

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 20 March 2024 6:47 PM
To: Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee
Cc: [REDACTED]
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. I ask that my submission be kept confidential due to family violence issues. I do not wish to be contacted regarding my submission.

As a parent of a child with 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.

I have four children in Queensland state schools. My 14 year old daughter who has a disability has been suspended multiple times, including for long periods and back to back. As a result, she spends long periods at home by herself without adult supervision, which exacerbates her anxiety and frustration.

The suspensions only make her more angry and feeling like the school doesn't understand her. Before the suspensions, she enjoyed learning, but now she is failing, which means she doesn't try. She has completely disengaged from learning. She feels that she has been classed as "naughty" and no one will look at her another way.

What I don't understand is that the suspensions are obviously not working, so why is that the schools only answer in response to what is clearly behaviour that stems from her disability? If something doesn't work, you don't keep doing it more.

I want to see changes to how the system supports students with disabilities before my two youngest in year 3 and 5 reach high school, as I fear they will suffer the same fate as my daughter.

In particular, I want to make sure teachers have the time to offer students with disability more support and get to know students more. Teachers are currently so busy that they don't have the time to get to know each student, which means they make assumptions - like my daughter being the "naughty kid" before they have the chance to learn about their support needs.

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,
Danielle Pikicavake

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