



Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders Leading Linking Learning

QASEL POSITION BRIEF: MARCH 2022

Subject: HOSES Roles and Responsibilities

Expectations that are clear, aligned and achievable.

The Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders (QASEL) is the peak professional association for special education leaders across Queensland. QASEL members are Principals, Deputy Principals, Heads of Special Education Services, Heads of Curriculum/Department and other leaders and aspirants, who support students with disability, across all sectors of education in Queensland. Some members are based in special schools, many support students with disability and diverse learners in primary, secondary and early childhood settings.

This brief seeks to clarify QASEL's position in relation to the ever-changing expectations of the role of Heads of Special Education Services (HOSES) in Queensland State Schools. QASEL welcomes the opportunity to actively participate in continued conversation regarding this and remains committed to our vision: successful leaders - successful learners.

Background:

The 2017 [Queensland Disability Review](#), conducted by Deloitte, identified a range of recommendations aimed at *ensuring that students with disability have inclusive and productive educational experiences*. The subsequent introduction and implementation of the Department of Education's (DoE) [Inclusive Education Policy](#) has led to many primary and secondary schools significantly changing the way in which they utilise the staff allocated to their Special Education Programs, including their HOSES, to strive to create more inclusive environments.

These changes have led to a range of inconsistent expectations across the state regarding the roles and responsibilities of HOSES.

Across the state, the HOSES role is now locally known by a number of variations including: Head of Diversity, Head of Inclusion, Deputy Principal Special etc. Often these roles suggest a much larger remit than students with disability. Some of these role changes are done through local consultation and workplace reform. At other times, the title of the role is changed without a review into the remuneration, capabilities and workload impact for the HOSES.

The generic role description for a HOSES has not kept pace with these changing expectations. This had led to a mismatch between the position the applicant wins and the tasks they are asked to perform once in the position. The current generic role description continues to reference special education units in the description of responsibilities:

- *Lead the school special education unit or special education developmental unit teachers ...*
- *Manage the human, financial, facilities and curriculum resources of the unit ...*

In 2012, QASEL supported the development of a Special Education Handbook for HOSES and SEP Teachers. This resource was compiled by the Darling Downs and South West Region HOSES and SEP Teacher Network. The DoE also produced a "Handbook for the management of Special Education Programs in Primary and Secondary Schools" which was last updated in 2011.

The DoE is currently undertaking a review into the allocation of resources to schools to support students with disability. While the role of the HOSES is outside the scope of this review, the outcomes of the review will undoubtedly change the way schools organise their resources and programs to deliver services to diverse learners, which will likely lead to further inconsistencies across the state.

Many HOSES members report concerns with their workload, lack of clarity of expectation, insufficient administrative and non-contact time.

Position statements:

QASEL recognises and respects the importance of school-based decision making and autonomy to meet local needs. However, we are concerned that the role of the HOSES has become so diverse from one setting to the next (or from one change of Principal to the next) that there is no longer a shared understanding of the role at a school or systems level.

QASEL believes that the current role description of HOSES used for selection and recruitment processes needs an urgent review to bring it in line with contemporary thinking, and to ensure it reflects the work being carried out by HOSES in a variety of diverse contexts (e.g. ECDPs, Primary, Secondary, Cluster HOSES and P-12 campuses).

QASEL believes that to be successful, HOSES require a high level of leadership capability and expert knowledge in the impact of disability on learning. QASEL supports all measures to ensure HOSES are provided with multiple opportunities to build their personal and collective capability.

QASEL believes that the role of the HOSES should primarily focus on the success of students with disability. The broader inclusion agenda should be a shared responsibility across all school leaders.

QASEL believes that Primary and Secondary Principals would benefit from the development of a set of guidelines that could be used to negotiate local responsibilities with HOSES. These guidelines could be flexible enough to allow for local, collaborative decision making while still ensuring some level of state-wide consistency of expectation and integrity in terms of the core function of the role.

QASEL believes that a review of the roles and responsibilities of HOSES would be timely following the resource allocation review for students with disability.

Summary:

QASEL supports a thorough and comprehensive review of the roles and responsibilities of HOSES to ensure that expectations are clear, aligned and achievable.

This review should consider issues such as:

- A review of the HOSES and SEP teacher position descriptions to support a consistent understanding of the roles across the state.
- The development of a scalable leadership model that reflects complexity and workload in all sites regardless of size or context.
- The development of a handbook/guidelines or similar online document to support HOSES and SEP teachers.
- A review of the HOSES job title/s that encourages a more consistent state-wide approach while allowing flexibility for individual schools.
- A review of the allocation of administration and non-contact time to HOSES that acknowledges the diverse nature of the role and contexts.
- Consideration of the provision of targeted AAEP time to support the HOSES
- A review of the teaching expectations for HOSES (e.g. Level 1 currently 0.8 teaching load)