

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 372  
**Submitted by:** Jennifer Millers  
**Publication:**  
**Attachments:** No attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Education Bill 2024  
**Date:** Monday, 18 March 2024 10:43:44 PM

---

I **object to** and have **serious concerns about** the proposals in the Education Bill 2004 for the following reasons:

### 1. Bloated Curriculum

Flexibility is the key to providing an opportunity for these children to become fully functioning members of their community. This is achieved by providing some standard opportunities (classroom style), and life and field experiences (travelling, camps, etc). Trying to enforce conformity to the ACARA curriculum will negatively affect many children who do not, cannot, or are not allowed to attend school and learn under the standard system. These students are not always able to study eight different subjects at the same time. The current system suits them better where they study English, Maths, and other subjects as the children are able to manage. This does not mean they do not study a variety of subjects, just not all at once.

Some children tend to learn subjects (other than English and Maths) when interested. When this interest is evident, then it is an opportunity to 'go hard' on that subject covering information which may be several year levels higher than their current year. This enables a more positive outcome for the home-schooled child (ie interest plus learning new things) with a more manageable way to teach them.

It needs to be noted that many of these children need to do schoolwork around medical appointments. This means they do not necessarily work 0900-1500 (or similar) Monday to Friday. They may have several appointments on a single or several week days and make up time on other days which could include evenings and weekends.

An example of flexibility that may be needed is when the children learn an instrument. They may not manage in depth theory (which they will probably never use) but are enriched by learning music which will broaden their life skill sets enabling them to fit more readily into a non-standardised world. Noting that the ultimate aim for all children is to become fully functional in their community and where possible not be dependent on anyone else to function effectively.

### 2. Education in the Best Interest of the Child

Parents are required to ensure their children get an education, but, in the best interest of the child, they should be able to choose how. They are in the best position to know their individual children and what works best for each of them. They are fully aware of how to seek information and assistance to best meet their child's needs.

How is the best interest of the child measured under the new Bill? Are the writers of the Bill teachers, home schoolers, etc? If not, how do they know what is best for the home-schooled children? Or was the 'easy' way taken where there is a system in place for schools so that should be able to be transitioned to home schoolers? The 'easy' way

may have gotten the Bill written but it will create more issues than seem to have been considered so far.

### 3. Administration

The Home Education Unit is already taking several months to respond when reports on three subjects per home-schooled child are submitted. What is the plan to deal with eight subjects per home schooled child.

The home-school educators (as that is what parents are – educators) have already provided relief to over-sized classrooms etc. Why would it be considered fair to increase the administrative pressure on them? If you believe that moving all of the home-schooled children into standard schools is a good idea, how will the Education Department cope with increased numbers when there is a teacher shortage? How will it cope with the behavioural patterns of some of the home-schooled children who require one-on-one attention and are currently being nurtured to learn at home, for example, autistic children? These children are very intelligent and do not necessarily belong in special schools.

#### My Story

I am the grandmother of a special needs (autism) home-schooled child. He has good days and bad days and the best person to know how to manage him is his mother. I am still learning (after 10 years) about what makes him tick and how to manage his behavioural patterns.

My grandson attended standard school for Preps and part of Grade 1. He was withdrawn from school by his mother when he spent most of his day alone in the Deputy Principle's office as the school's way of coping. This did not help with him learning to socialize with other people! He used to disappear for periods of time. He was in a storeroom once long enough to paint two walls and the floor. If there had been a required evacuation of the school, he possibly would not have been found. The teacher had no idea where he was, but more worrying, was that no one looked for him for quite some time. This indicates to me that the school did not have enough staff, at that time, to manage the students who were going there. The Deputy Principle, the Head of Student Support Services and his mother created a plan for him which could not be enacted due to not enough people able to assist. In the end, he was restricted to attending school for two hours per day. This meant that his mother could not work (jobs 0900-1100 are not readily available). She felt that he was not learning anything (ie sitting in the Deputy Principal's office most of the time) and she could do a better job herself. How has the staffing situation changed?

My grandson finds it difficult to complete 'standard' assignments. He struggles to write. This does not mean that he is not learning and cannot have a conversation about what he knows. At the moment, for example, he is really interested in Ancient Greece. This involves him researching information in different ways (internet, hard copy encyclopedia, museums) and having conversations with his mother (his educator) on what he has discovered. Interest from the child = go hard on the subject!!! Not a little bit every day/week; solid block of subject learning whilst the interest is there. A win-win all around.

Your sincerely

Jennifer Ann Millers

[REDACTED]