	2	<1%	9	1%
• Reference to standards scale with a number of respondents wanting reversal (i.e. A representing the highest performance); elaborate on / describe A – G; why assess year 3, 5 and 7 on the same standard scale?; information on what all levels mean	5	1%	11	1%
• Other suggestions	12	3%	24	2%
<b>layout (eg colour, size)</b>				
• Simplify; make easier for parents to understand	3	1%	7	1%
• More detail; more explanation	0	0%	6	1%
• Reference to colour; stronger colours needed; more uplifting colour	1	<1%	3	<1%
• Other suggestions	2	<1%	14	1%

In addition to being asked opinions on the 2001 student report, **parents/caregivers** and schools were asked whether there were any aspects that they wished to have **added**. Display 24 summarises the responses.

**Display 24: Response regarding additions to Student Report**  
**[School N=455; Parent/caregiver N=1192]**



As can be seen, the majority of respondents indicated they did not want anything added to the report. There was approximately three times the number of parents/caregivers (23%) wanting additions as schools indicating they wanted additions (7%).

Those who indicated they wanted additions to the student report were asked to specify the change. These are summarised in Display 25.

**Display 25: Suggestions on additions to Student Report**  
**[School N=455; Parents/caregivers N = 1192]**

Type of Addition/Suggestion	Schools		Parents	
	F	%	F	%
Don't use educational jargon; make easier to read; explain in clear English what is being tested	0	0%	16	1%
Wanting greater level of detail, specificity of information; Elaborations on A – G scale; elaborate on marking of writing task; elaborate on how to interpret information/results; more specific information	4	1%	34	3%
Provide copy of test; give examples; child's answers; summary of activities; explain conditions of test (how long etc.); instructions given; information about tasks	2	<1%	61	5%
Give percentages; specific grading; numerical scores	0	0%	29	2%
Wanting comparisons of some kind; averages; student/class/school to state/national; to previous tests; student to school; to previous cohort; student to other students	2	<1%	33	3%
Wanting information about how to use the report information; what to do with the results; recommendations about tutoring/extra help; suggestions for areas, books to help improvement	0	0%	21	2%
Wanting to see information on other areas of performance; science; social/emotional; speaking; self esteem; attitude; social skills; arts and craft; creativity, lateral thinking	0	0%	17	1%
Other suggestions	11	2%	47	4%

While it is difficult to draw any conclusions from the numbers of respondents wanting changes there are some small discernible patterns. It should also be pointed out that some suggestions are more by way of commenting on what is currently there; and so some level of interpretation has been necessary in the analysis. There are no real discernible patterns in responses from schools, particularly due to the small numbers of responses seeking additions, both in relative and in absolute terms. However, there are some responses by parents/caregivers that are worthy of note:

- Approximately 5 per cent of parents/caregivers (20% of parents/caregivers who indicated they wanted additions) would like to see either the test, sample questions and/or their child's answers;
- Where patterns have been identified they are often reflective of patterns of comments made in response to other specific questions on the survey.

Parents were also asked if they had any other general feedback on the student report. The results are summarised in Display 26.

