

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: Rebecca Laycock
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Hi Di Farmer & Parliamentarians,

My name is Rebecca Laycock. A mum of 8. 3 of those children in alternative mainstream high school, one "high school" homeschooler, 2 in mainstream primary school and one in mainstream Kindy.

I am sure you are going to be reading a magnitude of emails and letters opposing and applauding multiple things.

I'm here to share my thoughts on what my experience has been and why I think some of your adjustments will immensely affect my children and their education.

Firstly, we chose to homeschool one of my children after teachers at several schools repeatedly allowed her to fall through the cracks, no one cared enough to help her. Miss 14, is AuADHD. It has been a lengthy process getting to this diagnosis. And along the way we had teachers saying she just has bad behaviour, or that they don't believe in ADHD amongst other horrible things. Then we had the bullying, not even going to discuss this as I'm sure you could imagine why and what with her diagnosis (and no, she was never been the "problem"). Then the lack of teaching and understanding mainstream school teachers can provide for children on the spectrum (and no not all are like this but most have not had training to handle a neurodivergent child).

All of the above, over the course of eight years, left my child depressed, victimised and uneducated to an inappropriate level for her age yet was being given grades of "C"?!

I made the ultimate decision to homeschool after my child not being accounted for. And no this was not the first time my child was not accounted for, an Autistic ADHD child, not being watched close enough that she went unaccounted for under the watch of the teachers at a STATE school. Not Acceptable!

Since homeschooling and adhering as closely as possible to the Australian curriculum, I have discovered that my "grade 9" child reads at a level of a year 6 child. She comprehends English at a level of a year 6 child and I'm reaching saying she achieves mathematics at a level of a year 5 child. I tailored her program to what she could comprehend and could cope with and she has improved significantly academically. All in a matter of 8 months. She is smiling again, she is engaged in her self, her mental health, her education and her LIFE. Why is this? Because of being able to homeschool how MY CHILD needed.

You want to implement these new rules and regulations but some do not suit every child. Not every child learns the same and not every child is neurotypical or able bodied. You want to impose removing the use of gendered language and not every neurodiverse child will comprehend what this means or why. Allow a child to be called a boy, girl, non binary etc. Don't remove their right to choose who they are or want to be. Removing gendered language removes gendered toilets (potentially), is this safe?! You want to implement acknowledging well being, inclusion and diversity. Which are great things but a little too late for one of my children and now you want to "control" how she is now learning in her safe and accepting environment, at her own pace, in her own way she understands. I think NOT.

We currently have a generation of "woke" kids. Kids that will learn that for so long the QLD education system failed them and with some, not all of these amendments/additions to legislation, are acknowledging or rectifying already failed attempts.

So, for my babies still in mainstream I say NO, don't remove gendered language, add to it. Give our children the freedom to choose who they want to be. I say, YES, to introducing student support plans, as long as this is monitored by a non biased person or "committee" that will look at solely the child's individual needs and not what a school can accommodate in the governments realm of acceptable.

And for my homeschooler, enhancing the regulation of home education, I say NO. Allow us the right to teach our children how they need to be taught. Allow us the right to an education that is tailored to their needs. Allow her to be interested again. Don't take away what your education system could not provide, a love of learning.

And don't assume that we are not following the Australian Curriculum just because it does not fit into your "box" of approval.

AuADHD children see the world differently, experience it differently. They feel deeper, think harder and have an intense connection when engaged. Not all children on the spectrum qualify for special education and are sometimes (in our case, yes) left to slip through the cracks attending mainstream schools.

Consider ALL circumstances, Ms Farmer and parliamentarians. Some of us would have loved for our children to be educated and safe in a mainstream school. But now, we school, however each child needs, mainstream, homeschooled or alternative.

Regards

Rebecca Laycock

