



School Movement Survey 2006

This publication provides information on the reasons given by parents/carers for moving their child from an ACT government school in 2006.

Highlights

- Of those that moved from an ACT government school in 2006 around half (47%) moved to another ACT government school and around one in five (22%) moved to an ACT non-government school.
- There was a range of factors that led to a student moving from an ACT government school. Over half (52%) indicated that quality of education was a factor in their decision, followed by peer relationships (46%) and professional standards of staff (46%)¹.
- For those that stayed within the ACT public education system, their decision to move was based on the physical location of the school (25%), quality of education (24%) and professional standards of staff (21%). Where a child moved to an ACT non-government school, the most common reasons given for moving were related to school culture (21%), peer relationships (19%) and quality of education (17%)¹.
- Where a child remained within the ACT public education system the choice of their new school was based on the reputation of the school (49%), the location of the school (33%) and school facilities (22%). Where a child moved to an ACT non-government school the choice of their new school was based on school culture (39%), school reputation (30%) and school facilities (13%)¹.



¹ These percentages add to more than 100% as respondents could provide multiple reasons.

Findings

Destination of students leaving a government school

Over half of the 339 survey respondents who moved their child from an ACT government school in 2006 stayed in the public education sector in either the ACT or NSW (Table 1). Around one in five (22%) went to a non-government school in either the ACT or NSW, 13% were no longer enrolled in a school or college and 1% were home schooled.

Table 1: Sector of enrolment after moving from an ACT government school, 2006

School sector	Number	Per cent
ACT government school/college	160	47
NSW government school/college	16	5
<i>Total government school/college</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>52</i>
ACT non-government school/college	73	22
NSW non-government school/college	2	1
<i>Total Non-Government School/College</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>22</i>
Not enrolled at any school/college	44	13
Home schooled	3	1
Other	41	12
Total	339	100

Note: Other includes those students at a school in another Australian state and territory or that are now attending an international/overseas schools.

Reasons for moving from an ACT government school

The most common reasons identified by parents for moving their child from an ACT government school are listed in Table 2. Over half (52%) indicated that quality of education was a factor in their decision. Other common factors included peer relationships (46%), professional standards of staff (46%) and school culture (42%).

Table 2: Reasons for moving from an ACT government school, 2006

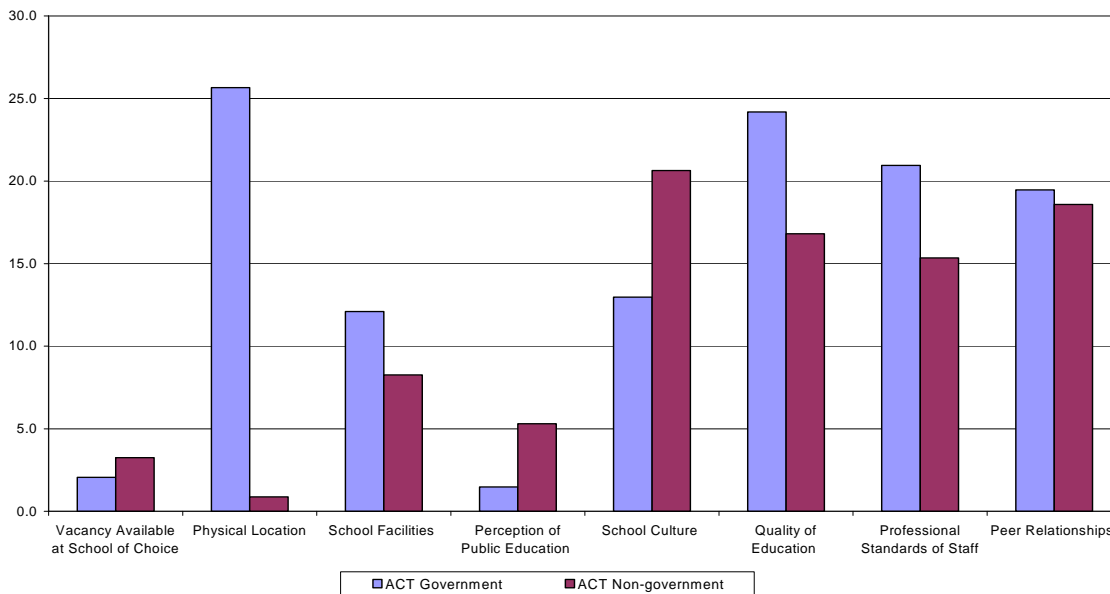
Response categories	Number	Per cent
Quality of education	177	52
Peer relationships	157	46
Professional standards of staff	156	46
School culture	143	42
Physical location	131	39
School facilities	80	24
Employment related	34	10
Perception of public education	31	9
Vacancy available at school of choice	18	5
Total	339	

Note: The numbers do not add to 339 as this is the total number of respondents, while the number indicated is the number of times that an item was identified. The percentages do not add to 100%, as respondents could provide more than one response.

