



Education and Training

# School Movement Survey

## August 2009 – August 2010

This publication provides information on the responses parents and carers gave regarding why they moved their child to or from an ACT public school between August 2009 and August 2010. It also includes an overall summary of results gathered from the three surveys between 2008 and 2010.

### Key findings

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Over half (58%) of the in-scope students who entered an ACT public school in 2010 were starting kindergarten.

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Half (51%) of the in-scope students who left the ACT public school system in 2010 went to a non-government school in the ACT.

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Quality of education was the most common response parents gave for moving their child from an ACT public school to an ACT non-government school. The most common factors parents considered when selecting the new school were quality of education (96%), reputation (92%), school culture (87%), school facilities (73%), peer relationships (70%) and the location of the school (70%)<sup>1</sup>.

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Seven percent of the in-scope students who entered an ACT public school in 2010 moved from an ACT non-government school. Personal reasons were the most common response parents gave for moving their child from an ACT non-government school to an ACT public school. The most common factors parents considered when selecting the new school were the location (79%) and quality of education (76%)<sup>1</sup>.

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The most common factors for a student leaving school in 2010, prior to completing year 10 or after starting but not completing college, were personal reasons (35%), employment related (26%) and peer relationships (21%)<sup>1</sup>. Seven in 10 (70%) of these early school leavers were engaged in some form of employment and/or studying outside the traditional school environment.

1. Respondents could provide multiple responses so totals may add to more than 100 percent.

# Introduction

In order to collect detailed information about parents' choice of school, the Department of Education and Training has conducted biannual School Movement Surveys for the last three years. This publication presents the combined results for the 2010 surveys together with an overall summary of the results for the three years, 2008 to 2010.

The scope of the survey was parents and carers of students who entered or left an ACT public school between August 2009 and August 2010. This excluded parents of students who exited or entered a specialist school, exited a school that closed, completed year 6, 10 or 12, were short-term enrolments or movements and students who had experienced a traumatic event.

A total of 6,588 students were identified as being in-scope for the 2010 survey. A sample of parents and carers of these students were surveyed via telephone using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing methodology. Of the 2,693 students selected in the random sample for the survey, 1,483 surveys were completed, representing a response rate of 55 percent.

The report is divided into four sections.

Section 1: Presents results from the survey of parents and carers of students who entered the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010

Section 2: Presents results from the survey of parents and carers of students who left the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010

Section 3: Presents results from the survey of parents and carers of students who moved schools within the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010

Section 4: Presents comparative results for 2008 to 2010

Ninety-five percent confidence intervals have been provided throughout this publication. These provide a measure of the variability associated with undertaking a sample of the whole population. For example, 57 percent  $\pm$  4 percentage points means there is 95 percent confidence that the true percentage (for the population) lies between 53 percent and 61 percent.

# Findings

## Section 1: Students who entered the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010

### Origin of students who entered the ACT public school system

Of those in-scope students who entered an ACT public school between August 2009 and August 2010, 58 percent were starting kindergarten, 7 percent moved from an ACT non-government school, 10 percent moved from a school in NSW, 12 percent moved from a school elsewhere in Australia and 12 percent moved from overseas.

