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Queensland Teachers' Union rejects proposed student behaviour changes in education legislation

The Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) has rejected proposed changes to Queensland education legislation that would compromise student behaviour management and undermine principals' decision making.

The changes are contained in proposed amendments to the Education (General Provisions) Act (EGPA). The amendments rejected by the QTU would allow appeals after 11 cumulative days (including multiple short School Disciplinary Absences, or SDAs) and mandate re-entry support plans after every SDA for some student cohorts. These are not acceptable, as they do not allow school leaders and teachers to decide when such plans would be effective.

QTU Vice-President, Leah Olsson said the proposed changes diminished teachers' and school leaders' professional autonomy and severely restricted school leaders' ability to maintain safe and orderly schools, and consequently safe and effective learning and teaching conditions.

The QTU has conducted school leader forums since the submission was tabled in Parliament, and recently held a two-day school leader conference in Brisbane, at which members called for direct action from the Minister and the Parliamentary Committee considering the proposed changes.

"The QTU seeks a commitment from all political parties that these amendments will be removed and that a roundtable is held urgently with all relevant stakeholders to discuss these issues," Ms Olsson said.

"School leaders are clear that it's time the focus moved from the number of SDAs to the interventions required to address the behaviours of the students that warranted the SDA in the first place."

Ms Olsson said re-entry plans for students would only be viable if the Queensland Government and Department of Education delivered the resources needed to develop and enact them, including extra teaching and support staff.

"If the Department of Education is genuine in wanting to achieve equity and excellence, it must provide more fully funded support for students who need it, including positive learning centres in more locations open to all year levels, more guidance officers, and more advisory visiting teachers," Ms Olsson said.

"We want all students to achieve, and schools must be given the tools to enable this; student behaviour data should inform, not drive, what we do."

A pre-recorded video and audio file from QTU Vice-President, Leah Olsson is attached for your use and can be accessed here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/72nnp7kj7wx4ml9m8i55m/h?rlkey=mh3f3lmg4sxe8hh48ysagz1bh&dl=0>

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