Around half (47%) of parents who moved their child from their current ACT government school remained within the ACT public education system. In these cases, the most common reasons given for moving were physical location (25%) and factors relating to quality of education (24%), professional standards of staff (21%) and peer relationships (20%) (Figure 1).

Where a child moved to an ACT non-government school the most common reasons given for moving were related to school culture (21%), peer relationships (19%), quality of education (17%) and professional standards of staff (15%).

Figure 1: Reasons for moving from an ACT government school to another ACT government school or an ACT non-government school, 2006



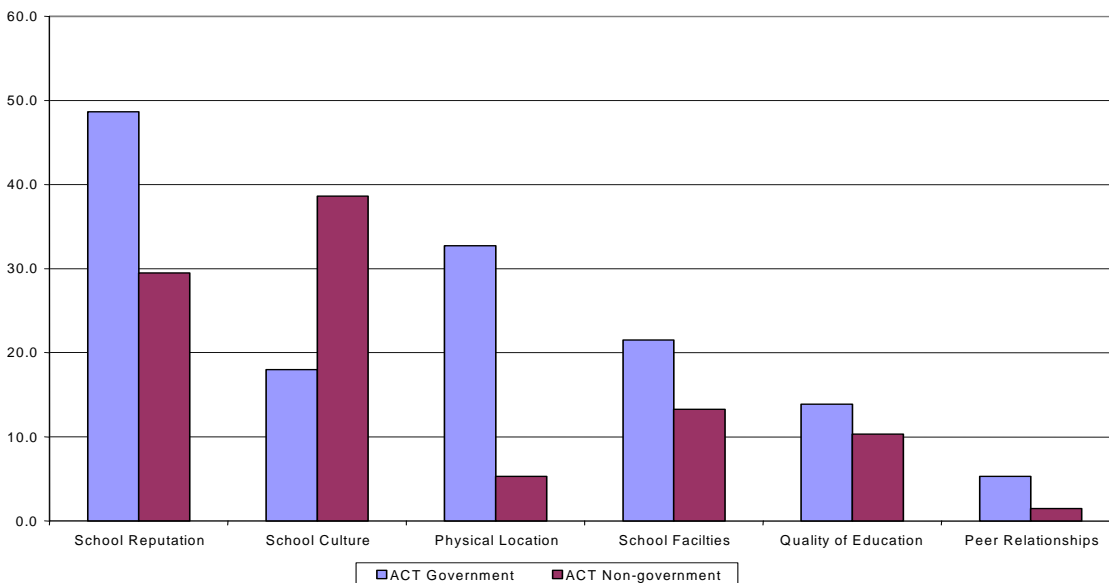
Note: The percentages in the figure above do not add to 100%, as respondents could provide more than one response.

Reasons for selection of new school

Of those that moved from an ACT government school to another ACT government school the choice of their new school was based on issues related to the reputation of the school (49%), the location of the school (33%), school facilities (22%), school culture (18%), quality of education (14%) and peer relationships (5%).

Of those that moved from an ACT government school to an ACT non-government school the choice of their new school was based on issues related to school culture (39%), school reputation (30%), school facilities (13%), quality of education (10%), physical location (5%) and peer relationships (2%).

Figure 2: Reasons for selecting new school by destination, 2006



Note: The percentages in the figure above do not add to 100%, as respondents could provide more than one response.

These results are comparable to those of two recent Australian studies that looked at the factors associated with parent choice of school; *Parents' Attitudes to Schooling* (DEST, 2007) and *Why parents choose Private or Public schools* (ACER on behalf of the Sydney Morning Herald, 2004).

Overall, the DEST study found that the most important factor parents considered when choosing a school was teacher quality (91%), followed by a secure environment, discipline, values, facilities and academic reputation, location and extra curricular activities (all over 50%).

However, when looking at responses by sector the study found that parents with children in the public education sector rated school location, facilities and peer group as more important than those in the private sector. Private sector parents rated religion, tradition, values and discipline as more important than those in the public sector.

Similarly, the ACER study found that subject availability, location, parents' school history and factors associated with 'social and cultural familiarity or security of the school' were more important for public sector parents. Private sector parents rated discipline, religious or moral values, school traditions and school uniform as more important than those in the public sector.

Methodology

The survey was posted to households with a personalised covering letter detailing why the survey was being undertaken on 29 June and had a closing date of 20 July 2007. A reminder postcard was sent to households who had not responded to the survey on 11 July 2007.

While the scope of the survey covered all students who left an ACT government school in 2006, students in Year 12 and students who had left a closed or closing school were excluded. As such, a total of 1763 households were surveyed. Of the 1763 surveys sent out, 371 surveys were returned, 32 of these were excluded as they fell outside the original scope of the survey and a total of 339 (19%) surveys were considered to be in scope and useable.

Conclusion

As this was the first time the Department has gained a consolidated view of the reasons why parents/carers decided to move their child from an ACT government school a review of the survey will be undertaken. The review will cover issues such as scope (who should be included), timing of the survey (how often and when during the year), the approach to be used (mail, telephone, focus groups etc) and the questions asked in the survey.

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