

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitted by: QTU members at Norville State Primary School
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ATTENTION

We, the QTU members at Norville State Primary School strongly reject the following amendments to the Act without further clarification and discussion between front line staff that these amendments will affect. These front-line staff being; Principals, Deputy Principals, HOSES, HOC, GO and teaching staff at **ALL** state schools.

The following amendments are extremely divisive, discriminatory and detrimental to the wellbeing and good order of state schools

- *improving procedural fairness for decision-making processes for school disciplinary absences
- *introducing a new appeal right for accumulated short suspensions
- * introducing student support plans
- * removing the use of gendered language
- *acknowledging wellbeing, inclusion and diversity
- *make minor and technical amendments to improve the operation and effectiveness of legislation regulating education in Queensland.

This is evidenced in the following response from a Norville staff member, parent and teacher.

“In response to the latest movement to change the pronouns we, as teachers, use to address children.

EVERYONE has a right to be addressed as one feels fit. If a child is wanting me to address them as "they" I will do so happily. I am a SHE and my children are HE'S, we will be offended if we are not addressed in such way. Children who wish to be identified as He and She have the right to do so as well.

Where to next...am I going to start teaching Dogs and Cats? Will I no longer be able to use the word person or human?

I feel as a teacher I am meant to be a neutral, non-bias educator. This movement will make me feel that I am no longer a fence sitter and I need to choose a side.”

Opposing changes to the Education Act, especially those that could potentially add to teacher workload and increase stress levels, while providing less support for behaviour issues, is crucial for maintaining a healthy and effective education system. Some points to consider regarding the proposed changes:

1. **Increased Teacher Workload:** Removing gendered language and implementing new appeal rights and student support plans may seem like small changes, but they could significantly add to the administrative burden on teachers. Teachers already have a myriad of responsibilities, including lesson planning, grading, and managing classroom dynamics. Adding additional paperwork and procedural requirements could detract from their ability to focus on teaching and supporting students effectively.
2. **Higher Stress Levels:** Teaching is already a demanding profession, and educators often face high levels of stress due to the pressures of meeting academic standards, managing diverse classrooms, and addressing individual student needs. Introducing changes that increase workload without providing adequate resources or support systems can exacerbate stress levels among teachers, leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction.
3. **Lack of Support for Behaviour Issues:** Compiling student support plans and implementing re-entry processes for suspended students are essential for addressing behaviour issues effectively. However, requiring schools to manage these processes without adequate support mechanisms in place could leave teachers feeling overwhelmed and ill-equipped to handle challenging situations. Without sufficient training, resources, and personnel to assist with behavior management, teachers may struggle to maintain a safe and productive learning environment for all students.
4. **Equity Concerns:** Changes to the Education Act should prioritize equity and inclusion for all students. However, some of the proposed changes, such as removing gendered language, may overlook the diverse needs of students and fail to address systemic inequalities within the education system. Additionally, without careful consideration of the impact on marginalized or vulnerable populations, changes to appeal rights and student support plans could further widen existing disparities in access to educational opportunities and support services.

In summary, while updates to the Education Act may be necessary to reflect evolving educational practices and societal norms, it's essential to ensure that proposed changes do not place undue burdens on teachers, exacerbate stress levels, or compromise the quality of education and support provided to students. Any amendments should be carefully considered in consultation with educators, stakeholders, and experts to prioritize the well-being of teachers and students alike.

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