

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you with my concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the education bill that has recently been presented to parliament.

As a home educating parent, I do not support some of these changes that have been introduced and I am worried about the impact that they will have on my family and the homeschooling community.

We choose to home educate after trialling the school system twice. Both times my children were subjected to bullying, lack of support and were left behind academically.

I oppose the Australian Curriculum (ACARA) being added to the legislation for homeschooling.

We trialled following the Australian Curriculum when we first began homeschooling. It did not work for my children. It held no interest for them and created a forced learning environment where my children were not engaged. We now use curriculum that is interest based and engaging and my children have flourished. There is no need to force a curriculum on homeschooling families when we are already required to show we are provided a rich and diverse education plan.

I am very concerned about the removal of provisional registration. I have heard numerous accounts of children not being safe in schools, from physical and sexual assaults, to mental wellbeing including anxiety, threats of suicide and acts of self-harm. Taking away this 60-day window to submit a plan for parents who are already going through enormous upheavals to their lifestyle, including possible financial stress as they transition to home educating, whilst dealing with the high stress of having a child struggling, is simply appalling. In the interest of safety, I strongly oppose this change.

My last concern is the suggestion that we as the parent do not get to choose if our child is homeschooled. Who would determine whether my child is eligible for home education?

Both of my children left the school system unable to do basic math, read or spell. My son was put into a special needs learning environment where he was targeted and bullied by the other student relentlessly. Staff were aware of this but chose to continue to keep them together, stating a lack of resources. My son became so anxious that he would be unable to leave the car in the mornings as he was shaking so much with anxiety he could not move. He became so withdrawn that he would not speak, laugh or play at home. All the light left him. Is this the system he will be sent back to if he is not deemed to be eligible to homeschool? How is the right and how is it ok that someone other than his family has the right to choose? This is taking away a basic human right and would be detrimental to many children.

It was raised that there were concerns about safety due to a suicide of a homeschooled child. As tragic as this is, I believe that the suicide rate inside the schooling system would be at such a high rate in comparison and I believe that if my son were to be forced back into that system he would be added to that statistic.

I am opposed to the changes to homeschooling in Queensland.

Yours sincerely

Erin Preston