


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

**Submission No:** 1504  
**Submitted by:**   
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**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to you as a home schooling parent with concerns about the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

### *Amendments under consideration*

Education in a home setting may not be the best choice for every family, or may not be the right answer in every period of a child's school years. However, it is the best option in many situations where a child's needs cannot be met in a traditional school setting for a very broad spectrum of reasons. With regards the amendments currently under consideration -

- Please don't remove provisional registration options. On occasions the need to remove a child from a school environment can be quite urgent - reasonable provisional registration periods and constraints mean that this is possible, and the transition to home schooling can be made safely by the family.
- Greater program flexibility allows a more child centred and individual approach to learning. Rigid adherence to a single approved education and training program may not be the most effective means of providing a quality education for all children at all stages of their learning. The increased flexibility and freedom to explore new areas of interest and styles of learning is one of the main ways that home education can increase learning engagement and improve mental health outcomes for many children who struggle in a mainstream school setting.

### *Homeschooling as a necessity, not an initial choice*

All children deserve a high quality education - however, in the case of many children in the home school community this may not be best provided by a traditional progression through mainstream schooling. This is evidenced by the Home Education Unit's own recent findings that "(j)ust under half of families opting to home educate were not open to this approach initially - many feel it is something that became necessary for their child/ren.". This same report featured a wide range of reasons for families not feeling comfortable to participate in mainstream schooling, notably concerns about behaviour management in schools, providing the best care for a child with one or more disabilities, and to facilitate a suitable learning environment for a gifted child.

The home school community in Queensland is a very diverse one, and I would urge you to consider the huge variety of reasons behind the love and hard work that goes into providing a high quality education at home that I am sure are provided in the submissions to the committee. I would like to focus mainly on the reason given by around one fifth of HEU survey respondents, namely the nurturing and education of gifted children.

### *Gifted children and home schooling*

"(E)vidence from testing programs shows that the most advanced students in each year of school are about five to six years ahead of the least advanced students."(1). The care, dedication and hard work of teachers in mainstream schools is unfortunately not enough to provide an ideal learning environment for such a broad range of needs and abilities.

Where gifted and talented programs are available in schools they are often limited in time, scope and resources. When combined with the fact that many preservice teacher training programs do not include specific units dealing with gifted education, this means that we now face a system in which "up to 50 per cent of gifted students are underachieving; that 20 per cent drop out of high school, and that 40 per cent fail to complete tertiary education."(2). This is a huge waste of potential, both for the individual students themselves, and for our society as a whole.

Home schooling can provide a much more engaging learning environment for gifted children, with the ability to accelerate and compact curriculum material, promote deeper learning in areas of special interest, and draw from a wider range of community support and involvement than is possible in a school environment. This flexibility has been of enormous benefit in alleviating frustration and anxiety surrounding schooling in our family and many others. Instead of decreasing the flexibility of arrangements for home educating families, perhaps a more beneficial option for all Queensland children would be to consider increasing the diversity of options for enrolment and progression across all school settings - including part-time enrolments, increased selective schooling options and wider early access to tertiary subjects.

I thank you for your consideration of my submission, as well as urging you to consider how much flexibility is required in the home school setting to ensure that every child can receive the best quality education for them as an individual.

(1) <https://www.acer.org/au/discover/article/why-the-curriculum-should-be-based-on-students-readiness-not-their-age>

(2) <https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2023/05/neglecting-gifted-students-in-education-has-costs-for-all-australians>