




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (5.12 pm): That required some patience. Education transforms the lives of individuals, families and whole communities. It is with great pleasure that I contribute to the debate on the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019. In 2003, the federal government released an issues paper on the establishment of a national institute for quality teaching and school leadership. In 2009, work commenced on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. On 1 January 2010, as a result of the Commonwealth review of teaching in Australia and decisions made in 2009 by the then Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, known as MCEECDYA, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, known as AITSL, was established. In December 2010, MCEECDYA agreed to endorse and use the standards throughout this country. At that time, the Queensland representative on MCEECDYA was a wonderful colleague, the Hon. Geoff Wilson MP, the then minister for education.

The AITSL board of directors has a membership nominated by jurisdictions, the Australian government, the Catholic and independent school sectors, teacher unions, professional associations, principal associations and the deans of education from each of the major universities across the country. AITSL's primary purpose is to provide national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership.

During 2011 and 2012, while I was the principal of Glenala State High School, it was my pleasure to also represent the Australian Education Union on the advisory council of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. That advisory council was charged with the responsibility of developing the professional standards for teachers and school leaders. Out of that process emerged the teacher standards, of which I am incredibly proud, and the notion of graduate, proficient, highly accomplished teacher—known as HAT—and lead teacher, as well as the published professional standards for school leaders.

A teacher's role is to grow and develop the minds of the children in their classroom. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers describe what teachers should be aiming to achieve at every stage of their career. Those standards assist our teachers to reflect on and improve their practice inside and outside the classroom.

It is abundantly clear in educational research that the most significant impact on student achievement is the quality of teaching. Sadly, when the Newman government was closing schools and failing to allocate adequate teacher numbers to growing schools, it may be concluded that there was a lack of recognition of the importance of quality teaching. At another time in this House I will further share some of my experiences as a school leader under an LNP government.

There is now considerable international and national evidence that the major in-school influence on student achievement is the quality of classroom teaching. That is supported by research from the OECD in 2005 and 2013, by Dinham, Ingvarson and Kleinhenz in 2008, and by Jensen in 2010. Effective teaching lifts student performance and improves school completion rates—something Labor has always been committed to.

There are substantial social and economic benefits realised by improving students' achievement and raising the quality of teaching is a key strategy for achieving those benefits. The most important lesson from countries that have been successful in achieving high scores in international testing is their investment in the preparation and development of high-quality teachers while at the same time elevating the status of the entire profession, as is the case in Singapore, Finland and Estonia. I have had the opportunity to visit those countries and witness the successful strategies that they have in place.

In 2007, Fullan argued—

'In the successful countries it is clear that there is an absolute belief that quality education for all is crucial to their future... These countries then approach the task with the knowledge that everyone must be part of the solution. They know that teachers are the key to improvement and can only work effectively when they are supported. They make major, coordinated efforts to improve the quality of teachers through various forms of support.

The McKinsey Group drew the same conclusion by stating, 'It's a system thing, not a single thing.' Certainly, air-conditioned schools are not mentioned. Retaining our talented teachers in our classrooms is a key step to ensuring strong educational outcomes in Queensland schools. In 2015, the Queensland government made a commitment to transform and modernise the teaching profession under the Letting Teachers Teach initiative and established two new voluntary classifications, HAT and lead teacher, which are aligned with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, endorsed by the Australian education ministers through the Education Council.

Many members who have come before me have described the purpose of the bill. We know that some of those purposes are to establish a new function for the Queensland College of Teachers to perform the role of certifying these HAT and lead teachers in our schools. It is also being able to engage and deliver training to other entities. Further, it enables fully registered teachers who are employed in prescribed schools to apply to the Queensland College of Teachers for certification and renewal of certification of HAT and lead teacher career stages.

There are many other objectives of the bill, but the primary purpose of this initiative is to allow teachers to be recognised for their precision within the classroom and inspire them to stay and continue to improve and to share their practise amongst their colleagues as opposed to pursuing, as I had done, school leadership roles or leaving the profession altogether, which would be a tragedy. It also supports promoting the teaching profession as an attractive career option by creating new career options with potentially higher remuneration. Teachers are able to apply for certification as a HAT or lead teacher during 2019.

Many of the outstanding teachers that I had the honour to lead will prove ideal candidates for these positions. Precise teaching should be acknowledged and rewarded. A framework for HAT and lead teacher certification will allow teachers to seek higher career levels if they wish while continuing to be a teacher in our great Queensland classrooms.

As part of this framework, a certifying authority is required in accordance with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's guide to the certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers in Australia. QCT is the most appropriate organisation to act as this certifying authority as it is an existing independent external statutory body with an in-depth knowledge of APST. It currently has the function of registering Queensland teachers across the state and non-state sectors against the first two career levels of the APST. QCT has demonstrated an ability to perform this role over two years, establishing processes and procedures and recruiting and allocating staff to support this process. I acknowledge the Queensland Teachers' Union, which will offer an introductory 1½ hour program and a four-hour intensive program to support QTU members working towards HAT or lead teacher certification.

In 2018, 3,800 teachers have already completed this program with the Queensland Teachers' Union. This process is presented by experienced assessors and provides a range of tips and tools to help participants develop their skills and understanding of the standards. Whilst the Palaszczuk government values our teachers and understands the transformative role of education, the 2019-20 federal budget was a spectacular failure in regard to education.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I fail to see how the federal coalition budget is relevant to the debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, I will bring you back to the long title of the bill, please.

Ms McMILLAN: I thank the Queensland Teachers' Union for its ongoing commitment to supporting our teachers and, of course, the education profession as we embark on this change process. For QCT to perform the role of certifying authority on an ongoing basis, legislative amendment is necessary to extend its functions under the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 and the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2016.

(Time expired)