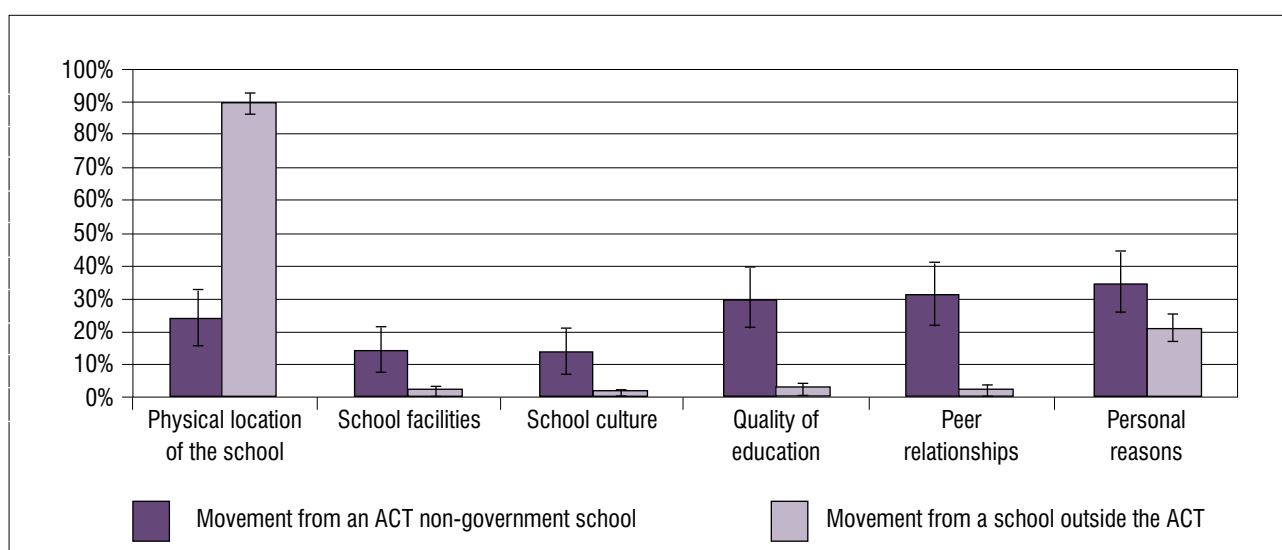
**Table 1: Origin of students who entered the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010**

	Number	Percent
New students starting kindergarten	2287	58 ± 4
ACT non-government school	257	7 ± 2
NSW school	405	10 ± 2
Other school in Australia	474	12 ± 3
Overseas school	472	12 ± 3
Other <sup>2</sup>	37	1 ± 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3932</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Responses parents gave regarding why they moved their child from their previous school

Figure 1 details the most common responses parents and carers gave regarding why they decided to move their child from their previous school to an ACT public school. Of the students who moved from an ACT non-government school the most common responses were personal reasons (35%), peer relationships (32%), quality of education (30%) and physical location of the school (24%). Where a child moved from outside the ACT education system, the most common response was the location of the school (89%).

**Figure 1: Most common responses parents gave regarding why they moved their child from their previous school by origin when the destination was an ACT public school, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>3</sup>**



2. Other includes students who were home schooled or not enrolled in any school.

3. The percentages in Figure 1 do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates that there is no statistical difference between the results.

## Factors considered when selecting an ACT public school

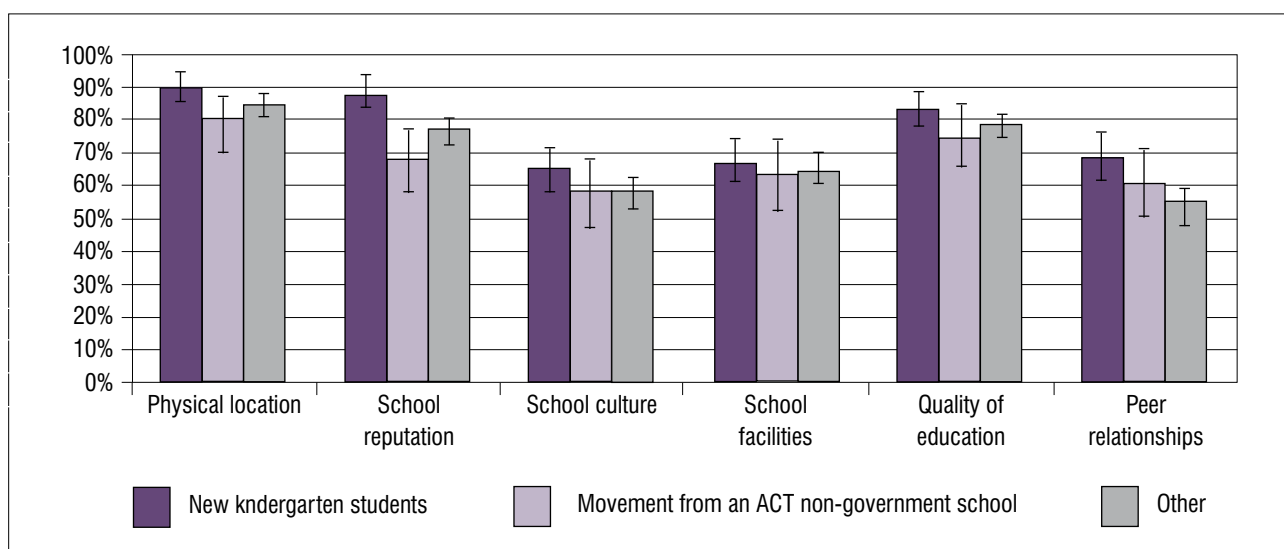
Table 2 details the factors parents and carers considered when choosing an ACT public school for their child. The most common factors were the location of the school (88%), school reputation (83%) and quality of education (82%).