**Display 26: General feedback from parents/caregivers about the Student Report  
[Parents/caregivers N = 1192]**

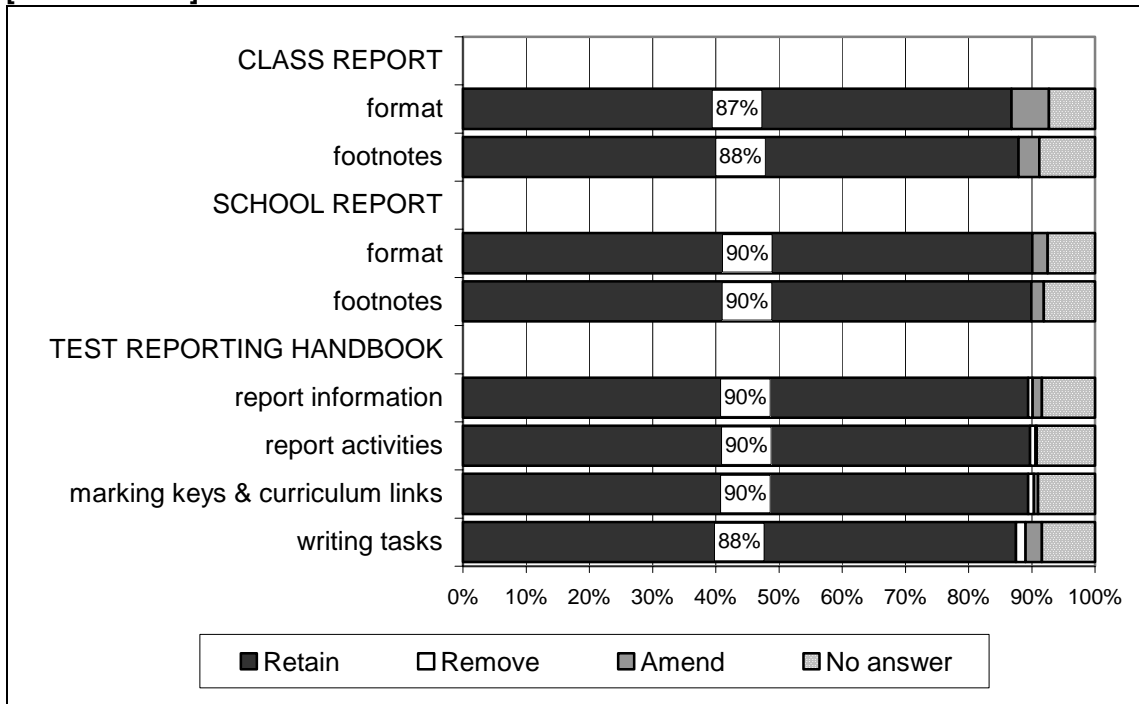
Type of feedback	Parents/caregivers	
	F	%
Greater clarity; simplify; graph on front cover confusing; unsure of terms	27	2%
References to level and amount of explanations; need explanation of terms; more information; includes references to getting all correct on test but this is not reflected on scale	17	1%
Examples; would like to see test papers; details on what was done in the test	17	1%
Conflict with school report; doesn't reflect ability; doesn't match reality	12	1%
Comments referring to use, follow up; child needing help; interview; way the education department will help	16	1%
General positive comment	34	3%
General negative comment; opposition to test; questioning validity of test	18	1%
Other suggestion or comment	79	7%

There is no identifiable pattern of responses as is evidenced by the large number of responses which, after analysis, remain ungrouped – approximately two-fifths of all responses that gave general feedback. What is notable in the patterns that have been identified is that, like the responses to the question regarding additions to the student report, they are reflective of patterns identified in response to other questions. For instance consistent themes which emerge are the need for greater simplicity of explanations and presentation of information as well as the need for greater depth of information.

#### **6.4. Opinions assisting designing of 'next year's' class and school reports and *Test Reporting Handbook***

In respect of the three report documents distributed for use by schools, opinions were sought on how various listed aspects should be treated in next year's 2002 Testing Program. The responses are summarised in Display 27.

**Display 27: Opinions on how aspects of class and school reports and Test Reporting Handbook should be treated in next year's Testing Program [School N=455]**



As can be seen, most schools (over 85%) felt that the various listed aspects of the report should be kept while a small minority wanted removal or change.

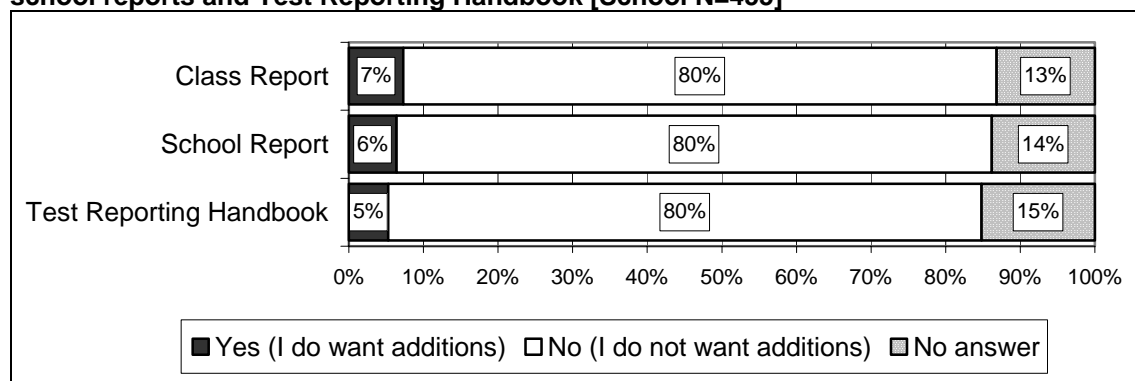
Those schools that ticked 'change' on any of the aspects were asked to specify the change. A small number of respondents made suggestions, notable examples of which are summarised in Display 28.

