




Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

**EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (4.58 pm): I rise to add a brief contribution to the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019. Today many members have spoken about how we manage to get the best education for our kids. As members would be aware, there was the Great Results Guarantee and a masters teachers program that were good programs. Lead teachers and highly accomplished teachers getting recognition through this program will also be good. Turning briefly to the objectives of the bill as stated in the explanatory notes, they state—

create a certification process in Queensland, consistent with a national framework, that recognises high performing teachers and encourages them to continue their role as a classroom teacher;

There are other objectives which people can read, but the reason that is important is we all know that great classroom teachers will have an impact on our lives. I am sure all of us here can look back on our education and give an example of a teacher who impacted our lives. There are some fantastic schools in my electorate. I would love to list them all but, Mr Deputy Speaker Kelly, I know you are going to pull me up if I try, but I am going to give it a crack. At each of these schools it would be great to have some lead teachers and teachers who are highly accomplished because at some of these schools there are hardworking teachers. They need the recognition and they need the pay because we do not want to lose them from the classroom. We want to keep them there.

A teacher who worked at Highfields State School some years ago taught one of my sons. Mr Mathewson is an absolutely brilliant teacher. He gave up enormous amounts of his time before and after school for kids whom he had not taught for three and four years to make sure they got through their program, and he never got the financial recognition that he deserved. A program like this is a great program to aim at someone just like that. If we want to keep hold of our teachers, it is really important—and it has been mentioned by others—in terms of facilities to ensure that the classrooms are up to a standard that they require and ensure that they have the resources they need. I know members have spoken about air conditioning, and it is important. If we want highly paid professionals to do a professional job in many circumstances—

**Ms McMILLAN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr WATTS:** No, it is absolutely relevant.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Resume your seat, please. What is your point of order?

**Ms McMILLAN:** Air conditioning has nothing to do with the College of Teachers bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What is your point of order, member?

**Ms McMILLAN:** Relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will just take some advice.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I am taking advice. Minister, that is not an opportunity to debate across the chamber. We will give you some advice when we are ready. I call the member and bring you back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This bill is talking about highly accomplished teachers and they deserve to have conditions that meet the standards that a professional would expect. Someone who is earning over \$100,000 a year and putting a lot of time, energy and effort into planning their classes and delivering the best education they can does not deserve to be assaulted and they do not deserve to be in hot classrooms. There are hot classrooms here in Queensland and the number of assaults is growing in Queensland.

**Ms PEASE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Resume your seat, member. Pause the clock. What is your point of order, member for Lytton? Can you make a point of order from there?

**Ms PEASE:** No, I cannot.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I have another point of order.

**Ms GRACE:** I rise to a point of order on relevance. We cannot have the member for Gregory—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It is not an opportunity to make a speech, Minister. I have your point of order.

**Ms GRACE:**—raise a point of order about relevance and then have the member for Gympie's interjection not being allowed to be taken—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. I understood the point of order on relevance. I do not need the speech, thanks very much. Member, I give you the call but I ask you to remain relevant to the long title of the bill.

**Mr WATTS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is disappointing to me that members in this chamber think that it is not relevant to have a highly accomplished teacher and a lead teacher in conditions that we ourselves do not have to work in.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Resume your seat. I am taking some advice. Member, I warn you formally. Can you come back to the long title of the bill, please.

**Mr WATTS:** I seek your guidance. I am talking about the bill itself. I am talking about lead teachers and highly accomplished teachers, their ability to get recognised and to have conditions that they deserve to work in. I find it difficult how the members opposite could find that not relevant at all.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, resume your seat and I will give you that guidance. Thank you for seeking it. Member, this is a bill for an act to amend the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 and the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2016 for particular purposes. Those particular purposes, as you yourself have outlined, are in the explanatory notes and I would ask you to be relevant to those particular purposes which do not involve the matters that you are attempting to bring into this debate.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have been listening to the debate and the objections raised by the government. The committee report indicates that under the policy objectives of the bill it creates a certification process—yes, it does—and then it also says that it 'encourages them to continue their role as a classroom teacher'. It is directly speaking of their role as a classroom teacher.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, there is no point of order. It is not relevant to this.

