


Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1299
Submitted by: 
Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Inquiry into Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Dear Parliamentary Committee,

I wish to make a submission and object to the Education Bill 2024.

My concerns are highlighted below:

Part 4 Amendment of Education (General Provisions) Act 2006:

“An additional guiding principle is also inserted in section 7 for chapter 9, part 5 (Home Education) to guide the achievement of the Act’s objectives for home education. The new guiding principle provides for the primacy of the child or young person in relation to the way home education is to be provided, stating that it should be provided in a way that is in the best interests of the child or young person, taking into account their safety and wellbeing, and ensuring the child or young person has access to a high-quality education.”

I have concerns with this guiding principle as it does not make it clear on who decides it is in the “best interest” for the child or what this means. It leaves it very subjective and open to interpretation. Will it be local authorities who decide? This is a parental decision and choice should not be taken away from them, as generally parents will have their children’s best interest at heart (plus the parent will know the child better than any authority). In the situation where this is not true, and the child’s safety and wellbeing are at risk then this should be managed through child protection services and their associated legislations and should not be managed through the education act.

Clause 62 omits section 210 (chief executive must ensure compliance with procedural requirements) to ensure that if an application for registration of a child for home education does not comply with procedural requirements for an application under section 208, the application is not taken to be made and the child cannot be taken to be provisionally registered under section 212.

My understanding of this is that an application for Provisional Registration needs to be in full, with all documents and educational plan, and only those who submit this will be eligible for this temporary cover until the application has been approved. This creates an issue that if a child is in a bad situation at a school and the parent wishes to remove the child from this and home school them either long term or as an interim fix, they can’t unless they submit all the required documents which will take some time to prepare and as such will be required to leave them in this bad situation. In no way shape or form is this putting the child’s safety and wellbeing at the forefront.

I am writing this from personal experiences; our child was on the upper end of learning abilities for his age and was “getting bored”. His teachers said he was extremely intelligent and didn’t know what more to do for him. We spoke to the school principal, and she was fantastic and sorted things out for our son to make schooling a more enjoyable place to be, by streaming the work. However, she left, and the new principle put an end to this and was extremely inflexible. We spoke to him on numerous times about our son, however our son’s mental health declined, and he started to become troublesome at school (up until then, this had not been an issue). We asked for the same learning experiences the previous principal had provided and he flatly said no (I wished in hindsight I had taken this up further with Qld Ed and not just taken him at his word). It came to a head when our child hid under a building for a full school day and the school did not know he was hiding. His mental health had declined and now his safety and wellbeing at school was in question. We

immediately withdrew him, and home schooled him. It took about 6 months but slowly his mental health improved, and we had to learn how to home school. We discussed our options with numerous health and educational professionals and decided homeschooling was the best option for our son. This was not something we took lightly as we had never intended to home school him, it was very hard on our family and stressful, however as parents we saw this as the best option for our child. He has now finished school, has attended TAFE, and has a job.

From our personal experience I believe the proposed changes would not have allowed us to take this swift action for the benefit of our son. We would have been required to leave him in a bad situation whilst we developed the plans (which could take weeks or months) and the once we got through that process, sit and wait whilst someone (who most likely did not know our son) made a decision on what is best for him. This is totally unacceptable.

I have concerns with the other proposed changes including forced curriculums, burdensome reporting requirements and requirements to “show proof of progression”.

Therefore, in summary I object to these changes as proposed in the Education Bill 2024 as I do not see they are in the best interest of the children.

I have recently read in news articles that home schooling has increased drastically in the last few years, maybe the government should be asking why parents are taking their children out of mainstream schools and home schooling (as it is very hard work and for many parents this is not their first choice), perhaps the current education system needs an overhaul not putting extra burdensome and unacceptable requirements on homeschooling.