

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

**Submission No:** 933  
**Submitted by:** Rebekah Scown  
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## Kelly Tremlett

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 19 March 2024 8:09 PM  
**To:** Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee  
**Cc:** hello@arighttolearn.com.au  
**Subject:** Submission on the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Attn: Committee Secretary - Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee

Dear Committee Secretary

I write to make a submission on the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

As a parent of a child with a disability, I want to share with the Committee my experiences and why I believe that all students with disability deserve access to a fair and equal education.

My daughter started attending Prep in 2022. She attended full-time at a Private school in Toowoomba and had an amazing teacher who promoted inclusion. When she entered year 1 in 2023, the teacher was less inclusive. My daughter had been back at a school for less than a week after summer holidays (starting year 1). The principal explained they were suspending her because other kids in her class were not wanting to go to school because "they were uncomfortable that she did not follow the rules". Our daughter had tried to leave the classroom due to sensory overload a few times and was told no. We were told by the principal that parents had complained that she was given a special spot in the classroom to calm down from sensory overload. Their children were unhappy that she got special treatment. Her fish had also died, so she was a little more emotionally deregulated but did not hurt the teacher or other kids. She did not yell but she did cry and she was not obedient of the teachers instructions. It was not brought into consideration that it was the first week of school in year 1 and the teacher did not yet know her or how to communicate effectively. We were asked to visit the school and they explained they had complaints from parents and the teacher. We were told a few Parents asked for their children to be moved to other class because of the discomfort their children felt having our daughter in their child's class. The principal requested we not bring her to school until they could work out a solution. After two weeks absent, we were informed our daughter was allowed to return to school for 1 day a week. After two weeks, that was increased to two days a week. Our daughter is intelligent, social and has a large vocabulary. She absolutely loved school. She cried every day she could not go to school because she did not understand why she was not able to attend (in prep she attended full-time). The school had applied for funding for a Teacher Aid (IEP etc) but was denied despite our daughter having an Autism Level 2 diagnosis from a Paediatrician and being on NDIS.

Despite being being told not to bring our daughter and only attending less than 1/4 of the time, we were still required to pay the \$3000 school fees for the term. There was no discount. We also had no avenue for daycare because she was older than 6 years old. It dramatically affected our careers and put a lot of stress and pressure on us. (I am a lawyer and my husband is a system administrator). Thankfully my husband's workplace allowed him to work from home to care for our daughter. After 1 term where our daughter's self esteem was being undermined because she was not able to attend school regularly, we made the decision to relocate to Cairns so she could attend the Autism Queensland School (it was the only campus with places). It was expensive to relocate to Cairns from Toowoomba but we felt that it was the only option. Our daughter did nothing to be suspended but have a difficult first week settling into school.

These experiences have led me to support the A Right to Learn campaign, which is focused on keeping disabled students in the classroom.

I strongly endorse the campaign's five asks in response to the Bill, including:

1: Using suspension as a last resort. I agree with the Disability Royal Commission recommendation that school suspensions should be a last resort or to prevent 'serious harm'.

2: Currently, the Bill only allows an appeal when a student has been suspended for 11 days or more in a year. I believe that there should be appeal rights for all suspensions, regardless of the number of days.

3: The implementation of a multi-tiered support system. Children experiencing multiple suspensions require support through a multi-tiered system to address their needs effectively.

4: I support the need for increased transparency and accountability in schools regarding efforts to reduce suspensions, such as submitting an annual report to Parliament, establishing a Board to oversee suspensions, and implementing scorecards for schools.

5: To include a Students Rights section in the Bill to enshrine the right to learn for all Queensland students.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission on the Bill.

Yours sincerely,  
Rebekah Scown

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Please reply to Rebekah Scown at [REDACTED]

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