

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 51
Submitted by: Nicole Johnson
Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Proposed amendments to Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
Date: Tuesday, 12 March 2024 9:16:18 PM

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you about the government's proposed amendments to the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*. In particular, I hope to persuade you that requiring homeschool students to follow the Australian Curriculum is unnecessary and detrimental to students and families.

I know that you experienced members of Parliament and I note that some of you have held responsibilities within the Education portfolio for some years, so I am pleased to be heard by a group who has both interest in and knowledge of the state of education in Queensland today.

My husband and I were both high achieving public school students but felt that the system failed us in various ways, notably in its "one size fits all" approach. Teachers were unable to accelerate or extend content appropriately in areas where we excelled, and in fact teachers at my primary school urged my mother in 1992 to remove me from the school system and home educate me for this reason. She, however, lacked the confidence and resources to do this, and so I completed year 12 in the state system, with an OP 1 at 16 years old.

In hopes of providing a more tailored education to our three children, and with the desire to continue to spend more time with them, we decided to home school. Sadly, my husband passed away several years ago when our three children were all under 8, but I have continued homeschooling them and am very proud of their current selves. We have had several difficult years, with three immediate family members dying of terminal illnesses in the past five years. Homeschooling allowed us to spend time with them during their illnesses, take time off to grieve when we needed to, and pick school back up when we were ready without having missed a day of lessons.

It also allows us to deep dive into interest areas as a family, instead of segregating the children into grades. Each of my children completes separate maths and English work at their own level, but for history, geography, science, art, Latin, logic, sport and book clubs, they work together and often with other homeschooling friends across a range of ages, studying the same topics at their own individual level. This is possible because up to this time, Queensland has allowed homeschoolers to work outside the national curriculum. When my then Year 4 student studied ancient history using chapter books and primary sources, my Year 2 student studied the same content through picture books and more scaffolded primary source work. They produced a timeline together, studied the same famous artworks, worked together to mummify a chicken, and had a far richer experience than if I had been compelled to provide an ACARA "Year 4" education to one and an entirely separate ACARA "Year 2" education to the other.

Queensland teachers receive four years of university education to teach them to implement the national curriculum for a single grade level or subject area at a time. They also receive paid professional development days each year and curriculum documents from schools to help them do this, in hopes that all Queensland children will receive a baseline education of an acceptable standard. The government now proposes to amend Section 217 of the Act to compel home schooling parents to implement this same curriculum with no training or support, and in more than half of cases, to children in multiple grade levels. This is despite the fact that the current registration process in Queensland requires parents to provide evidence that our children are receiving, not merely an "acceptable" education, but a "high quality" one. I am advised that less than 1% of registrations fail to meet this requirement, but those that do have their registrations cancelled.

If I am required to provide my children with an education keyed to the ACARA standards, I will continue to educate them at home. However, I believe they will receive a lesser education. They will lose the opportunity to work together and with mixed age friends in favour of hours of grim and joyless independent work each day. They will be required to repeat content they have already covered in depth in previous years, and it will become more difficult to accelerate or remediate them in areas of personal strength and weakness. The additional planning and reporting burden placed on me will leave me less time and energy for "extras" like volunteering on the homeschool Book Week committee, supporting the kids' entrepreneurial ideas, researching excursions, art and music

appreciation, running a boys' book club or celebrating events like Harry Potter Day and Hobbit Day. These are precisely the things that take an education from "acceptable" to "high quality".

Successful homeschooling looks incredibly different to classroom teaching. There are many factors that influence this such as multi-age teaching, concepts or projects that cross many different subject areas and children who have differing learning speeds and styles within the same family. Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. I hope that I have convinced you to take another look before implementing the proposed changes to section 217 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.

Kind regards,

Nicole Johnson

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the contact information of Nicole Johnson.