

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1062
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Dear committee members,

I write to express my concerns about the proposed amendments to the Education (General Provisions) Act, as they relate to home education in Queensland.

My objections are as follows:

Home education is a choice that parents should be free to make without generating suspicion or undue scrutiny. It is not entered into lightly, and is often a last resort because of the inability of the school environment and curriculum to support their children's needs. If other parents are not expected to justify their choice of a public/private/alternative/distance education school as being in their child's best interest, then such a requirement of home educating parents is unjust and feels like suspicion and mistrust, not support.

Flexibility is an essential element in the success of home education. Standard curriculum is ideal for no one. Parents are in the best position to provide individualised, tailored learning, with a superior knowledge of their children's interests and abilities. All children deserve access to a high quality education, but I reject the notion that education should be the same for everyone. Same does not mean equal. My eight year old daughter loves ancient history, and she is learning a lot about people and places through the stories that we read. It would be nonsensical to make her wait until Year 7 to learn anything about ancient history, just because that's what other children her age are doing in school.

The current level of regulation is sufficient to ensure that home educated children are receiving a high quality education. We research learning styles, gather resources, write plans, keep samples, submit reports and reflect on our children's learning and the adjustments we have made each year. Every home educating family I know of cares deeply about their children and invests a great deal of time and energy into helping them thrive. Many have sacrificed a second income or cherished personal time because the wellbeing of their children is more important to them than money or convenience.

In my family, we have chosen home education because it is consistent with our values and allows us to spend time together learning through conversation, play, real world experiences and deep exploration of special interests, as well as selected academic resources. My two school-age children are highly gifted, one is autistic and the other has anxiety and ADHD, meaning they have both strengths and challenges that are out of step with their typical age peers. The current reporting framework gives me the flexibility to meet them where they are without the slightest inconvenience or embarrassment. Attempting to replicate the school curriculum at home would be no advantage to us, and I urge you to broaden your definition of an approved curriculum, to allow for the variety of ways in which home educators successfully provide a quality education to their children.

Respectfully,

Simone Louws