**Table 2: Factors considered when selecting an ACT public school when the origin was not an ACT public school, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>4</sup>**

Response Categories	Number	Percent
Physical location	3449	88 ± 3
School reputation	3275	83 ± 3
School culture	2451	62 ± 4
School facilities	2627	67 ± 4
Quality of education	3204	82 ± 3
Peer relationships	2486	63 ± 4

Of the parents and carers who decided to enrol their child in kindergarten at an ACT public school, the most common factors considered when selecting the school were the location of the school (90%), school reputation (89%) and quality of education (84%). Where a child moved from an ACT non-government school, the most common factors considered when selecting the new school were the location of the school (79%) and quality of education (76%).

**Figure 2: Factors considered when selecting an ACT public school by origin, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>5</sup>**



4. The percentages in Table 2 do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates that there is no statistical difference between the results.

5. The percentages in Figure 2 do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates that there is no statistical difference between the results. Other includes students who were attending a school outside ACT, home schooled or not enrolled at any school.

## Section 2: Students who left the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010

### Destination of students who left the ACT public school system

Half (51%) of the in-scope students who left the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010 went to a non-government school in the ACT, 17 percent were no longer enrolled in a school, 13 percent went to a school in NSW and 13 percent went to a school elsewhere in Australia (Table 3).

**Table 3: Sector of enrolment after moving from an ACT public school when the destination was not an ACT public school, August 2009 to August 2010**

	Number	Percent
ACT non-government school	844	51 ± 5
NSW school	223	13 ± 3
Other school in Australia	209	13 ± 3
Not enrolled at any school	279	17 ± 3
Other <sup>6</sup>	106	6 ± 2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1660</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Responses parents gave regarding why they moved their child from an ACT public school

The most common responses parents and carers gave regarding why they moved their child from an ACT public school are provided in Table 4. The most common responses were quality of education (32%), location of the school (31%), personal reasons (24%), school culture (23%) and peer relationships (22%).

**Table 4: Most common responses parents gave regarding why they moved their child from an ACT public school when the destination was not an ACT public school, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>7</sup>**