**Display 28: Class and school reports and Test Reporting Handbook: Suggested changes [School N=455]**

Report	Changes suggested	F	%
<b>Class Report</b>			
• format	Make easier to read; enlarge print	5	1%
	Provide more detail	2	<1%
	Use graphical presentation	2	<1%
	Use colours	2	<1%
	Identify lower performing students e.g. bottom 15%	2	<1%
	Other e.g. send reports earlier; provide online for download; print one side of paper only	5	1%
• footnotes	Make easier to read; enlarge print	4	1%
	Identify lower performing students e.g. bottom 15%	4	1%
	Other e.g. explain A to G in writing; include State mean; less detail; more detail	4	1%
<b>School Report</b>			
• format	Make useful for small schools e.g. give whole-of-school responses to questions	2	<1%
	Provide more details e.g. non-A&TSI	3	<1%
	Change 50% shading to 60%	1	<1%
• footnotes	Make simpler or clear e.g. use dot points	2	<1%
	Specify bottom 15%	1	<1%
	Other	2	<1%
<b>Test Reporting Handbook</b>			
• Report information	less verbose; less information; provide brief notes; make less bulky	4	1%
• Report activities	[Nil response]	0	0%
• Marking Keys/ Curriculum Links	make it simpler	1	<1%
• Writing Tasks	Provide more information of requirements and ratings	2	<1%
	Provide more information on range of response and where children went right or wrong	2	<1%
	Make ratings less confusing	1	<1%

In addition to asking for specifics about suggested changes, schools were asked to indicate anything that they wished to **add** to these reports. Display 29 indicates that most schools didn't want any additions.

**Display 29: Percentage response regarding additions to class and school reports and Test Reporting Handbook [School N=455]**



Those who wanted additions were asked to specify their suggestions. Display 30 provides a summary.



**Display 30: Class and school reports and Test Reporting Handbook: Suggested additions [School N=455]**

<b>Suggested additions</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Class Report</b>		
Identify students at risk; identify lower 15%	5	1%
Provide a comparative summary from year to year	2	<1%
Provide graphs	3	<1%
Add other details to report [Test date; class average; class strengths and weaknesses; footnote explanation of CF and TF; collated results for class; rank order of all students on each area]	5	1%
Attach other information to report [test questions (2), summary of how writing is marked, class strengths and weaknesses]	4	1%
Other [Use different colour for literacy and numeracy]	1	<1%
<b>School Report</b>		
Identify those needing intervention	1	<1%
Provide comparative summaries [show trends for state and like schools; track progress of cohorts in Years 3, 5 and 7; like school comparison; summary of previous year; comparison of previous tests]	5	1%
Provide graphs	2	<1%
Add other details to report [test date; summary of individual results; school average; non-A&TSI data]	4	1%
Attach other information [how writing marked as per handbook]	1	<1%
<b>Test Reporting Handbook</b>		
Add test questions	3	<1%
Add sample letter/newsletter to parents/caregivers	3	<1%
More information on writing [further explanation of process; more on writing samples]	2	<1%
Other explanation of what graphs represent; add an index	2	<1%

Unsolicited comments from schools and parents/caregivers were also analysed. While many of the comments reflected comments in the previous pages, one notable issue emerging from the analysis was about the time at which the report was received. One notable comment received from 7 parents/caregivers and 11 schools was that the reports arrived too late in the year. Year 7 was often specifically mentioned as being problematic.

Finally, in relation to Focus Question 5, schools were asked to prioritise the format that should be used in the future to distribute report materials to schools (floppy disk, secure Internet, print or other). Schools were asked to write 1 for the most favoured format, 2 for the next favoured, and so on up to 4. Display 31 presents a summary of this prioritisation and shows that print is the most preferred format. The most frequent 'other' category specified was CD-ROM, with the next most frequent 'other' being various combinations of the four formats.

**Display 31: Summary of Report distribution priorities (N=455)**

<b>Priority rank</b>	<b>Distribution format</b>	<b>Index of priority*</b>	<b>% respondents giving priority 1</b>
1	Print	1012	77.4
2	Secure Internet	2157	15.6
3	floppy disk	2450	9.2
4	other**	3765	3.7

\* The Index of priority was calculated by summing all respondents' priorities (1, 2, 3, 4). Nine was allocated for no answers.

