

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

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Attachments:

Submitter Comments:

I believe a reason increasing numbers of inexperienced teachers in Australia think they will leave the teaching profession within less than 10 years of commencing to teach is due to the decision to "so-called" integrate increasing numbers of Special School students into regular Primary and High Schools, without adequate support for Special School students with high support needs. Attempting to integrate larger numbers of Special School Students into regular schools appears to be no more than a cost-cutting initiative which short-changes both Special School students as well as Primary and High School students. Parents who are wealthy enough to choose to have their Special Needs child educated in a Private School may enrol their child in a Private School. However if their child's intellectual level is very low or their child's special needs result in their child exhibiting extremely disruptive behaviour in the regular classroom setting, the parents will very quickly be shown the door and their child will become just one more high support needs child in the nearest Primary or High School. When low-functioning children are placed in a regular Primary or High School, many are often teased by regular students and so become school refusals. To my knowledge as a Special Schools' teacher in Queensland for 40 years, teasing is rarely a problem. Some Primary and High School students resent the amount of teacher and teacher-aide time that is allocated to students with high support needs and when they are adults and come into contact with people with disabilities, many adults tend not to treat disabled adults with the respect and dignity they deserve. In Australia throughout my long teaching career I have not found the general public greatly value teachers and the teaching profession. While growing up in England I found that the public placed a high value on teachers and that teaching was thought to be a noble career. I was amazed on lecture tours in Japan to find that as a teacher I was a highly valued member of the community. Talking to colleagues in Switzerland I was astounded at the high value the Swiss place on teaching and teachers. A colleague gave me the following basic reason for this in comparison to the value placed on teaching in Queensland: - "Switzerland has beautiful scenery to attract the tourists. However unlike Queensland Switzerland has no valuable resources under the ground. The only really valuable resource we have in Switzerland is what is what there is between children's ears. So we pay teachers a far higher wage than a teacher receives in Queensland and a teacher in Switzerland can remain as a classroom teacher for the teacher's entire working life. In Queensland teachers have to leave the classroom to earn a better wage." The higher wage for a teacher in Switzerland attracts a more highly educated person to consider teaching as a well-paid life long career in a well-respected profession. Harry Johnson Former Teacher/Coordinator, Kingfisher Recycling Centre, Aspley Special School, Brisbane.