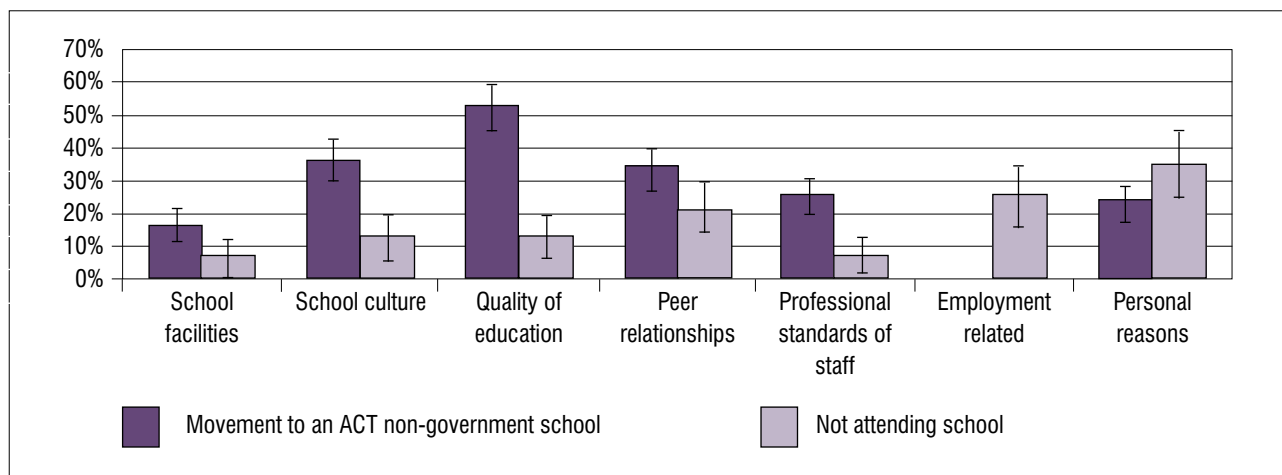
Response Categories	Number	Percent
Physical location of the school	512	31 ± 4
School facilities	172	10 ± 3
Quality of education	537	32 ± 4
Peer relationships	361	22 ± 4
Professional standards of staff	261	16 ± 3
School culture	383	23 ± 4
Personal reasons	404	24 ± 4

6. Other includes students who were home schooled or attending a school overseas.

7. The percentages in Table 4 do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates that there is no statistical difference between the results.

Figure 3 shows the most common responses parents and carers gave regarding why they moved their child from an ACT public school. Where a child moved to an ACT non-government school the most common responses were related to quality of education (52%), school culture (37%) and peer relationships (34%). Where a child was no longer attending school the most common responses were personal reasons (35%), employment related (26%) and peer relationships (21%).

**Figure 3: Most common responses parents gave regarding why they moved their child from an ACT public school by destination, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>8</sup>**

