

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 1267  
**Submitted by:** [REDACTED]  
**Publication:** Making the submission public but withholding your name  
**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

# Submission to the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee

## Introduction

I am writing to the Committee to express my serious concerns about proposed changes to the *Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024* in regards the regulation of home education in this state.

I write this submission as a parent and step-parent who has had first-hand experience of the failings of the current mainstream public schooling system across two states and territories, especially for neurodiverse children.

The proposed changes to the current legislation, outlined by the Minister for Education (<https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/99849>) on the 6th of March 2024, would see a requirement for home educators to conform to the Australian Curriculum developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

## Why my family moved to Home Education

My observations of the Australian Curriculum used in the mainstream state school system:

- it is challenging for neurodiverse children to deal with multiple subject transitions.
- it limits time available for subjects needing extra support or for students who may have fallen behind the year level standard.
- a significant component of homework is required by students, simply because teachers cannot keep pace with curriculum.
- it is a complex curriculum to support and implement.
- it is an inflexible curriculum, that does not allow students the opportunity to meet their own learning plans and goals (outside of the specified key learning areas).
- it does not give parental involvement in the decisions around what is being taught to their child – this is particularly of concern around socio-political or religious positions that may not be consistent with their own values.

**The result of a “one size fits all model” curriculum meant that all my children disengaged with the mainstream public school system to various degrees, which was further exacerbated by their neurodiversity traits.** Teaching a complex and crowded curriculum to a child, who may need explanations of these concepts in different ways, led to a downward spiral. The inability to complete assessment tasks meant they would often fall further behind; their confidence would then suffer, and they would become further disengaged.

This cycle would repeat, and the pressure would then be transferred to the parents to try and rectify the problems, which by this stage were often labelled as “behavioural” issues. There was the constant fear of emails or phone calls from the school, and individual plans to try and deal with the issues, which were only there to “paper over” the cracks.

The ultimate issue was that the school curriculum and environment was not engaging them, nor were the teaching styles providing the necessary supports to assist neurodiverse children with their learning.

Whilst my own children have now finished in the mainstream secondary education system, all three of them were let down by a rigid system that failed to provide sufficient support for their needs (which included Autism, ADHD). I now very much regret that I was not aware of the option of home education for them when they started experiencing major difficulties in the school system.

As a current step-parent of a teenage student, I could see the same path developing for him. My wife and I concluded that home education was the only viable path left. He transitioned from a public state secondary school in early 2023 to a home education program being taught by us. **This was not a choice we entered lightly, as we understood the significant responsibility and workload that would now fall to us as primary educators.**

The **decision to home school was not driven by pandemic legacies, social media, or other external influences** – it was our last hope to turn around the situation and the only way that we could see that he would get a high-quality education. The mainstream public system had destroyed his love of learning, his self-confidence, and he had lost all interest in education. Attending school had effectively become a waste of time – he was learning nothing.

## Benefits of moving to Home education

At the end of Term 1 2023, we submitted our enrolment for home education, and unenrolled him from his local secondary school. As part of his detailed learning plans submitted and approved by the Home Education Unit (HEU) we drew on a range of materials, including many elements directly linked to the Australian Curriculum. The key point was that we were able to develop a **curriculum specifically tailored to his interests and passions**. We were not forced to rigidly follow the Australian Curriculum in its totality.

The educational outcomes since transitioning to home education have included:

- concentrated focus on areas he was struggling in – which had been ignored in the school system.
- a renewed enthusiasm for learning because he has had direct input into the subject areas and materials he wanted to learn.
- the ability to control the pace of the learning, allowing us to speed up and slow down as needed depending on the level of confidence with the material.
- the ability to study specific areas of interest to a much higher-level detail than was afforded in the school system.
- the ability to tie in our teaching directly with real-life events – and not be dictated by a rigid curriculum which was tied to year level learning outcomes.
- Evidence of achievement through a range of written artifacts.
- The ability to reflect our own parental values and incorporate them into his learning program.

In short, **we chose to home educate because we believe it's best for our child**. We made that decision after exhausting all other options in the school system. If the school system was providing for the needs of all students, especially neurodiverse students, then our children

would not likely need homeschooling; it would have been a preference-based choice rather than an express need.

## Conclusion

The **right to choose what home education is appropriate is potentially under threat by these amendments and should not be dictated by the government.** The legislation must retain the right for parents to choose the most appropriate method of education for their children.

Given the current rates of growth in home education in Queensland since the pandemic, we are not alone in making this choice. I suspect that some of the motivation for this change is an education bureaucracy that is now panicking around the exodus of students from the school system.

Many parents choose to homeschool because **schools can't meet the unique needs** of every child. The changes proposed to the legislation claim these proposals will reduce inequality in education but will likely make it worse.

**Going back to the Australian Curriculum that has failed a child in the school system, is not in their best interests.** Right now, parents decide what's best for their child. This needs to be protected at all costs.

There are **currently processes in place for the Home Education Unit to assess and reject learning plans if they don't believe they achieve high quality learning outcomes** for the student. If managing this function is a workload issue for the HEU then the department must consider the staffing of this area, rather than trying to force home educators down a rigid Australian Curriculum in the hope that this will make their approval processes simpler.

## Committee Actions

I request the Committee **reject these changes to enforce the adoption of the Australian Curriculum by home schooling parents**, so we as home educators can continue to offer a personalized education that suits our child's learning style, complex needs, special interests, career goals, and allows them to succeed. This is ultimately in the best interests of the child.