

Education (General Provisions) (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill 2023

Submission No: 7

Submitted by: [REDACTED]

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Attachments:

Submitter Comments:

Re. Inquiry into Education (General Provisions) (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill 2023

I am a high school teacher, in the areas of maths and science. I teach solely in the junior secondary space, in a low socio-economic school. According to the My School website, the school I work in has 65% of its students in the lowest quartile of education advantage for the country. The school I work in has been enormously underfunded, and the problem has increased in the timeframe of which I have been there. The impacts on the students and families are great, for a multitude of reasons. I will address what I feel to be pertinent, and my understanding of the impacts.

1. The school lacks funding for adequate levels of support for the children.

This year, the region has removed significant amounts of funding from the school. This has been through staffing and resourcing. I acknowledge that I do not see the 'ins and outs' of these decisions, but we do receive information through meetings etc. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] his kind of human resource allowed staff the opportunity to problem solve in assisting particular students who would display complex behaviours, with complex drivers. They allowed for students to have a safe space to receive support, as well as a safe space to be disciplined. They also provided on-the-ground support by assisting during class time when children were leaving classrooms etc. When region transferred [REDACTED], due to budget cuts, the staff and the students have lost most of the support previously provided. Behaviour management has become a far greater and more difficult task, without this essential working relationship with a key stakeholder in the school. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It also means that our heads of department are less able to focus on curriculum and the development of their staff, and are spending more time assisting in behaviour management.

In addition to the loss of [REDACTED] the school does not have anywhere near enough money to assist children with disabilities. I am teaching classes of children with 50-60% **reported** disabilities, and do not have a teacher aide, even though the classes swell to up to 25 children. The behaviour becomes impossible to manage when children are left unable to access the curriculum at the level they require, in the way they require. Teachers are consistently being sent lists of strategies to use to support children with particular disabilities and can sometimes be liaising with 3 or 4 different case managers internally, and we are not able to get the resources to practically apply the necessary strategies. I have attempted to get simple physical or technological aides for children, in attempts to fill how much my attention is stretched whilst teaching, and even then, we do not have a bank of resources to collect from. I have had to use my own money to purchase pencil grips, slope boards, and even subscriptions to resource websites to find differentiated work for the kids to do. I also teach a lesson a week for literacy, and we do not even have adequate amounts of books, or the types of books needed, to teach phonics to the lowest-level children. I am paying for a subscription so that I can download eBooks to print and staple in my prep time. A school really should have enough money to properly teach a basic phonics program and to be able to read at-level books with the children.

The school has also had significant cuts made to the budgets of our departments, particularly the departments where we use consumables like cooking, sewing, science, wood work and metal work. Our families do not have the monetary means to buy their own consumables in

these instances, so it is on the school to bridge this gap, and this is something that should be more carefully considered.

2. The school has had to stop approving all professional development for staff.

The school rarely has funds to send staff to professional development. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

professional development sessions were about differentiation and disabilities from memory. The research is moving very quickly on so many topics that teachers need to be across, especially on disabilities. If schools are so lacking in funding that they cannot send staff for training in (what I would consider) essential learning, then it goes without saying that the children are not receiving the best practice possible, which is in line with the latest research, practices and strategies for pedagogy. Numerous inquiries into disabilities have highlighted that educational settings need to be more inclusive, and staff not being adequately upskilled to support these children is a huge barrier. This then has ongoing costs to the families and the wider community.

3. The funding models do not appear to be predictive and appear to be reactive.

Funding models need to be based on trends seen on a macro level, as well as on a micro level. School staff need to be regularly asked about gaps that they see in their own schools, so that more targeted funding models can be created. I feel like it goes without saying that schools with the highest levels of disadvantage should attract more funding. These schools have less ability to fundraise from their community and from within the school. They have higher levels of needs that relate to their life circumstances. The schools are often in great levels of disrepair. None of this information, or the connection between poverty and support requirements, is unfounded either. This research is easily found, and is backed up through observation of the trends in schools. The funding is usually only promised once things start to plummet, or have already plummeted, instead of strategically placing funding and monitoring its effect. Even now, schools are grappling with a new curriculum to plan and eventually implement, an impending mobile phone ban, and schools like ours don't even have new textbooks! Much less being on bring-your-devices... But we are expected to keep rolling through, even without extra resourcing to smoothly bring policies and initiatives in. Everything is too little too late, even though polling staff would likely guide where funding could go.

Thank-you for the opportunity to make a submission to the committee. I will be disappointed if another MP walks through our school gates, sees the state of disrepair, and continues to not proactively attain fairer funding for struggling schools and their communities. The Ministers all need to do better, and frankly, have a lot to answer for with the state of disrepair seen in many QLD state schools.