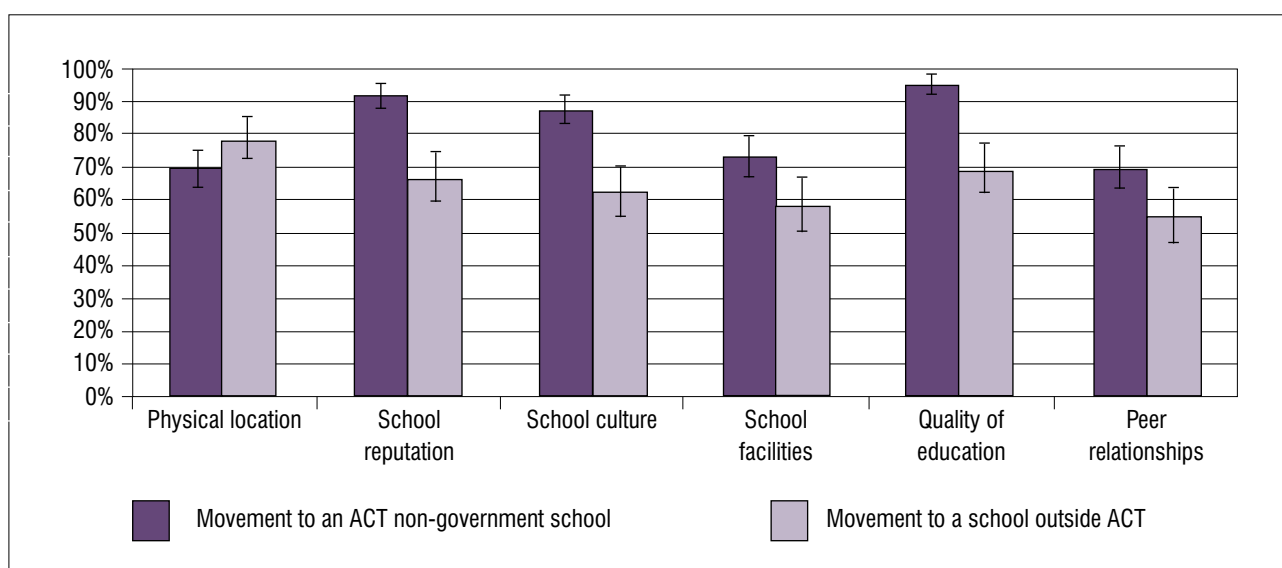


### Factors considered when selecting the new school

Figure 4 details the factors parents and carers considered when choosing a new school for their child.

Where a child moved to an ACT non-government school the choice of their new school was based on issues related to the quality of education (96%), reputation of the school (92%), school culture (87%), the school facilities (73%), peer relationships (70%) and the location of the school (70%). Where a child moved to another school outside ACT the choice of the new school was based on the location of the school (79%), quality of education (69%), reputation of the school (66%), school culture (62%), the school facilities (58%) and peer relationships (55%).

**Figure 4: Factors considered when selecting the new school by destination when the origin was an ACT public school, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>8</sup>**



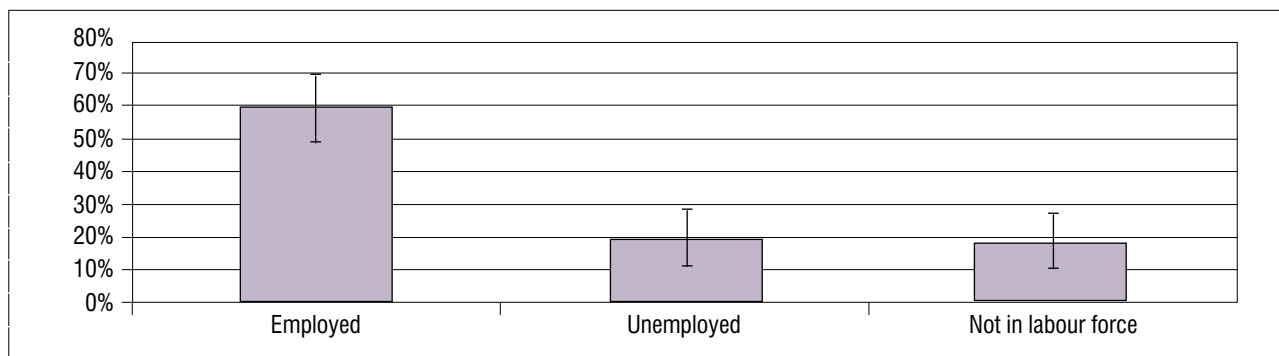
8. The percentages in Figure 3 and 4 do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates that there is no statistical difference between the results.

## Destination of early school leavers

Seventeen percent of the in-scope students (279) who left the ACT public school system were no longer attending school and most of these students were from the college sector. Of these, six in 10 (60%) were engaged in some form of employment, almost four in 10 (38%) were studying outside the traditional school environment, and three in 10 (30%) were not studying or employed at the time of the survey.

Figure 5 shows that at the time of the survey, 60 percent of early school leavers were employed, 19 percent were unemployed (not working, but actively looking for work) and 19 percent were not in the labour force (e.g. on holidays, studying only).

**Figure 5: Labour force status of early school leavers, August 2009 to August 2010**



Over one third (38%) of early school leavers were studying. Of these, almost eight in 10 (78%) were studying part-time and most (58%) were studying at a Certificate III level.

Almost one third (31%) of early school leavers were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. This was double the percentage of year 12 graduates undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship (15% of 2009 year 12 graduates). The most common occupations were technicians and trade workers (35%), labourers (23%) and sales workers (20%).

