

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 21 March 2024 1:13 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.

As a [FORMER DISABLED STUDENT] 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.

After being accepted into a selective school and having to withdraw due to a lack of accessibility, being a CP sufferer, I attended a public school with a disability unit where behavioural and learning disabilities were not differentiated from physical ones. I repeatedly noticed that students were suspended for the slightest misdemeanour such as pinching another student. I would incur the displeasure of teachers when frequently stating that suspending students was counterintuitive as they did not understand this meant "a day off" and it was an excuse for teachers not to research or understand students' conditions. That bad behaviour would persist if research into disability management failed to occur. At present this repeatedly occurs to my autistic nephew, demonstrating little has changed. It is vital that new and updated knowledge and competent professionalism occur, as funding is only as good as its proper and informed application. Disabilities need understanding and students need to properly benefit from education.

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,
Robert Melato

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