

Experience more.

A principal's guide to building teacher capability and workforce sustainability.

July 2026

Message from the Deputy Director-General School and Regional Operations and Performance

Dear colleagues

Queensland's state schools are strongest when every student has access to high-quality teaching, regardless of where they live and learn.

As school leaders, you play a vital role in making this possible. Every workforce decision you make not only shapes outcomes for your school, but also contributes to the strength and sustainability of the teaching profession.

Like myself, many of you have experienced the professional and personal benefits of teaching in different schools and communities. These experiences build confident educators, develop future leaders and strengthen our understanding of the diverse communities we serve.

As we prepare for the 2027 school year, we are strengthening our approach to workforce planning, teacher mobility and permanent employment. These initiatives will better align workforce opportunities to areas of greatest need while providing teachers with rewarding career pathways that broaden their experience and support long-term career growth.

Your leadership is essential.

By identifying talented teachers, supporting career conversations and planning strategically for your workforce, you can help develop future leaders, retain high-performing teachers and build a stronger workforce for all Queensland state schools.

This guide outlines the important role principals play in strengthening workforce capability across Queensland and supports these important conversations.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to ensuring every Queensland student has access to exceptional teaching.

Leanne Nixon

Deputy Director-General

Schools and Regional Operations and Performance

Every workforce decision shapes the future

Leadership extends beyond your school

Every workforce decision is an opportunity to strengthen your own school while contributing to a sustainable teaching workforce for Queensland.

Supporting teachers to broaden their professional experience helps develop stronger practitioners, future school leaders and more resilient schools.

Many experienced principals attribute their own professional growth to opportunities to teach across different schools and communities. By encouraging similar opportunities for today's teachers, you are investing in the next generation of school leaders.

As a principal, you influence:

- teacher capability
- leadership development
- workforce sustainability
- student outcomes
- equitable access to quality teaching

Leadership is not simply about building your workforce, it is about building Queensland's workforce.

Workforce planning starts with students

Every workforce decision should begin with one question – what do our students need?

Effective workforce planning looks beyond filling vacancies. It considers the capability your students need today while building the workforce they will require tomorrow.

Consider your students

- What capabilities do our students need?
- What expertise will our school require over the next 12 months?
- Are we making the best use of our workforce?

Consider your people

- Who is ready for broader experience?
- Who has leadership potential?
- Which temporary teachers should we retain?
- What capability gaps exist?

Consider your future

- What leadership capability will we require?
- How can mobility strengthen our workforce?

- What decisions today will benefit students tomorrow?

Partner with your HR Business Partner to align workforce planning with your school's future capability.

Understanding priority schools

Priority schools are schools where workforce need is greatest.

They include schools located across rural, remote and regional Queensland, together with selected schools within our south east Queensland regions.

These schools are the focus of workforce attraction, mobility and permanency initiatives to help ensure every Queensland student has access to high-quality teaching.

How are priority schools identified?

Priority schools are determined through a consistent statewide approach informed by both workforce data and regional knowledge.

Consideration includes:

- teacher vacancy trends
- teacher retention
- beginning teacher profile
- Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)
- Partnership Initiative schools
- regional workforce intelligence and local contextual insights

No single measure determines whether a school is identified as a priority school. Decisions reflect both the workforce and the local operational context.

Career pathways at a glance

Temporary and permanent teachers currently working in state schools within the department's south east Queensland regions are being encouraged to consider and explore exploring new teaching experiences and career opportunities in our priority school and settings.

The pathways outlined below are available to teachers in:

- Metropolitan North Region
- Metropolitan South Region
- North Coast Region
- South East Region

Teachers currently in your school seeking permanent employment, opportunities for professional growth or a lifestyle change, will greatly benefit from these pathway opportunities.

 EXPERIENCE PATHWAY	 MOBILITY PATHWAY	 PERMANENCY PATHWAY
 Who? Permanent teachers	 Who? Permanent teachers	 Who? Temporary teachers
 Opportunity One-year Relieve at Level (RAL) in a Priority School	 Opportunity Permanent transfer to a Priority School	 Opportunity Permanent appointment to a Priority School
 Outcome Return to your substantive school after one year	 Outcome Guaranteed placement at your nominated preferred school after 2 years	 Outcome Guaranteed placement at your nominated preferred school after 2 years

Each pathway supports professional growth while strengthening workforce sustainability across Queensland.

View the [Experience More. Supporting teacher career pathways in Queensland state schools guide](#) for information about each pathway.

Your role as a principal

Principals play a critical role in helping teachers explore career opportunities while supporting workforce priorities.

Your role is to:

- identify teachers who demonstrate capability and leadership potential
- discuss career aspirations and professional development goals
- consider how opportunities align with your workforce planning
- consult your HR Business Partner
- encourage interested teachers to complete the [Career Pathways Expression of Interest](#)

Regional HR teams will work directly with teachers to explore suitable opportunities.

Supporting teacher mobility

Teacher mobility helps every Queensland student have access to quality teaching.

Each year, significantly more teachers apply for transfers to schools and locations within south east Queensland, than to our other regions.

Supporting teachers to consider broader professional experiences helps improve workforce sustainability, while developing capability across our profession.

Supporting mobility helps:

- develop stronger teachers
- build future leaders
- strengthen priority schools
- improve workforce equity across Queensland

Supporting mobility is not about losing great teachers – it is about developing them.

Supporting valued temporary teachers

High-performing temporary teachers are an important part of Queensland's future workforce.

Where operationally appropriate:

- identify talented temporary teachers early
- discuss permanency aspirations
- encourage consideration of priority schools
- work with your HR Business Partner to identify pathway opportunities

Permanent employment opportunities will be directed toward priority schools and locations.

Temporary engagements in non-priority schools should generally not extend beyond 2 school terms unless there is a genuine operational requirement.

Relieve at Level (RAL)

RAL provides permanent teachers with an opportunity to broaden their professional experience while remaining connected to their substantive school.

Participation should:

- support professional growth
- align with workforce planning
- contribute to succession planning
- be agreed by all parties

For further information:

- [Relieve at Level Guide](#)
- [RAL Agreement](#)

Planning for returning teachers

Teachers returning from priority service often bring:

- broader professional capability
- increased confidence
- leadership experience
- new perspectives
- valuable knowledge gained through different school contexts

Consider how returning teachers can contribute to mentoring, leadership, succession planning and school improvement.

Resources

The following resources are available to support your workforce planning and career conversations with temporary and permanent teachers.

Career pathways

- Experience More. Supporting teacher career pathways in Queensland state schools guide – information for teachers
- [Career Pathways Expression of Interest form](#)
- [Relieve at Level Guide](#)
- [RAL Agreement form](#)

Further information for interested teachers

- [Experience More. Career pathways for teacher in Queensland state schools webpage](#)
- [Choose Your Teaching Adventure booklet](#) – guide to rural and remote incentives
- [Teach Queensland Live Chats](#)
- [Teach Queensland Live Chat: Career pathways for state school teachers](#)
- [Teach Queensland Career Fair – Saturday 5 September 2026](#)

Questions and support

- [Your HR Business Partner](#)