Seventy percent of parents of early school leavers were satisfied with the school most recently attended.

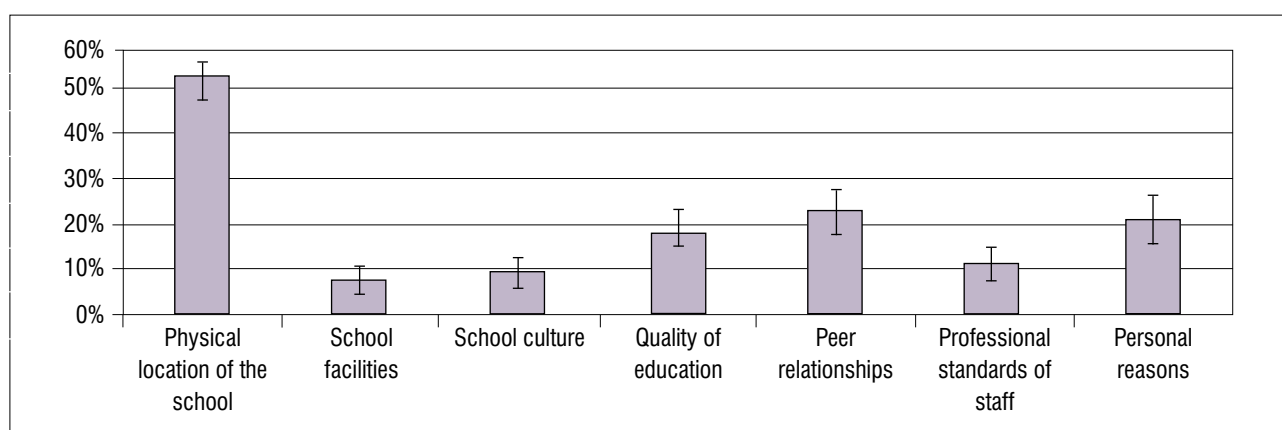
The Department recognises the importance of each student's unique pathway towards a fulfilling and productive adult life. Schooling in this context helps students to make choices about their future training, study and employment options. This objective is complemented by recent changes to the *ACT Education Act 2004*. Taking effect on 1 January 2010, all young people must participate in schooling until they complete year 10, and then either continue full-time in education, training and/or employment until age 17 or completed year 12 or equivalent, whichever occurs first.

## Section 3: Students who moved schools within the ACT public school system between August 2009 and August 2010

### Responses parents gave regarding why they moved their child from an ACT public school

Figure 6 details the most common responses parents and carers gave regarding why they moved their child from one ACT public school to another ACT public school. The most common responses were physical location (53%), peer relationships (23%), personal reasons (21%) and quality of education (19%).

**Figure 6: Most common responses parents gave regarding why they moved their child from one ACT public school to another ACT public school, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>9</sup>**



### Factors considered when selecting the new ACT public school

Table 5 details the factors parents and carers considered when choosing another ACT public school for their child. The most common factors were the location of the school (81%), quality of education (78%), the reputation of the school (76%), school culture (68%), school facilities (64%) and peer relationships (58%).

**Table 5: Factors considered when selecting the new ACT public school when the origin was another ACT public school, August 2009 to August 2010<sup>9</sup>**

	Number	Percent
Physical location	807	81 ± 4
School reputation	756	76 ± 5
School culture	675	68 ± 5
School facilities	642	64 ± 5
Quality of education	775	78 ± 5
Peer relationships	582	58 ± 5

9. The percentages in the Figure 6 and Table 5 do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates that there is no statistical difference between the results.

