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The School Report helps parents to make informed education choices for their children, write **Tanya Chilcott and Craig Johnstone**



CHOOSING a school remains one of the most important decisions facing a parent.

The 2008 School Report gives some indication as to what vocational and academic standards are being achieved in schools across the state, allowing parents to make an informed decision about which is best for their child.

While it is an important snapshot, it is a snapshot only, with some changes made this year to capture the changing nature of education.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is one important addition.

Studied at four state schools by Year 12s in 2008, it requires students to complete six subjects, a theory course and mini thesis.

An English, maths and second language course are requirements and students receive a score ranging from 1 to 45, with a minimum of 24 needed to secure their IBD.

Queensland universities translate the 24 to 45 score into an OP 1 to 15 to

admit students to their courses.

John Jose, principal of the Queensland Academy for Creative Industries, which made its debut in the 2008 School Report through the inclusion of IBDs and their first Year 12s graduating last year, said the academy tried to "challenge", "excite" and "extend" students around the IBD curriculum.

The QACI, which requires students to sit a general test and submit a portfolio before they are accepted, was Queensland's top academic state school in 2008, as 98 per cent of their Year 12 students received an IBD.

Another change to this year's school report has been the deletion of columns including the Gender and Breadth of Curriculum, which showed the number of subject areas offered by a school. A column has also been added to recognise the new Queensland Certificate of Education, which was awarded to students for the first time in 2008.

Vocational Education and Training

qualification columns have been streamlined.

Most of the remaining information remains the same, including the decision to only release OPs in the form of the percentage of eligible students who received an OP better than 15.

Some schools, however, outshone others in the area of OP 1s and 2s last year, such as the Brisbane Grammar School.

Education Minister Geoff Wilson said parents should use the data to identify schools in their area that had the characteristics they valued the most.

"It's also important to remember that this data measures the achievements of a single group of students in a single year," Mr Wilson said.

"The same school with the same teachers, the same curriculum and the same ethos may have very different groups of students who achieve different results from one year to the next."