


Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1141
Submitted by: 
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Committee Secretariat
Parliament House
George Street Brisbane Qld 4000

24th March 2024

For the attention of the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in our state. As a homeschooling parent, constituent, and a member of the community, I believe it is of the utmost importance to communicate my concerns about the effect of these changes on our education system.

I am tertiary educated and have completed the first year of my second degree; prior to having children I worked in my field amongst several international companies. My husband has a Masters degree and is the Managing Director of a national logistics company. We both decided early on that homeschooling was the right path for our family and as such enrolled our son and are now in our second year of homeschooling. As a child who achieved much academic success, I felt like the education system failed me. My creativity was squelched and any desire I had to continue to learn was drained completely in the push to 'tick the boxes' and eventually I burnt out. It took many years for me to rediscover a love of learning and it is for that reason I chose to homeschool hoping that my child will not have to experience this.

The proposed legislation raises several pressing concerns that I believe need to be addressed. Firstly, there is a clear shift in the responsibility for the administration paperwork from the Department of Education to parents. One of the leading causes of teacher burnout in the education system is reporting and administration. Not only will this require excessive time and energy to produce, above and beyond what would be expected by a teacher in a classroom, it takes precious time away from our children and families which is one of the key reasons we like many choose to homeschool. The proposed changes are based on vague observations and anecdotes at best; there are no facts or studies that support these changes whatsoever. The Australian Curriculum was designed for the education of children in a classroom and is a long and complex document. Applying it in a homeschool setting will detract from the personalised teaching we are able to provide and instead require simply 'ticking the boxes' which, in a one to one setting, takes away the rich and broad high quality education we already have in place and will lead to boredom and disengagement.

Most importantly however, there is no mention of the impact of these changes on a child's social, physical and mental wellbeing in this report. The Department of Education and Queensland government have a duty of care to the children residing in this state. This has not been factored into the consultation document in any way.

Children begin homeschooling for a wide variety of reasons, some of whom may be suffering from trauma caused by circumstances such as inadequate school response to bullying or harassment which must be prioritised over what the department deems 'high quality education'. The shortened and seemingly arbitrary timelines for registration and providing additional information in planning and reporting, should not be at the sake of children's safety and wellbeing. Furthermore, the Department of Education is responsible for sufficiently training staff to efficiently and fully assess a homeschool plan and report without requiring a framework based on ACARA. Of note, recent studies by Learning First (<https://learningfirst.com>) have found that the Australian Curriculum is leading to a decline in levels of education. Using ACARA as the only 'standard' for high quality education is therefore lacking any evidentiary basis.

Finally, I am also extremely concerned about the lack of public consultation and transparency around these proposed changes. As a parent and a home educator, I believe it is absolutely imperative that inclusive and frank discussions amongst key stakeholders in the education system are undertaken including ALL educators, parents, students and relevant members of the community to make such important changes that affect our children.

Given the above, I ask that you reconsider the proposals to the education legislation and open up dialogue with the homeschool community at large to create change that will be in the best interests of all our students, teachers, and schools. Moving forward policy changes can be made that are both inclusive and collaborative to work in the best interests of all stakeholders.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response on this important issue.

Kind Regards,

