

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

**Submission No:** 626  
**Submitted by:** Yarrilee State School Union Members  
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**Submitter Comments:**

# Re: EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

From: Queensland Teacher's Union Members of Yarrilee State School (4655)

Opposed to and request edits to the proposed bill.

C/O Yarrilee State School, 15 Scrub Hill Rd, Hervey Bay. 4655

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14 March, 2024

## **PLEASE CONSIDER YOUR BILL AMENDMENTS AND HOW THEY AFFECT THE TEACHERS, DEPUTY PRINCIPALS, PRINCIPALS AND STUDENTS WHO VALUE AN HIGH PERFORMING EDUCATION.**

We draw your attention to two parts of the Bill's amendments and how they will have a negative impact to the good order and management of schools as well as student and staff wellbeing. Please acknowledge that this feedback is provided to you by current teachers and school leaders who face students, and families every day and are at the forefront of educational delivery. The people providing you this feedback are the ones that should and need to be consulted prior to ANY amendments to a Bill that affect them.

The Department of Education (DoE) Role Description clearly states the following:

(DOE) is committed to giving all children a great start, engaging young people in learning, creating safe and inclusive workplaces and investing in communities for a stronger Queensland. Our human rights commitment is to create a stronger, fairer Queensland by respecting, protecting and promoting human rights in everything we do. Our objectives are: A great start for all children, Every student succeeding, Building Queensland communities, Safe and capable people delivering our vision, Fair and safe workplaces and communities. Our vision is one of equity and excellence in a progressive, high performing education system that realises the potential of every student. <https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/workingwithus/Documents/teach-s1-teacher-rd.pdf>

It is clear that as a government, you are committed in writing to provide the best education system possible. However, as a government you may like to consider the current Teacher Shortage and WHY teachers are not being attracted to the profession. In fact, why teachers are considering leaving.

As you continue to make changes to the Education Bill, you make it more and more difficult to attract and retain teachers and administration. Currently teachers are barely coping with their current workload and the teaching of a growing number of students with a disability or who are affected with trauma. How will these changes be funded to ensure that teachers and schools provide a safe classroom for all students? The government needs to really think about how they can progress schools with the vision of equity and excellence with the current staff models. Schools, staff and resources are stretched too thin and currently don't adequately meet the needs. For every student to succeed schools desperately needs to reevaluate their class sizes and staffing models.

Please consider our feedback to the proposed changes as outlined below.

- **contribute to the good order and management of Queensland state schools by:**
  - improving procedural fairness for decision-making processes for school disciplinary absences

Processes are currently in place and are already very restricted. A principal does not make the decision to suspend (disciplinary absence) a student easily or without thought of how it will affect the student and their family or the other students and staff in the classroom trying to access an education. After all, it is clear that our leadership team is trying to create a "...Fair and safe workplaces and communities," as outlined in YOUR Role Description. The principal also has to consider the physical and mental health of their staff and other students when making decisions regarding disciplinary absences. Once again, trying to create a safe workplace.

Please appreciate it is necessary for students and their families to understand there are consequences for actions, and some consequences may require removal from the education site. Especially after all current school processes have been exhausted within the current constraints of funding and resources.

A consideration by the government may be that they provide alternate education facilities that students who require to be absent from school for disciplinary reasons.

Alternatively, providing additional support – human resources and other resources - within school is desperately needed to mitigate the chances of reaching suspension. All staff are at breaking point and have exhausted all current support avenues. We need further avenues of support in order to deliver the quality education the government envisions.

Another consideration could be, that this absence be regarded as a time to reset and support the child and family – a holistic approach. To gather the information required, up skill staff, gather resources in order to make an informed decision on how to best support a successful return to the classroom in order to deliver the quality education the government envisions.

Outside agencies need to also have some accountability in their role to support a student in their education. Currently students are waiting too long or the costs for parents to access this is unattainable. Students are suffering and Staff are trying to support them with the limited resources available to the school. Better access to professionals such as Paediatricians, Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, etc will vastly proactively improve a student's outcomes at school.

(DOE) states it "... is committed to giving all children a great start, engaging young people in learning, creating safe and inclusive workplaces and investing in communities." But if the government decides to continue with this Bill, that is restricting schools in their ability act according to student behaviour, they **MUST** be willing to fund schools appropriately to support the students who remain at school after often violent and anti-social behaviour. Therefore as (DOE) states in their role description "...creating a safe ... workplace."

(DOE) also makes it clear that "... Our human rights commitment is to create a stronger, fairer Queensland by respecting, protecting and promoting human rights in everything we do." Therefore, students and staff who are exposed and impacted by any unacceptable behaviour, and who are trying to access a quality education, **MUST** be considered through adequately funded support and resources.

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Staff who are continually negatively impacted in delivering the vision of DOE of “... equity and excellence in a progressive, high performing education system” MUST also be considered through adequately funded support and resources.

As outlined in the (DOE) vision it is clear that everyone (all staff and all students) have the human rights to be allowed to learn and perform to their best of their abilities with adequately funded support and resources. This current proposed amendment would see this vision erode even further for the (DOE) and government.

- introducing a new appeal right for accumulated short suspensions

Again, Principals do not make the decision to suspend a student without consideration of all students and staff affected. They consider the student’s cognitive ability and their vulnerability. They consider the rights of the other students and staff as required by the (DOE).

The right for a student and or parent to appeal a short suspension is not required and would open up the opportunity for abuse of the right to appeal. The time this would take would impact on the more important needs of the child. To allow this, is to belittle the educational system and the process. To allow this, is to belittle Principals and their professionalism and judgment.

- introducing student support plans

Introducing support plans for at risk students is something that is often done and is a valuable support document. These support plans take a lot of time in both man hours and human resources to currently complete. However, with anything that is introduced and worth doing it MUST be fully funded and fully supported.

If the government chooses to do this then they MUST be willing to fund the school. They need to provide appropriate training in a timely manner, funding for personnel to complete the documents as well as funding to implement the strategies identified on the support plans. Staff MUST be involved in this process in order for it to be successful, but this requires commitment from ALL stakeholders – (DOE) members, other agencies and most importantly families.

- **modernise and improve education services by:**
  - removing the use of gendered language

It is important to allow those students and staff the opportunity to identify as non-binary and have the appropriate pronouns written, however removing gendered language does not allow those students and staff that do identify as male and female to be respected as they identify.

- acknowledging wellbeing, inclusion and diversity

It is a positive thing to acknowledge wellbeing, inclusion and diversity. But funding the supports for these elements for both staff and students is what is required. Acknowledging something provides nothing. What is the next step? Ultimately how does the government ensure that the (DOE) vision is enacted successfully and all staff’s wellbeing is taken into consideration?

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Lead by QTU Reps of Yarrilee State School : **WHITE, Megan, O'ROURKE Ashleigh, HORGAN Renee, and GILMOUR, Neroli,**

From: Queensland Teacher's Union Members of Yarrilee State School (4655)

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