State’s great OP divide

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ABOUT 30 Queensland schools – most of them Catholic or independent – have a better than 80 per cent chance of ensuring students with university ambitions gain entry to higher education, an analysis of date on Year 12 results shows.

The information released over the past three years also shows that students at girls-only schools tend to perform slightly better academically than those at boys’ schools.

And it reveals that government and Catholic schools are doing the bulk of the work in offering vocational pathways for students who opt not to pursue university entrance.

The data, collected by the Queensland Studies Authority and released annually since 2006, includes information on the proportion of eligible students at each school who gain Overall Position scores of 15 or better.

The Courier-Mail’s analysis suggests that Queensland’s ranks of elite academic schools are dominated by independent and Catholic institutions clustered in the state’s southeast.

About 30 of them have managed over the past three years to ensure more than 80 per cent of their OP-eligible students perform at a level that will get them into a university course.

The sole government school to reach this benchmark is Brisbane State High School, although some, such as The Gap State High and Kenmore State High, come close. Education Minister Rod Welford has said that an OP15 or better all but ensured entrance to a university.

However, Mr Welford, the Catholic and independent schools lobby and educators caution against solely using the proportion of students with outstanding OP scores as a measure of a school’s suitability.

Queensland governments from both sides of the political fence have prevented The Courier-Mail form publishing detailed OP data.

However, those schools with students who do well with their Ops regularly report the fact on their websites or on public noticeboards.

The three years’ worth of data shows that smaller regional schools are the most consistent performers within the state school sector.
Of the 19 state schools at which more than 70 per cent of eligible students performed well enough over the three years to be offered university entry, 10 of them were outside the southeast corner. Schools such as Atherton State High, Centenary Heights State high in Toowoomba and Malanda State High scored better than many urban schools.

Top of the class — Based on proportion of students getting OP15 or better

1 Brisbane Grammar
2 Brisbane Girls Grammar
3 All Saints Anglican
4 Moreton Bay College
5 Somerville House
6 St Patrick’s Gympie
7 St Rita’s Clayfield
8 Somerset College
9 St Peter’s Lutheran
10 Emmanuel College: St Joseph’s Gregory Terrace
12 Mount St Michael’s; All hallows
14 AB Paterson College
15 Matthew Flinders Anglican College: Whitsunday Anglican
17 St Margaret’s Anglican
18 Townsville Grammar
19 Redlands College
20 Concordia College
21 Toowoomba Grammar
22 Hillbrook Anglican; Anglican Church Grammar; St Aidan’s Anglican Corinda
25 Northside Christian College
26 Mueller College Redcliffe; Rockhampton Grammar
28 St Augustine’s Marist College Cairns; Brisbane State High School