

21 March 2024

Committee Secretary - Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Re: Submission on the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Dear Committee Secretary

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) welcomes the opportunity to make a brief submission on the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is an organisation of, for, and with people with disability. QDN operates a state-wide network of over 2,000 members and supporters who provide information, feedback and views from a consumer perspective to inform systemic disability policy and disability advocacy. This submission is informed by the lived experience of our members, all of whom have disability.

QDN has had a long history of promoting, protecting and advancing the human rights of people with disability in Queensland. QDN believes that all students with disability deserve access to a fair and equal education.

QDN supports the A Right to Learn campaign and it's call to keep students with disability in the classroom. QDN believes that when children with disability are included in schools from an early age, children grow up seeing disability as a regular part of life. This leads to more inclusive communities and society as more people with disability take part in society and take up opportunities alongside their peers.

Many QDN members have spoken to us about their experiences in education. They have reflected on the importance of an inclusive education, giving personal accounts of how this has led to increased opportunities post school in relation to building friendships and connections with peers, undertaking paid work, undertaking further studies at university or TAFE and pursuing other life goals such as creating a home, getting married and having children.

QDN strongly endorses the campaign's five asks in response to the Bill, including:

1. Using suspension as a last resort. QDN agrees with the Disability Royal Commission recommendation that school suspensions should be a last resort or to prevent 'serious harm'.
2. Currently, the Bill only allows an appeal when a student has been suspended for 11 days or more in a year. QDN believes that there should be appeal rights for all suspensions, regardless of the number of days.
3. The implementation of a multi-tiered support system. Children experiencing multiple suspensions require support through a multi-tiered system to address their needs effectively.
4. QDN supports the need for increased transparency and accountability in schools regarding efforts to reduce suspensions, such as submitting an annual report to

Parliament, establishing a independent governance oversight mechanism to oversee suspensions, and implementing scorecards for schools.

5. To include a Students Rights section in the Bill to enshrine the right to learn for all Queensland students.

QDN thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission on the Bill.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Moss
Chief Executive Officer
Queenslanders with Disability Network