



Speech by

Ms Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 12 February 2008

EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (5.07 pm): I rise to support the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2007. The bill before the House will amend the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002 to enable the Queensland Studies Authority to develop and administer common national tests in literacy and numeracy. The common national tests will be a positive step forward in creating greater consistency across all state jurisdictions, and I believe that achieving greater consistency across all states will be of great benefit for all school students in Australia.

The results will provide us with more meaningful comparisons when looking at how Queensland performs against other states but, more importantly, how Australian students perform as a whole, as a nation, using comparisons that have more meaning for educational professionals. The common national test will be held in May of each year, and for the first time year 9 students will be included. Previously in Queensland the tests were conducted in the latter part of the school year in August. However, testing students in May makes a lot of good sense as it will give schools greater opportunity to use the results of the tests to assist students who demonstrate a need for additional support with their literacy or numeracy skills and help them achieve better outcomes during the year.

Having a daughter in year 9 this year who will be tested in May for the first time, I believe that any additional support required during the remainder of the school year based on her results would be most welcome and a most productive way of achieving a better learning outcome, which I believe every parent would applaud.

The common national tests have been developed with regard to a set of nationally agreed statements of learning for English and mathematics—two important subjects during the school learning period of our lives. The literacy assessment task will cover students' achievements in reading, writing and language conventions which are solid, basic learnings that are essential to our everyday and working life. For reading, students will be required to read a range of texts similar to those used in their classrooms and to answer questions of varying difficulty to show their understanding of the material. This assists obviously with analytical and comprehension skills which are most useful and essential during any successful working career. For writing, students will be required to write a narrative in response to stimulus material. This writing task will be assessed in terms of how well students can demonstrate their ideas, organise their writing and use their vocabulary. Students' skills in sentence structure, spelling and punctuation will also be assessed. These are basic writing skills which also form part of essential needs in our working lives.

With respect to language conventions, students will be required to identify and correct spelling errors, and answer multiple-choice questions on aspects of grammar and punctuation. This will demonstrate the practical way of using the knowledge and skills that are being taught in our schools not only in Queensland but throughout Australia.

The numeracy component of the test will cover numbers, algebra, function and pattern, measurement, chance and data, and space. Questions will require students to apply mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of contexts. I am positive that these national tests will be put to good use where the results will be used in a more meaningful way to assist students further with

their learning and to assist Queensland and Australia in ensuring that our students achieve the best possible education. As we all know, education and ongoing learning are key to a quality working life and successful career. I am happy to support the amendment bill.