## 6.5. Summary and conclusions regarding Focus Question 5

### **Focus Question 5**

#### **How do school and parents/caregivers rate the 2001 reports?**

In response to Focus Question 5, the evaluation found the following:

- Both parent/caregivers rated the student report positively with 68 per cent of parent/caregivers and 80 per cent of schools giving a rating of either 'good' or 'very good'. Most parents/caregivers (71%) also felt that the amount of information was 'about right' and most (91%) considered that it had been of either 'some' or 'great' help in understanding their child's performance. Ninety-two per cent felt similarly about the letter in the front of the report.
- Of the various aspects of the student report listed on the survey (letter, graphs, item descriptions, spelling words, writing standards and layout), most schools and parents/caregivers (between 84% and 91%) felt that they should be kept for inclusion in next year's report. A minority wanted changes and additions to the student report.
- Of the various aspects of other reports listed in the surveys (these being class and school report format and footnotes and Test Reporting Handbook report information, report activities, marking keys, curriculum links and writing task information), most schools (between 87% and 90%) felt that they should be kept. A minority wanted changes and additions to these reports.
- Changes and additions suggested by respondents to the student, class and schools reports and Test Reporting Handbook were very varied and sometimes implied opposing views. Although not subject to generalisation, these suggestions have been categorised and included in the evaluation report.
- Most schools preferred the issuing of reports in print form over the other alternatives listed (secure Internet, floppy disk and other including CD-ROM). Seventy-seven per cent gave 'print' their first preference.

### **Conclusion 7**

**In general, the student, class and school reports and the *Test Reporting Handbook* rated well and should be continued in their present form, but the various suggested changes and additions are worthy of consideration when improvements are being made, particularly those associated with additional information requests and presentation format.**

### **Conclusion 8**

**The distribution of printed reports should continue but school opinions on the method of distribution of report enhancements should be canvassed in future evaluations.**

## 7 How school plans to use report information

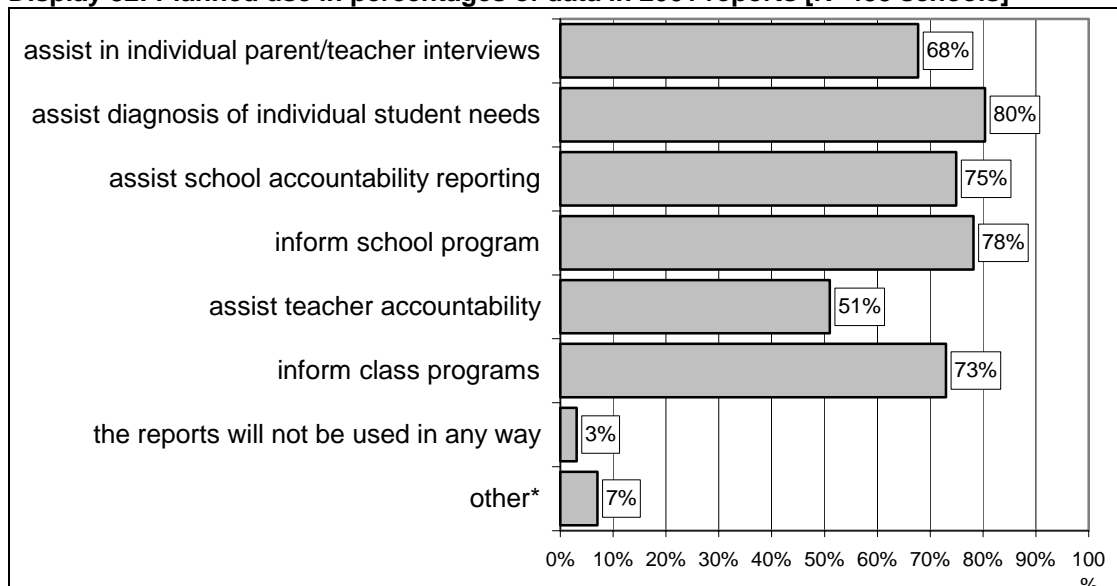
### Focus Question 6

How do schools plan to use the data included in the 2001 reports?

#### 7.1. Planned use

Display 32 presents a summary of school responses to the question, 'How does the school plan to use the information in the reports?'