**Mr WATTS:** I will talk about my wife, and I will explain why she is relevant to the bill. She is a teacher and she puts in a lot of hours after work and a lot of time giving guidance to students outside of her normal classroom role. This program is exactly the sort of program that she would have aspired to, but she has taken on a more administrative role in her teaching career because after 25-odd years the ability to progress her career means that administrative roles come into play. This certification is a good thing and it is very important.

At Wilsonton State High—one of the newest state highs in my area—a program like this will lead to it being able to retain good-quality teachers, and it needs those teachers. I want to divert for a moment because I do need to recognise that the minister has provided some additional funding for a Beyond the Broncos program at a couple of the schools in my electorate. That is a wonderful program that will feed directly into the capacity of teachers to be able to do their jobs.

It is very important that we do not narrow this debate down to exactly just the certification process of these teachers. This is about the schools of Queensland. This is about making sure that those schools have the best quality teachers we can and that our children can receive the best education that they deserve, and a certification process is very important to that. The whole point of that certification process is to retain teachers in the schools. That means that it is more than just a rubber stamp from a college saying that they have passed a few exams and a process.

The simple fact is that what we are trying to achieve here is good-quality teachers in our classrooms and keeping them there so that they do not feel the pang of the dollar pulling them towards administrative roles. I have seen a lot of good teachers who have done a fabulous job in the classroom who are not great administrators, and I am sure there are great administrators who are not fantastic teachers.

This program recognises the skills set that is required for a teacher to be able to deliver the education that we all want for the next generation in Queensland. Those teachers do not deserve to be assaulted in their classrooms, and it is unfortunate to see that assaults have grown by 63 per cent since the Labor government came to office. Those teachers do not deserve to be mistreated in any way. Rather, they do deserve to have the facilities and to have the recognition that this bill provides.

This year Toowoomba State High will celebrate its centenary year, and it is a really big moment for Toowoomba State High School. I am sure over many years there would have been fantastic teachers who have either chosen a different career or they have chosen to go into administration and left the classroom, and that is a great loss to the generations of Toowoomba students who have come through since. However, those teachers would have done that because of a lack of ability to progress their careers.

I think this certification process is a great step forward, but I do not think it should be the only step forward. I implore each and every one of us to consider different ways in which we can make sure that we get the very best educational results in Queensland. That will mean not only retaining people in the jobs that they are most suited to doing but also providing the facilities and services that professionals who are chasing a career path, who are passionate about that career path, deserve and want in order to stay on that career path. That is what we want from them. As the people who manage the taxpayers' dollars of Queensland, they need from us a process that is fair, equitable, recognised and well-administered that allows them to get the recognition they deserve.

I am disappointed that I have not been able to mention all of the schools in my electorate. I am sure that they, too, will be. I have 23 schools in my electorate. The reason that is significant to me is that, when teachers are not being treated fairly and well, a large number of my constituents are at my door talking to me about what is going on in the education system, whether that be the independent, Catholic, or the state education system. All of the teachers in my area are interested in this process. All of them are interested in trying to work out ways in which they can retain their expertise in the classroom. I think decluttering the curriculum, making sure that we remove any propaganda from our campuses of any political nature—it is not the right place for it—and making sure that we provide the modern facilities that people would expect is the way to go.

I will make a brief comment about air-conditioning classrooms. I think that should be brought in across Queensland to make sure that these professionals who desperately want to stay in the classroom have the conditions that a modern office, a modern administration block, a modern parliament—

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. When the interjection was taken by the member for Gregory in regard to air conditioning—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What is your point of order?

**Ms GRACE:** My point of order is relevance. You have ruled in that way. I ask that you rule again. Do not do it next time, member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, I will provide the directions in this chamber. I was providing advice to the Manager of Opposition Business. I was not paying as close attention as I could have. The acting Clerk has advised me that there is an issue around relevance. I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr WATTS:** The title of the bill is Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill. It is about making sure that we recognise these professionals and have their abilities recognised financially. I am saying—and every member opposite thinks this is not relevant—that we should make sure that we have modern, up-to-date facilities for them. I implore the minister to air-condition their classrooms.