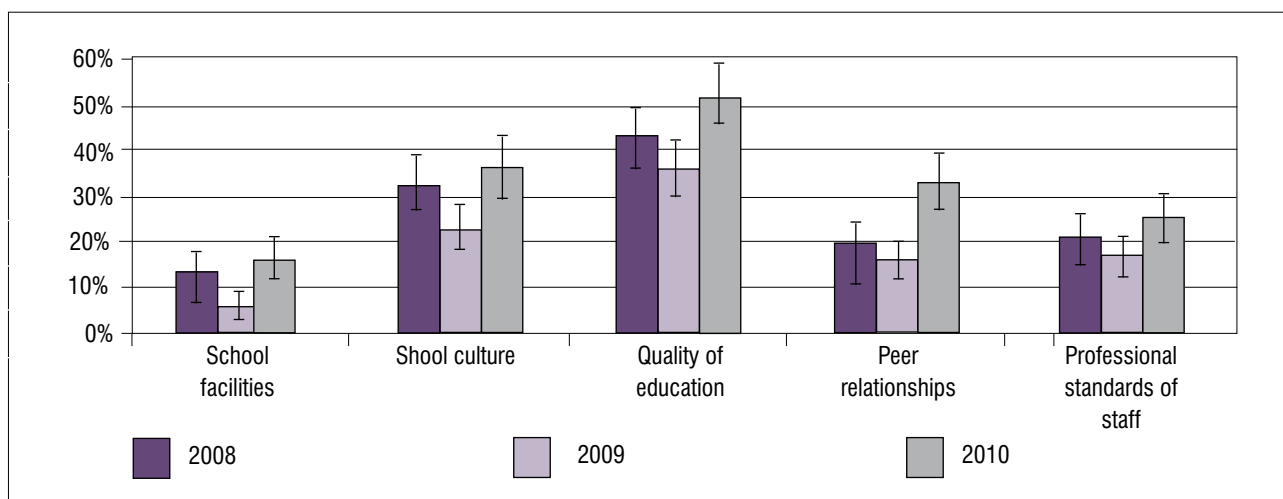
## Section 4: Key Outcomes for 2008, 2009 and 2010

After three years surveying parents and carers, the Department has a better understanding of the reasons behind school movement. Conducted in 2008, 2009 and 2010, the key findings of the School Movement Survey have been similar in each year.

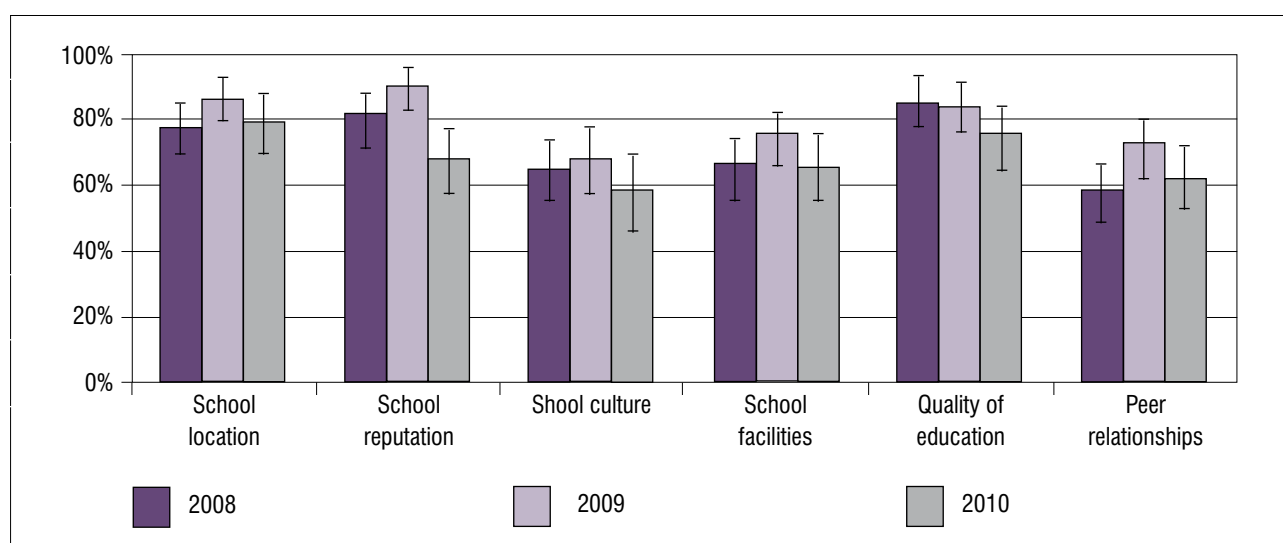
Quality of education, peer relationships and school culture were consistently identified as the main reasons why parents and carers moved their child from an ACT public school, after removing non-school factors (physical location and personal reasons). In addition, the main factors that parents considered when choosing a new school were consistently identified as physical location of the school, quality of education and school reputation.

