



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Independent Update

Issue 7, 2017

Socio-Economic Profile of Schools

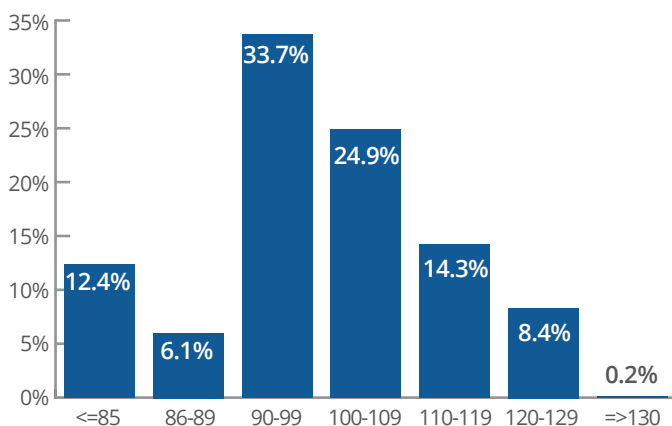
Since 2001 the socio-economic status (SES) of Independent schools has been measured using data from the ABS Census of Population and Housing.

Relative need measures the capacity of a school's community to support it. This is determined by the socio-economic status of the school community, according to the income, education and occupation of parents from that community.

To determine a school's SES profile, each of its students is assigned an SES score based on data from the Statistical Area 1 (SA1) geographical area in which the student lives, with approximately 400 persons per area. Student scores are averaged to produce an SES score for the school.

The majority of non-government schools - both Catholic and Independent - are in the middle range of SES scores.

Independent Schools by SES 2015



Up until 2014, most Australian Government funding for Independent schools was based on a school's SES score, as a measure of relative need.

Under the SES model, students attending schools with a higher SES profile were eligible for less funding than those attending lower SES schools. Schools such as special schools, special assistance schools and majority Indigenous student schools were deemed to be at the lowest possible SES and therefore received the highest level of recurrent funding.

Independent schools enhance the education choices available to Australian children, from all socio-economic backgrounds.

Funding arrangements from 2014

From 2014, Australian Government funding arrangements for non-government schools have changed and schools are now funded according to a Schools Resourcing Standard. The transition to this model commenced in 2014. However, these funding arrangements still require a measure of SES for two purposes;

- to determine a school community's 'capacity to contribute', and
- to calculate the Low SES loading.

'Capacity to contribute' means that the amount of base funding received is dependent on the estimated capacity of the school community to contribute to the cost of schooling. Schools with a higher estimated SES receive less per capita base funding.

In the SRS funding model, the Low SES loading is calculated using data based on a component of the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) calculation – the Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA) quarters.

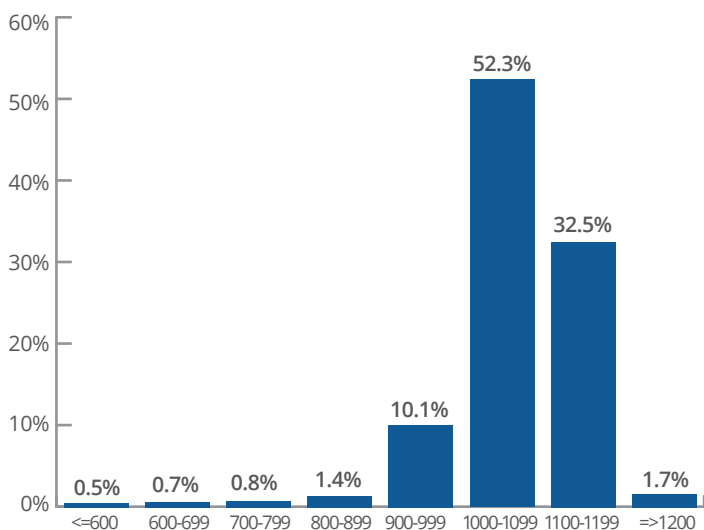
Measuring socio-educational advantage

ICSEA was developed and implemented by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) specifically “to enable meaningful comparisons of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test achievement by students in schools across Australia.”

While it is not a measure of SES per se, it is the only national measure that enables comparisons of some of the SES background factors for students attending government, Catholic and Independent schools. It accounts for a range of factors that impact on a student’s educational advantage including both student factors (e.g. parental occupation and education) and school level factors (e.g. percent of Indigenous students, geographic location).

The majority of Independent schools are in the middle range of ICSEA scores.

Distribution of Independent schools by ICSEA score 2016



While originally based on ABS Census of Population and Housing data, the ICSEA calculation now uses data derived from parental background data. For the Independent sector, this data is provided each year for the students who participate in NAPLAN tests. The methodology for calculating ICSEA continues to be refined by ACARA to both enhance and stabilise the data set on an on-going basis.

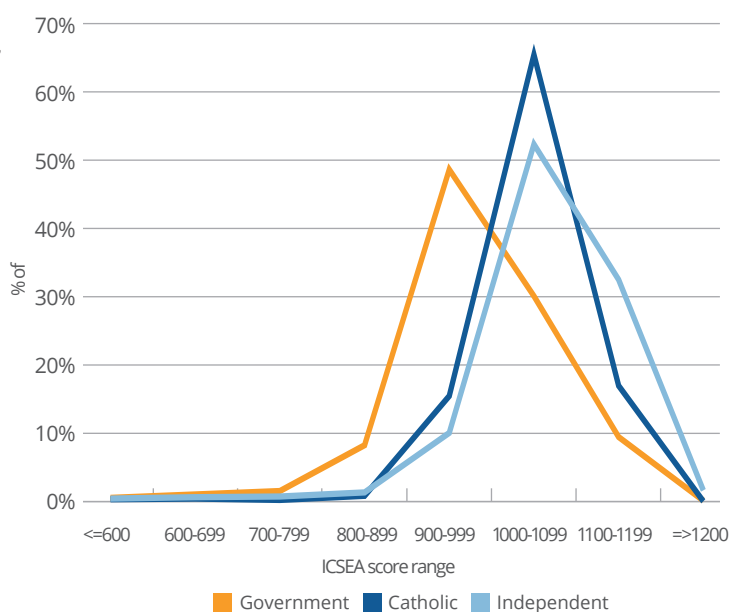
ICSEA has provided valuable comparisons of the socio-educational profiles of all Australian schools. It has confirmed that government, Catholic and Independent

schools educate a broad range of students from all socio-educational backgrounds.

ICSEA data debunks the myths about the socio-educational profile of students attending government and non-government schools.

Importantly, ICSEA demonstrates that individual school sectors do not educate specific sections of society. Instead, government and non-government schools contribute to educational choice and diversity.

Distribution of schools by ICSEA score by sector 2016



The government, Catholic and Independent sectors have similar socio-economic profiles as determined by ICSEA score comparisons. The majority of schools, regardless of sector, service communities that are in the ICSEA bandwidths of 900 through to 1199.

Diversity of Independent schools

Analysis of SES and ICSEA have demonstrated that Independent schools serve a diverse range of students across all socio-economic and socio-educational backgrounds.

The majority of Independent schools are in the middle range of both SES and ICSEA scores. They offer choice for young Australians to be educated in schools with a diversity of cultural, religious and educational philosophies.