

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1101
Submitted by: Sonja Hinds
Publication: Making the submission and your name public

Attachments:

Submitter Comments:

I am writing to you with my concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the education bill that has recently been presented to parliament. As a home educating parent, I do not support some of these changes that have been introduced and I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the homeschooling community. I am particularly concerned as a parent of a neurodivergent child. We have spent hundreds of hours consulting with numerous specialists and allied health experts and liaised tirelessly with her former school to try to implement recommendations to aide her to remain in school. Unfortunately, nothing our child required was able to be achieved by her school: from not being able to accommodate the needs of a neurodivergent child with sensory problems in an overcrowded school system, to being unable to ensure she is learning an acceptable level of basic literacy and numeracy skills. After already being failed by a government school with our calls for help going largely ignored, who exactly is going to be determining what is in the best interests of my child according to this proposed bill? If adhering to the Australian Curriculum is going to be a requirement, who is going to train me in how to teach it? Teachers are provided years of training in how to teach the Australian Curriculum in schools. We have worked hard to find the best learning styles to suit our child, and adhering to the Australian Curriculum would prevent her from engaging to her fullest potential. Should I not be allowed to focus more time on ensuring she has the essential basic skills required for everyday life rather than force her to learn complex algebraic equations that she will never use in the career path she has in mind? Also, if I am then required to report on every area of the curriculum then that is going to impact the amount of time I can spend on teaching. To me, this would be taking away from her high-quality education, not improving it. As a parent, it seemed substantially easier to just enrol my child into distance education, but we discovered that this method of learning was detrimental to our child and to our family. As a neurodivergent child she was unable to focus on the dull and repetitive curriculum being taught. This resulted in lessons taking much longer, taking away from any social opportunities which in turn led her to being even more withdrawn from society. Drawing on our experience with traditional schooling and learning methods, we would be unable to successfully follow the Australian Curriculum with our child because she just does not respond to it. Since being able to choose to home educate in the style best suited to our child her health and well-being has improved immensely, along with her basic literacy and numeracy skills. I would hate to see her progress negatively impacted by the proposed changes to the way we choose to educate. Having the option of homeschooling, with the flexibility of choosing the topics and learning style best suited to our child, has made a world of difference in just 12 months. She has begun re-engaging in society and is actually excited to learn again now that she has a say in how that happens. Homeschooling has allowed her to start thinking about her future and what she needs to do to get there. If she were forced to go back to mainstream schooling, or even restricted to studying the mundane topics in the Australian Curriculum, I fear it would be a huge setback to her psychological well-being. I would think being a self-sufficient adult contributing to society would be a far greater outcome, wouldn't you? I am concerned that the legislation has been introduced without proper consultation with current homeschooling families and I hope that you will take my feedback into consideration. For education to be inclusive of all students, I believe it is important to understand the reasoning behind the education decisions of the families who struggle the most to fit into mainstream education. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. It is my hope that, going forward, this legislation can suit the needs of all students across Queensland. I look forward to hearing your response about this important issue.