

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 2043
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Publication: Making the submission public but withholding your name
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:



CONFIDENTIAL

I request that my name and address be kept confidential as I do not want this personal information made public.

Re: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

To the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee

I write to state my position on the amendments regarding home schooling in Queensland. I do not support the amendments that would insert that “home education of a child or young person should be provided in a way that (i)is in the best interests of the child or young person taking into account their safety and wellbeing”, the removal of Provisional Registration, and the insertion that students be able to appeal suspension.

I am concerned that parents may be obliged to justify their choice to home educate their child/ren and prove that home education is in the best interests of the child. Parents are the ones who know the child best and have their best interests in mind. In my experience, many school staff and health care providers have very little understanding or an unrealistic idea of home education. It must be left up to the parents to decide if home education or school is in the best interests of the child. Home education is a valid option, and although it can be a ‘last resort’ for some families, many families also choose this option just because they want to provide their child/ren with opportunities to learn outside the school system. It should not be seen as an inferior choice. Many of these families are not trying to replicate school at home, so of course their learning may look different.

The time and effort invested in home education by parents demonstrates their determination to ensure the best interests of their child.

I am also concerned about the amendment which would remove Provisional Registration. When a family has decided that they will home educate their child, they should still be allowed to withdraw from school immediately and have time to create an educational plan that suits the needs and interests of the child. Being forced to continue to attend school does not seem to be in the best interests of the child, especially if the reason for leaving the school environment is bullying, behavioural issues of the child or their peers, anxiety about attendance etc.

My third concern is about the undermining of teachers of suspended students. Di Farmer expressed that these amendments would be “good for teachers” but I often hear of teachers feeling completely unsupported and either leaving the profession or seriously considering leaving because of difficulties with behaviour of students. Some tell of being physically assaulted by students, only to have the students back in the classroom later that same day or the next day. Having students able to appeal their suspension is sure to make those teachers feel unsupported and unvalidated, and unsafe in their workplace.

Thank you for considering my submission.