**Display 32: Planned use in percentages of data in 2001 reports [N=455 schools]**



\*Examples of 'other': teacher development, liaison with support teachers, class streaming, annual operational planning

As can be seen, most schools reported that they planned to use the report in some way. The most frequently ticked planned use (by 80%) was assisting diagnosis of individual student needs while the least frequently ticked planned use (by 51%) was assist teacher accountability, apart from those who indicated that they did not intend to use the reports (3%).

## 7.2. Summary and conclusions regarding Focus Question 6

### **Focus Question 6**

**How do schools plan to use the data included in the 2001 reports?**

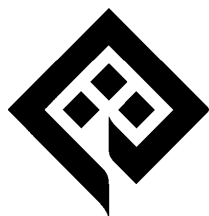
In response to Focus Question 6, the evaluation found the following:

- Most schools planned to use the data included in student, class and school reports. A small minority (3%) indicated that they didn't plan to use the reports at all.
- The most frequently noted planned uses for the reports were assisting in the diagnosis of individual student needs (80% of schools) while assisting teacher accountability was the least frequently ticked (by 51% of schools).
- Unsolicited comments from some schools and parents/caregivers indicates that the utility of the reports is reduced because of the time of year the reports become available – the end of the school year.

### **Conclusion 9**

**Schools' planned use of the reports indicates high potential utility, but this is reduced by the time of year in which the reports become available, particularly Year 7 reports.**

## Appendix 1: School Survey



# QUEENSLAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM COUNCIL

### 2001 QUEENSLAND YEARS 3, 5 AND 7 TESTING PROGRAM SCHOOL SURVEY

Dear **Principal**

Thank you for your school's participation in the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information to improve the Council's state-based testing programs.

It is of particular importance that you complete this survey in collaboration with the teachers in your school who participated in the 2001 Queensland Testing Program. Only **one** survey is requested from each school.

All survey data will be treated confidentially and no individual survey will be identified in the survey report.

Survey results will be posted on the Council's web site ([www.qscc.qld.edu.au](http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au)) when available.

Please return the survey to **Hermes Precisa Pty Ltd with the test materials** by 24 August 2001.

Your assistance in helping the Council to improve its testing programs is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J E Tunstall'.

J E Tunstall

Director

1 August 2001

#### BACKGROUND AND TEST PARTICIPATION

1. In what postcode area is your school located? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which of the following year levels in your school participated in the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program?  
(Please tick the appropriate box/es.)  
 Year 3       Year 5       Year 7

#### OVERALL OPINIONS OF TESTING PROGRAM MATERIALS

- 3a. **Overall**, how does the school rate the following 2001 Testing Program pre-test materials?  
(Tick one box for each.)

Wall chart	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
2001 Test Preparation Handbook	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Brochure for parents/caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 3 practice materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 5 practice materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 7 practice materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

**3b. Overall, how does the school rate the following 2001 Test materials?**

(Tick one box for each.)

Test administration handbooks	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 3 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 3 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 5 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 5 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 7 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
Year 7 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

**OPINIONS ON SOME CHANGES**

4. The 2001 Testing Program contained a number of **changes** to the 2000 Testing Program. Does your school **support** the changes listed below?

- The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered together in one session.  
 Yes (supported)       No (not supported) Reason? \_\_\_\_\_
- The dictation, proofreading and writing tasks were administered before the reading and viewing items.  
 Yes (supported)       No (not supported) Reason? \_\_\_\_\_
- The *2001 Test Preparation Handbook* (formerly known as the *Information for Schools* booklet) was reorganised around activities to be undertaken by the principal or principal and teachers.  
 Yes (supported)       No (not supported) Reason? \_\_\_\_\_

In what way, if any, could the *Test Preparation Handbook* be improved?

\_\_\_\_\_

**OPINIONS TO ASSIST PLANNING**

5. Was the **total** amount of time allowed for each test sufficient for **most** students?

Year 3 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If No, what total testing time should be allocated? _____ minutes
Year 3 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If No, what total testing time should be allocated? _____ minutes
Year 5 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If No, what total testing time should be allocated? _____ minutes
Year 5 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If No, what total testing time should be allocated? _____ minutes
Year 7 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If No, what total testing time should be allocated? _____ minutes
Year 7 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	If No, what total testing time should be allocated? _____ minutes

