




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 30 April 2019

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.37 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contribution on this debate on the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019. It is great to see some schoolchildren and teachers in the gallery, so welcome. I have already spoken in detail about the bill in the explanatory speech, but I will briefly outline its major features again.

The bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 to provide for a nationally recognised certification framework in Queensland that recognises high-quality teachers and encourages them to continue their role as a classroom teacher; enable the Queensland College of Teachers to perform the role of a certifying authority for the framework for the certification of highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers; and provide for an effective, transparent certification process, with decisions subject to appropriate review.

As I have previously noted, in its report after careful consideration, the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee made a single recommendation—that the bill be passed. Before the Palaszczuk government delivered on its commitment, the structure of the teaching profession often required teachers to choose between staying in the classroom or moving into administrative and school leadership positions to further their careers. Whichever way they choose, it is a great choice. While we are happy when excellent teachers become excellent principals and school leaders, it should not be their only choice.

This government firmly believes that the world-class education being delivered in Queensland creates opportunities for every young person from every background and in every community across the state. That is why this side of the House will continue to do everything we can to elevate teaching as a highly valued profession. That is one of the many things that will be achieved by the bill.

The Palaszczuk government believes that teachers deserve to be recognised and acknowledged for their hard work and professionalism. The member for Kawana was able to talk positively about teachers and teaching for about a hundred words before he showed his true colours and started to talk down the profession. Those on this side of the House do not ever question whether teachers are in the profession ‘just for the money’. I take from some of the comments of those opposite that that clearly is not the case on the other side of the House.

We know that teachers work hard every day to give our children a world-class education. This government understands that there are particularly exceptional teachers who deserve to be recognised and appropriately remunerated for the educational leadership they demonstrate in the classroom. The standards used in the process are based on AITSL’s Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Teachers will need to demonstrate that they meet their highly accomplished or lead teacher standards through a portfolio submission and lesson observation.

The member for Kawana’s reliance—unfortunately and of great concern—on NAPLAN as the sole indicator for a perceived slipping of standards in Queensland is an example of NAPLAN results being misused. This government knows and teachers know that student outcomes are not solely

determined by NAPLAN outcomes. The Grattan Institute last year identified Queensland as a star performer in reading and numeracy outcomes; however, you will not hear the member for Kawana talk about this. Those opposite are only interested in talking down the profession. However, there were some lovely comments on both sides of the House during this debate, and I would like to thank members on both sides of the House for continuing the great work they do in supporting their schools and talking positively about the teaching profession.

I think the member for Pumicestone, unlike the member for Kawana, made it clear that she understands the important work of teachers and really appreciates the education profession. I would agree with the member that teaching is not just a job. Teachers are not doing what they do every day just for the money. I would agree with the member that teaching is indeed a calling. The matter of teacher education centres of excellence was raised. I assure the member that there were no plans to abandon the development of preservice teachers to teach in low SES schools. The department is working with its regions to increase the support provided to preservice and beginning teachers through new centres across the state.

The Palaszczuk government understands the need to support our graduate and early career teachers. We know that through early support in a teacher's career we will develop the highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers of the future. The Palaszczuk government acknowledges that there are great quality teachers and excellent teaching that already occurs in our classrooms each and every day. The purpose of this bill is to recognise and appropriately remunerate those teachers who are meeting the highly accomplished and lead teacher standards.

This bill is the result of a meticulous pilot program that developed a certification process with established procedures and capabilities that allows the Queensland College of Teachers to continue to perform the certifying role on an ongoing basis. The amendments in the bill provide for a rigorous framework suited to Queensland's education environment. There is an appropriate level of operational flexibility and adaptability to ensure the certification process can be practically implemented consistent with the national framework developed by AITSL. Queensland's framework is so good that the department and the college have been acknowledged for the national leadership shown in developing and implementing this certification process.

This is a great piece of legislation that will contribute to lifting the status of the teaching profession in Queensland and around the nation. I take this opportunity to thank every teacher, staff member, principal, school leadership staff, teacher aides, business service managers and everyone who works in schools. We know there are many from the gardener right through to the principal who do an excellent job in schools every day. I am very pleased and honoured as Minister for Education that there is bipartisan support for this bill. I commend the bill to the House.