




Speech By
Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2018

MOTION

Independent Public Schools, Order for Production of Documents

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.20 pm): I rise today to call on this arrogant Labor government to release its secret report and to unveil its plans to abolish the LNP's highly successful Independent Public Schools program. Communities raise children, not autocratic bureaucrats and certainly not the Queensland Teachers' Union. Parents and teachers in my electorate tell me that the Independent Public Schools program allows them to shape their school to get the best outcomes for our young people and that the program is superior to alternative strategies that have been tried but have not delivered.

The Independent Public Schools program embodies the potential for system-wide change—change that is desperately needed and well overdue, change and improvement that the Minister for Education is tasked with yet seemingly intends to ignore. The LNP's Independent Public Schools program opens the door for breakthrough initiatives such as the International Baccalaureate program, which is offered at Mountain Creek State High School, one of the independent public schools in my electorate of Buderim. The IPS program provides for extracurricular and gateway programs along with the development of centres of excellence where emerging technologies such as robotics can be embraced.

We must give our schools the freedom to innovate. Schools need the power to be decisive and responsive to local issues. Schools need the flexibility to navigate their own dynamic socio-economic environment and the curriculum space to keep students up to date with the rapid changes occurring in the world. The way we learn has changed. The way we teach and support our students must change. The same old approach simply is not working. Our independent public schools, though, are.

Ms McMillan: How do you know?

Mr MICKELBERG: I know because I have spoken to the students, parents, teachers and principals in my electorate. They tell me that they are disgraced by your actions as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, will you please direct your comments through the chair.

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask the member to withdraw that comment. I take offence.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. For all of the great things independent public schools bring, there are two very important things they leave out: union influence and political indoctrination. It is for this reason that those opposite are scheming to throw perfectly good education policy out the window. Rigidity does not work. The minister must stand up to union bullies, not back them. If it is not because of union influence, why is this government hell-bent on bringing a wrecking ball to 250 highly successful schools and their communities? These are schools that embody everything I am looking for when I am choosing a school for my children.

In June the P&C of one of the first accredited IPS schools in Queensland, Brightwater State School, wrote to me expressing their grave concern that the future of their funding and the continuation of their program were threatened. The minister will stand up and say that I have been scaremongering and that they have nothing to fear, but, frankly, with the track record of this government, my constituents do not believe it.

Surely the Independent Public Schools model is a beacon of hope for the education minister while she lies awake at night scrambling for ideas to fix Queensland's failing NAPLAN results. The minister has said that she will release her secret report into the future of Independent Public Schools, yet after receiving the report two weeks ago she still has not—another broken promise, another review to go on top of the more than 140 reviews the government has already commissioned. If, as the minister has said, independent public schools have nothing to fear then now is the time to stump up and table her secret report. Failure to do so will only add to the community concern of an orchestrated assault on schools that are finally able to deliver for our young people.

I will finish today with the words of the Brightwater P&C Association and the school council—

We the Brightwater P&C Association and the School Council are both in unison to supporting the Independent Public School concept and also in our objections to any decrease in funding or cessation of the IPS program.

There you have it. Teachers, principals, parents and the broader community—and, most importantly, students—are all lavish in their praise of the Independent Public Schools program—everyone, that is, apart from Labor and the faceless QTU union bosses who tell this government what it can and cannot do. I call on all members of this House to support this sensible motion and reject the amendment moved by the member for McConnel.

(Time expired)