6. In your view, how did **most** students find the tests? (Please tick the appropriate box/es.)

Year 3 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Stressful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult
Year 3 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Stressful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult
Year 5 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Stressful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult
Year 5 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Stressful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult
Year 7 Numeracy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Stressful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult
Year 7 Literacy Test	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging	<input type="checkbox"/> Stressful	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable	<input type="checkbox"/> Confusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Easy	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult

**FURTHER OPINIONS**

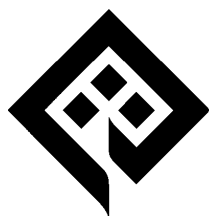
7. Is there any other feedback that the school wishes to provide that would assist in improving Council's testing programs? If so, please provide below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION**  
**Please return to Hermes Precisa Pty Ltd with the test materials by Friday 24 August 2001.**

## Appendix 2: School Survey 2



# QUEENSLAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM COUNCIL

### 2001 QUEENSLAND YEARS 3, 5 AND 7 TESTING PROGRAM SCHOOL SURVEY 2

Dear **Principal**

Thank you for your school's participation in the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program (2001 Testing Program). Earlier this year, the Queensland School Curriculum Council distributed an evaluation survey with the 2001 Testing Program materials. The information provided is currently being analysed and will undoubtedly assist in planning future testing programs.

The purpose of this brief second (and final) school survey on the 2001 Testing Program is to gather information to assist in **improving the student, class and school reports and reporting processes**. Would you kindly complete it in consultation with relevant teachers in your school, and return it in the freepost envelope provided to the address listed below **by Friday, 7 December 2001**.

All survey data will be treated confidentially and no individual survey or school will be identified in the evaluation of the survey results. The evaluation of the survey results will be posted on the Council's web site in 2002.

The Council's web site is located at <http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au>

Your assistance in helping the Council in improving its testing programs is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J E Tunstall'.

J E Tunstall  
Director  
12 November 2001

#### BACKGROUND

1. In which postcode area is your school located? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In your school, which of the following year levels received 2001 Testing Program Reports?  
 Year 3       Year 5       Year 7

#### 2001 TESTING PROGRAM REPORTS

3. **Overall**, how do you rate the 2001 Testing Program reports and *Test Reporting Handbook*?  
(Tick one box for each.)

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
Student Report .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Class Report .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Report .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Test Reporting Handbook</i> .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over

4. How do you think the following aspects of the reports should be treated in the next testing program (keep, remove, or change)?

**Keep    Remove    Change** *(If change, in what way? Please write on relevant line.)*

**Student Report**

- the graphs    \_\_\_\_\_
- item descriptions    \_\_\_\_\_
- spelling words    \_\_\_\_\_
- writing standards    \_\_\_\_\_
- layout (eg colour, size)  N/A  \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Report**

- format  N/A  \_\_\_\_\_
- footnotes  N/A  \_\_\_\_\_

**School Report**

- format  N/A  \_\_\_\_\_
- footnotes  N/A  \_\_\_\_\_

**Test Reporting Handbook**

- Report Information    \_\_\_\_\_
- Report Activities    \_\_\_\_\_
- Marking Keys and Curriculum Links    \_\_\_\_\_
- Writing Tasks    \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there any aspects which you would wish to **add** to the report materials?

- |                         |                              |                             |                                 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Student Report          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | If 'Yes', please specify: _____ |
| Class Report            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | If 'Yes', please specify: _____ |
| School Report           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | If 'Yes', please specify: _____ |
| Test Reporting Handbook | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | If 'Yes', please specify: _____ |

6. In the future, which format should be used to distribute the report materials to schools?  
*(Please write 1 for the most favoured format, 2 for the next favoured, and so on up to 4.)*

- floppy disc     secure Internet     print     other (*specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

**INTENDED USE OF REPORTS**

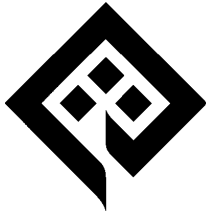
7. How does the school plan to use the information in the reports? *(Please tick appropriate box/es.)*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> assist in individual parent/teacher interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> assist diagnosis of individual student needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assist school accountability reporting         | <input type="checkbox"/> inform school programs                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> assist teacher accountability                  | <input type="checkbox"/> inform class programs                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the reports will not be used in any way        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>Please specify</i> ) _____        |

**THANK YOU. Please use the freepost envelope and address your reply to Attention: Richard Dunlop, Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, PO Box 317, Brisbane Albert Street Q 4002 By Friday 7 December 2001.**



## Appendix 3: Parent/Caregiver Survey



### QUEENSLAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM COUNCIL

**2001 QUEENSLAND YEARS 3, 5 AND 7 TESTING PROGRAM  
PARENT/CAREGIVER SURVEY**

Dear **Parent/Caregiver**

This survey accompanies your child's report on the 2001 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Tests in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy.

