This information has been compiled to address questions raised by BRSHS staff, the BRSHS Parents and Citizens committee (P&C) and the Local Consultative Committee (LCC).

If you require further information or clarification, please speak to your union representative or Principal, Roger Atkins.

What you need to know

The Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative commenced in 2013, with an aim to improve services and learning outcomes for students. Since then, 180 schools have become Independent Public Schools (IPS). In the Metropolitan North Region, only Bracken Ridge State High School and Sandgate State High School remain non-IPS. It is a competitive process and this is the last opportunity for schools to apply to become an IPS. There are only 70 placements in this final round and schools must, as a minimum, meet all of the IPS EOI criteria.

What are the benefits of becoming an IPS?

• **Financial benefits**
  The school will receive a one-off, up-front establishment grant of $50,000 to assist with the transition and $50,000 per annum to spend on functions associated with becoming an IPS. This represents a total of $250,000 of additional funding over four years. The school will have more autonomy and flexibility in managing the budget. The allocation of funds will be based on needs and determined by the school, in consultation with the school community.

• **Staffing benefits**
  The school will have additional autonomy and greater flexibility around staffing options. It will enable us to:
  - directly recruit staff and build a team that is “fit-for-purpose” and tailored to our local needs
  - locally manage our staffing profile
  - be on a level playing field (in regards to recruitment) with other Independent Public Schools in the region.

• **Other benefits**
  Some of the other benefits include:
  - the flexibility to trial and progress innovative practices to maximise student outcomes
  - an opportunity to explore innovative ways to connect with local businesses, industry and other community organisations
  - the ability to formulate infrastructure plans to shape a physical environment that best matches the strategic vision for the school.

What are the timeframes?

• The application to become an IPS must be submitted by 11 November 2016.
• If successful, the changes will take effect from 2017.
• The School Council should be established within 12 months of becoming an IPS.

What happens after the 4 years?

The school’s ongoing participation in the IPS initiative will depend on a range of factors, including the continued delivery of positive outcomes, appropriate school leadership and strong community support. The school will undertake a School Improvement Unit review every 4 years.

If we become an IPS, can we withdraw from the initiative?

Yes. In consultation with the school community (including support from QTU members, the Local Consultative Committee and P&C) the school may choose to withdraw from the IPS initiative. The request to withdraw can be initiated by the School Council and IPS Principal and will be considered by the Director-General.

If we become an IPS, will we remain part of the state school system?

Yes. Independent Public Schools remain part of Queensland’s state education system and as such, must comply with all state and national legislation, industrial instruments, policies and agreements. We will continue to have access to a range of central and regional office support and advice, as well as professional development opportunities. Safety nets (eg TRS) and HR support will continue to exist.
What innovative ideas will we pursue as an IPS?
BRSHS has already commenced work on a range of innovative ideas, including the establishment of:
• an integrated Wellbeing Plan
• several business improvement projects (eg Explicit Instruction, Assessment Practices, Data, Student Leadership)
• streamlined operating practices.
As an IPS, BRSHS will continue to progress this work. We will also proactively identify and pursue other opportunities to enhance school performance, student wellbeing and student outcomes.

Will becoming an IPS create additional work for staff, the BSM or Principal?
From discussions with our peers in Independent Public Schools, it appears that there will be no significant increase to current workloads for most staff. There will be limited changes to the day-to-day operations of the school. However, with increased autonomy, changes to budgeting and a change in reporting lines, there may be impacts for the school’s Executive team. IPS Principals will be supported by receiving clear and direct access to mentors, peers and supervisors for information, assistance and advice. Financial support (up to $50,000) is available to assist with the transition.

Does this give the Principal more powers?
As an IPS, the Principal will have greater flexibility and autonomy in regards to financial and staffing matters. A Delivery and Performance Agreement must be entered into with the Director-General and the chair of the School Council. The three key local consultative and accountability structures are:
• The School Council
• The Parents and Citizens Committee
• The Local Consultative Committee
Roger Atkins, BRSHS Principal, has advised that he is committed to remaining at the school for the 4 year duration as an IPS.

How does becoming an IPS affect the transfer process?
In regards to staff seeking transfers out of the school, there is no change. You can still transfer out to any school. Staff wishing to transfer in to the school, can now specifically identify BRSHS as their preferred option. In addition, we can ensure we get staff with the right mix of skills and knowledge to suit our needs.

What impact will this have on rural schools and the broader public education system?
Understanding and managing the broader impacts for rural schools and the public education system are matters for the Department of Education to consider.

What is the role of the School Council?
The School Council is a vital means of engaging with, and being held to account by, parents, school staff and the community. The School Council will meet quarterly and be responsible for:
• monitoring the school’s strategic direction
• approving and monitoring the implementation of school plans and policies of a strategic nature
• advising the school Principal about strategic matters.
The operational details of the School Council will be established during the first 12 months of becoming an IPS.

How will becoming an IPS affect the P&C?
The P&C President will be a member of the School Council. The introduction of a School Council will allow the P&C to focus on:
• fostering community interest in educational matters
• bringing closer cooperation between parents of children attending the school, other members of the community, staff members of the school and students of the school
• giving advice and recommendations to the Principal about issues relating to students
• assisting in the giving of financial or other resources or services for the benefit of students of the school.

If you require further information or clarification, please speak to your union representative or Principal, Roger Atkins.

Sources: IPS 2017 Prospectus and IPS Policy Framework.