




Speech By
Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 10 August 2017

MOTION

Schools, Drugs and Weapons

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (5.29 pm): I rise to support the amended motion. It is rightly concerning when parents and the community hear of students taking weapons or drugs into schools. It is without doubt the responsibility of government—both in regard to the policy settings and resourcing allocated by Education Queensland—and the operational response by police to do absolutely everything within our power to both prevent and stamp out issues like this when identified. However, it is not right and it is not ethical to use the emotive nature of this issue to play politics with Queensland families. To sensationalise it for one's own political purposes and try to generate unnecessary fear in our community is not what our community should expect from their elected representatives. It undermines the confidence that Queensland families can rightly have in our education facilities and system.

Let us introduce a little rigour into the debate. This government and Queensland schools have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to bringing weapons and drugs into schools, and we enforce it. Let us not forget that the subject of the member for Aspley's latest flurry of media releases on this topic seems to be police data released under RTI that confirms that Queensland has a zero tolerance for such offences because the subject students were charged. They did not get a slap on the wrist or the white flag waved in front of their face, to use the member for Aspley's assertion; they were charged.

Let us look at the numbers, as my fellow colleagues have stated. There are 30,000 more students in Queensland state schools now than when the LNP were in government. Since we were elected, there has been a 10 per cent reduction in incidents of misconduct involving an object. Since we were elected, there has been a 15 per cent reduction in incidents of children suspended due to smoking, alcohol and other drugs in our schools. To recap: under the LNP, less students, more weapons and drugs; under us, more students, less weapons and drugs in our schools.

The shadow minister is right to call on the government to address anything which compromises the safety of children in our schools. It is her job to hold us to account and it is ours to deliver—and deliver is exactly what we and this education minister are resolutely focused on doing each and every day. Last year, we introduced behaviour coaches into every region to support behaviour management in schools. We invested almost \$200 million last year and will invest over \$200 million this year to support behaviour management practices in schools. We are providing extra guidance officers in our schools for guidance support, behaviour support and learning support. Every state school has a responsible behaviour plan for students so that every student and every parent can understand the behaviour expectations and consequences for inappropriate behaviour in our schools. It is about working with parents, supporting our schools and setting them and all Queensland children up for success.

It might be the LNP's vision of education in Queensland to have my six- and four-year-old filing through metal detectors or bag searches as they arrive at school, but it is not ours and it is not warranted. I am proud to be a member of a Labor state government that will always stand up for the very best educational outcomes, facilities and support for teachers to ensure that every child benefits from a quality and safe education across our vast state.

One incident of weapons or drugs in our schools will always be one too many. It is concerning and it is absolutely unacceptable. Like every parent in this chamber, my boys are without doubt the most precious people in my life, but I have absolutely no concern as I kiss them goodbye each morning about whether they are going to be safe at school that day. I have no doubt that all the other parents on both sides of this chamber did likewise this morning as their children went off to school today. No-one kept them home in fear of their safety because our schools are not 'war zones' as described irresponsibly by the member for Aspley. Our schools are vibrant, engaging and safe places to learn. In the case that an incident should arise, we have confidence in our schools, in our principals and in our teachers that they have the necessary resources and support to act swiftly and to act resolutely.

This motion is about shameful politics and not our Queensland schools. While the opposition plays politics, we are building schools, investing in school facilities, employing more teachers and setting Queensland students up for success. The contrast, as always, could not be clearer.