When looking at students who have left the ACT public system and moved to the ACT non-government system, the most common reasons parents and carers gave for moving were quality of education and school culture. These results have remained fairly stable over time.

**Figure 7: Most common reasons for moving from an ACT public school when the destination was an ACT non government school, 2008-2010<sup>10</sup>**



**Figure 8: Factors considered when selecting an ACT public school when the origin was an ACT non-government school, 2008-2010<sup>10</sup>**



10. The percentages in Figures 7 and 8 do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response. The error bars reflect the 95 percent confidence intervals and where they overlap indicates that there is no statistical difference between the results

## Conclusion

The Department of Education and Training has sought feedback from parents and carers about school choice, to ensure public school education is high quality and meets the needs of ACT families. In response, the Department continues to implement strategies to improve public school education. These include the School Improvement Framework; high school and college sector reform; implementation of the ACT Curriculum Framework and for 2011; the national curriculum; a focus on enhancing performance in literacy and numeracy; a range of initiatives to support school safety and student wellbeing; the Quality Teaching model; and establishing the ACT Teacher Quality Institute.

In late 2007 the Department agreed to conduct biannual School Movement Surveys for three years (2008 to 2010) to examine the reasons why ACT students move schools. The School Movement Survey has produced consistent results over the last three years indicating that overall parental opinion on schooling is fairly constant. For this reason the Department has decided to discontinue the biannual survey in its current form.

## Explanatory Notes

**Confidence intervals.** Throughout this publication 95 percent confidence intervals have been included. For example, 57 percent  $\pm$  4 percentage points means that there is 95 percent confidence that the true percentage (for the population) lies between 53 percent and 61 percent. The confidence interval provides information on the reliability of the result and indicates that if the survey were conducted 100 times, then in 95 times, the percent of respondents with a particular characteristic would be within the confidence limits given.

**Weighted results** have been used in this publication to adjust for the variations in relative sample sizes and type of movements that occur from combining the results from the August 2009 to February 2010 survey and the February 2010 to August 2010 survey.

**Early school leavers** includes students who left school prior to completing year 10 or after commencing but not completing college.

**Employment related** includes reasons such as joining the workforce, starting an apprenticeship or traineeship or starting a course at a vocational education institute.

**Peer relationships** relate to the child's class or school group, friendships and safety.

**Perception of public education** includes the community's perception of the school or the wider public education system.

**Personal reasons** relates to reasons such as the student being asked to leave, the student's choice, change in custody arrangements, financial constraints and illness.

**Physical location** relates to reasons such as the family moved house, the location of the school and transport facilities.

**Professional standards of staff** includes responses associated with the school's leadership team, the child's teacher and teacher professionalism.

**Quality of education** relates to the school's curriculum, performance and programs.

**School culture** relates to discipline, religious or moral values of the school, school traditions and school uniform.

**School facilities** relates to IT facilities, playground equipment, classroom design, model of the school (K-10, K-6 etc), class size, availability of before and after school care and access to extra-curricular activities.

**School reputation** includes that family or friends recommended the school, the parent or carer went to the school or the reception received on inquiring about the school.

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