

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submission on behalf of Gatton State School QTU Members

To whom it may concern,

We are writing on behalf of the Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) members of Gatton State School to express our concerns with the proposed amendments to the Education Provisions Act that were recently introduced into Queensland Parliament. Specifically, our members have expressed concerns with the following aspects of the proposed amendments

- the ability for parents and students to appeal student disciplinary absences (SDAs) if they exceed 11 cumulative days per year at any or a combination of state schools.
- the introduction of re-entry support plans for First Nations students, students with disabilities and prep students with no additional resourcing provided to schools to facilitate re-entry process.

At Gatton State School, SDAs are applied as part of a supportive behaviour management process and usually as a last resort when all other avenues have been exhausted. SDAs are sometimes a necessary step in supporting positive behaviour at our school. This is particularly the case in instances where staff and/or students have been subject to occupational violence. Members have identified SDAs as a valuable response to these types of incidents because it provides an opportunity for volatile situations to be diffused. At our school, SDAs are always followed up with a re-entry meeting with the teacher, the student, the parent/carer, Principal/Deputy Principal and the Behaviour Support Teacher. At this re-entry meeting, an Individual Behaviour Support Plan (IBSP) is developed to support the student's successful re-entry into the school.

Our members have expressed concerns that the ability for parents and students to appeal SDAs will erode the principal's ability to maintain the good order of the school and to support staff and students effectively.

Although re-entry support plans are already in place at Gatton State School for ALL students returning from SDAs, members have expressed concerns that without adequate resourcing, it may be challenging to effectively implement these plans and to provide the necessary assistance to the students who need it most.

Specific feedback from members include:

- Schools need to be allowed to have processes that address emotional, psychological and physical abuse of staff and students.
- Suspension is not the first line of call. It is the last after all options have been exhausted.
- Suspensions sometimes need to happen to diffuse situations between both parties.
- Once that ability has been taken away from Principal, their authority is reduced.
- What is being put in place to support staff and students from here on in if suspension is removed as an option? What support will we be getting when parents are not supportive?
- Retaining and recruiting teachers is now already a major concern in all schools, I believe that this will exacerbate this trend.
- Where are the human rights for teachers and the other students' right to learn?
- I condemn the ability for parents to appeal SDAs over 11 days. This supersedes the opportunity to provide a line in the sand for ensuring good order and management of a school.

- Allowing parents and students to appeal disciplinary absences exceeding 11 cumulative days per year could potentially lead to disruptions in the disciplinary process and undermine the authority of school administrators in maintaining discipline and order within the school.
- I urge DOE to support resourcing for facilitation of re-entry for the mentioned priority groups.
- The lack of additional resourcing provided to schools to facilitate the re-entry process for First Nations students, students with disabilities, and prep students. Without adequate support, it may be challenging to effectively implement these plans and provide the necessary assistance to students who need it most.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these concerns.

Kind regards,

Shane Krog, Beverley Warren and Iaman Petrie

(Gatton State School QTU Representatives)