I would appreciate it if you were to take five minutes to complete the survey. Your responses will assist the Queensland School Curriculum Council, which manages the Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program, to improve future student reports and parent/caregiver brochures.

All survey data will be treated confidentially and no individual survey will be identified in the evaluation of the survey results. The evaluation of the survey results will be posted on the Council's web site in 2002.

The Council's web site is located at <http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au>

Please return the survey in the freepost envelope provided to the address listed on the other side of the survey **by Friday, 7 December 2001.**

Your opinions are highly valued and the Council looks forward to receiving your completed survey.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J E Tunstall'.

J E Tunstall  
Director  
12 November 2001

**Please turn over**

## BACKGROUND

1. In which postcode area do you live? (eg 4030) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which year level is your child?     Year 3     Year 5     Year 7

## 2001 STUDENT REPORT

The student report aims to explain your child's results compared to other students in his/her year level in Queensland and to assist you to understand your child's performance in the tests.

3. How helpful was the letter in assisting you to understand your child's report?  
 Of no help                       Of little help                       Of some help                       Of great help
4. How helpful was the Student Report in assisting to understand your child's performance?  
 Of no help                       Of little help                       Of some help                       Of great help
5. What is your opinion on the amount of information that was included in the Student Report?  
 Too little                                       About right                                       Too much

6. How do you think the following aspects of the Student Report should be treated in next year's Testing Program (keep, remove, or change)?

**Keep**    **Remove**    **Change** (If change, in what way? Please write on relevant line.)

the letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
the graphs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
item descriptions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
spelling words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
writing standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
layout (eg colour, size)	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

7. Are there any aspects that you would wish to see **added** to the Student Report?     Yes     No

If Yes, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

8. **Overall**, how do you rate the Student Report?

Very Poor     Poor     Average     Good     Very Good

## 2001 PARENT/CAREGIVER BROCHURE

9. Prior to your child sitting the 2001 Queensland Tests, did you receive the parent/caregiver brochure, *Your Children and the 2001 Queensland Testing Program*?     Yes     No     Can't recall
10. Would you recommend that a brochure continue to be sent to all parents of Years 3, 5 and 7 students?  
 Yes, I found it helpful     No, it's unnecessary

## ANY FURTHER FEEDBACK?

11. What other feedback, if any, do you wish to provide on the student report and the parent/caregiver brochure?  
(Please add any further comments on the lines below.)

Student Report \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Caregiver Brochure \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU.** Please use the freepost envelope and address your reply to **Attention: Richard Dunlop, Office of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, PO Box 317, Brisbane Albert Street Q 4002 by Friday 7 December 2001.**

**Appendix 4: Categorised school responses to 'other feedback' question  
(School Survey Q7)**

**Question 7: Is there any other feedback that the school wishes to provide that would assist in improving the Council's testing programs? if so, please provide below.**

<b>Issues identified in comments</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Pre-test materials (See Report section 3.2)</b>	
Practice materials should reflect actual test items, too easy, gives false sense of security	29
<b>Test materials (See Report section 3.3)</b>	
Suggestions, responses to particular questions or aspects of the test	111
Writing genre, task, process, stimulus a concern, more time to engage	83
Pencils were of poor quality, kept breaking, very disruptive	74
Ambiguous questions, some questions ambiguous, unclear questions, don't use negative questions, language difficult, bad wording of question, often reference to numeracy	66
Other reference to Year 3 – stressful, developmentally inappropriate, multiple choice format unfamiliar, inappropriate	65
Link items causing concerns, overlap unnecessary, overlap incompatible with curriculum, why have same questions?, don't use same questions, inappropriate, often in relation to numeracy	42
Difficulty of test, aspect of test, should be more average, should cater more to lower ability levels, some references to year 3	42
Inappropriate, stressful for some groups, eg A&TSI, ESL, doesn't cater for diversity, disadvantages some groups, biased	42
Mismatch with curriculum, not relevant to Queensland curriculum, doesn't test core, not in school program for year level, wrong/next year level, content/concepts, not covered in depth, often reference to year 3	40
Comments about appropriateness of test, test type/format, relate more to classroom practice, one off, value of test?, purpose?, validity of test?	30
Curriculum not covered, time of year wrong, test at end of year, test at beginning of following year	27
Instructions very wordy, repetitive, too many, inappropriate, difficult, unfamiliar	24
General positive comment	13
More notification of genre, give genre at start of year	11
Incompatible with teaching philosophy, early childhood approach, outcomes approach	11
Request to indicate special considerations on front cover, not addressed	10
Trick questions, wording seems designed to trick students	10
Protractors not appropriate – should use 180, confusing, printed in reverse configuration, should be the same each year	9
Same booklet for literacy and numeracy a concern, use separate books	8
More exemptions, wider range of exemptions should be offered	8
Other processes already in place to identify students needing support – Appraisal, Year 2 Net, particularly year 3	4
<b>Major changes (See Report section 4.1.)</b>	
Longer spread of time requested – 3 days, 4 days, separate weeks for literacy and numeracy, over whole week, writing task separate,	19

