

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

**Submission No:** 1318  
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## Submission in Relation to Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

As a home educating mother and registered QCT teacher I am writing to submit my opinion on the recent education legislation changes for Queensland. As a passionate member of the home education community, I believe it is important to voice my concerns regarding these changes.

### *Application Process*

I whole-heartedly support provisional registration and believe the other states have this dangerously wrong in terms of supporting the child's mental, emotional and physical health, the parents wellbeing, and could minimize a child's educational potential and ability to become effective and informed members of the community. As it stands currently, this legislation allows parents to remove children from toxic educational institutions and provide immediate support without the added stress of a formal plan. Families go through rough patches and this allows for flexibility and support during those hard times.

This change implies remaining in a potentially toxic educational institution is the only way to provide "high quality education". What evidence is there that shows us that schools are providing "high quality education" or that ACARA is the definition of said type of education? The term 'high-quality education' is used to describe ACARA but, as referred to in this document, "does not define what constitutes a high-quality education."

This lack of clarity does make it difficult for parents to determine if the educational standards and benchmarks ACARA outlines will meet the standard of high-quality education the individual child needs to become 'effective and informed members of the community.'

Anecdotally, it is a common complaint of newly Home Educating families that schools and the principals often making un-enrolling difficult, provide a toxic environment for the children and families and are potentially one of the reasons parents remove their children from the institution altogether. Relying on principals to provide empathy and support to these families is handing the power to these individuals when it should remain with the parents. The current provisional system allows for this flexibility and should remain as such.

### *High-quality Education (HQE)*

Affords less flexibility for parents to design an educational program of choice. This restricts parents ability to better cater to their children's various educational, social and emotional needs. This does not, in any way, provide children with 'higher-quality education'. It would make more sense to better develop internal frameworks around educating assessors in being able to identify all forms of education and the need to have varied educational philosophies and plans.

One cannot provide a 'more objective framework' to provide evidence to receive a 'high-quality education' against a subjective framework (ACARA). This is contradictory and until ACARA has a

definition of 'high-quality education' and can provide evidence for such a claim it is just creating more disadvantages for families and their educational progress.

Furthermore, educational philosophies are consistently changing and adapting over time. The pedagogy that being taught when I was at university when I was attending was openly being taught as obsolete. The current 'best practice' I often defined by the current government and philosophies of those in power at the time. Why should we be forced to comply with someone else's view of 'high-quality education' and their educational philosophy instead of our chose philosophy, that may well be evidenced-based and align to our child's needs.

There can be no such definition of the term 'high-quality education' as it is a subjective term and will always remain one. There is no one-size fits all, as long as we have individual children, we cannot have a standardized definition of this term. This does not make it easier for anyone except those assessing the programs. This is not about the children and their education.

### *Reporting*

This is very ambiguous. As it stands now, the plan is developed, adjusted, redesigned or recreated based on the child's needs. We reflect on the original plan and show progress. If our end goal is to provide a 'high-quality education', how does expanding the demand of reporting help to provide this?

Education is forever changing, as are our children. Their plans need adjusting constantly, regardless of which educational philosophy you align yourself with. Educational institutions also need to show differentiation to support students and report on where they are at, without having to provide detail on the original educational plan. Why should Home Educators be held to a higher standard of reporting than schools?

I would like to be able to reflect on our year, my child's ability to learn and explain how my child developed. This would be more beneficial to see how my child received support and how learning was facilitated instead of progress reports.

Some samples don't always show progress and I believe the legislation should allow for this. Schools don't have to show progress to uphold their 'high-quality education' status, so why should home educators?

The advantages listed in the consultation paper are very concerning and are in no way supportive of the demands on families. Objectivity in education is dangerous and does not equal 'high-quality education'. Every report should be individually assessed and subjectively reviewed to ensure 'high-quality education'.

### *Streamlining review of written reports*

The disadvantage to this change, as stated in the legislation document, is the reduction in oversight of the quality of education provided to individual children. This is inconsistent with the entire document which stresses the importance of 'high-quality education'. I believe that this change is only to the benefit of the chief executive and staff at HEU to reduce resources

and maximise efficiency. The benefit to parents only comes if those who are not selected for the sample are able to forgo writing one. Time spent on writing reports could be better used to facilitate learning experiences and foster connections with our children if those reports were not even being read. My children's time and education should not be wasted on writing reports that will not be read. Why put in all the time and effort of writing a report to have a high chance of it not being read? My family and time deserve more respect than this!

I believe the first year reporting was somewhat beneficial as I was able to self-reflect in a formal way and I developed an understanding of the reporting process. I would happily support a 15% report selection, but not a 15% sample of reports submitted. Only asking those families whose reports will be read to submit them would be more respectful. Another suggestion would also be to take approved selection participants out of the selection reporting pool for the following year after selection, unless identified as needing review. Could the reporting time frame be pushed back to every second year? Or perhaps to align with National testing and only report at the end of years 3, 5, 7 and 9? Would this not reduce stress on both families and resources? Keeping in mind that if reports are not every year, families should not be expected to report over numerous years as longer-term record keeping can be difficult for some families.

#### *Removing Certificate of Registration*

While I agree the move to contemporary technology is needed, the elimination of the Certificate of Registration is not something I support.

The Certificate of registration should be digitally sent with the written notice of registration. Some families need the certificate to access discounts, supports and to prove Home Education status if authorities come to call.

I agree that it is a burden on families to send this certificate back, however, could this requirement be the only thing to change? If the written notice of registration will not have to be sent back after cessation of home education, why does the certificate exist? What difference is there between proving you home educate with a certificate that's no longer void or a written notice of registration that's no longer void? They could be collectively generated and sent to reduce administrative burden, and void at the same time as the notice of registration instead to reduce the regulatory burden on home educating families.

#### *Grounds for cancellations*

I would like to see the term 'the child's usual place of residence' be either changed or more clearly defined. Many families choose to travel around, or do not prefer to deliver their child's education within the family home. Will this contradict our registration if we choose to spend our days immersed in the real world and the innumerable opportunities it provides? Are we to lose our registration if we become temporarily homeless, start travelling around permanently or join friends to learn cooperatively?

I hope the cancellation on these grounds will only happen after sufficient warning, requesting

more information and an internal review.

*Summary*

I am glad we have been given a chance to consult on this legislation, however I feel it is still vague and not easy to identify the bigger picture or end goal of these changes. As a consumer representative for health care I am aware that consumers should be present at all levels of planning and writing of documents. I am disappointed that we have only just been informed of these legislative changes, given such a short time to respond and have already been shown the disrespect of lack of communication and response.

I would love to see the introduction of stakeholder meetings or consumer engagement meetings. As a home educating mother and teacher who holds great interest in her children's education and the legislation around home educating, I feel it is imperative we hear from many varied voices when it comes to these sorts of amendments. Too many times are legislations created with only consultations with out-of-touch 'experts' and representation from the 'government of the day'.

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

Sincerely,

Lauren Flint