Issues identified in comments	Frequency
more breaks	
Difficulties encountered in small schools, one teacher schools, multi-age environments, more flexibility needed, extra day	17
<b>Miscellaneous comments</b>	
Other comment or suggestions	221
Dates not suitable – flu, Book Week, sports, Ekka, School Opinion Survey, AMEB exams, not suitable for SE Qld	14
Students are at school one year less than in other states, test should be in year 4	5

## **Appendix 5: Specific school suggestions on ways to improve various sections of the Test Preparation Handbook (Refer also to Display 14)**

### **Test Preparation Handbook Part A: Test information**

#### *Areas for revision*

- Perhaps give more revision areas as the tests contained areas that would not be covered until Term 4 normally

#### *Information on writing*

- more information on writing
- writing task – more info before the test
- provision of an example of the required genre. Syllabus documents do not give examples of description. Description genre is very broad and varied.
- Clarification of handwriting style required from children
- The writing task should not be in the handbook – but separate so that teachers have more time to read and comprehend booklet. August is a very busy time for us.

#### *Highlight important aspects*

- highlight key words e.g. ‘description’ and include ‘30 minutes in every hour at the discretion of principal’
- important details should be highlighted e.g. genre
- in dark type add ‘changes’ to previous year’s format
- it was difficult to locate how long the session breaks were to be

### **Test Preparation Handbook Activity 4: Finalise participation in the tests**

- was quite clear but there was some confusion in procedure for having to change date of one of the tests. The test was able to be completed in the testing week. Procedure was unclear – phone assistance very helpful.
- be more conscious of small schools with eg two Yr 3, two Year 5, and two Year 7 with one person to administer. Extend timelines.

### **Test Preparation Handbook Activities 5 and 6: Finalise exemptions and special considerations**

- Do not include language background other than English including indigenous languages and dialects in with disorders and disabilities for exemptions and special considerations
- to be more specific in guidelines to assist students
- notes on exclusion of students from test
- more specific information – ambiguous instructions for special consideration students
- be more explicit about exemptions. Allow more time to return materials.
- Special considerations checklist – you have to search for relevant information
- I liked the special considerations proforma better in 2000 (two pages and not one)
- More info on which children are to be considered for special considerations
- clarify assistance for students who have not been ascertained; still some confusion about principal/teacher roles; needs more specific direction on details of special considerations assistance
- special considerations could be clearer
- be clearer about instructions for special considerations and exemptions
- a bit clearer on what was required for exempt and absent students
- Still confusion over special consideration entitlements. I know that I read whole questions to LD students
- more info on special considerations
- It was not quite as clear (easily found) what to do about ascertained and disabled students
- be clearer in special considerations

### **Test Preparation Handbook Activity 7: Familiarise students with testing processes**

- Show example of test paper cover so that we know what details are necessary eg group number
- Practice questions for reading/viewing tasks are different from test format in that the teacher needs the questions to be answered. Some confusion because this is different in the test situation

**Test Preparation Handbook Activity 9: Prepare materials and physical resources**

- Clearer instructions for issue of teacher resources; early issue of contents of literacy – description general – not yet taught making assessment unfair.
- earlier access to material

**Test Preparation Handbook Activity 10: Become familiar with test administration procedures**

- indication as to who can view materials pre-test (exactly)
- the procedure to view the Test Admin handbook only on the day is not being followed