

Disability Inclusion in Victorian Secondary Education Bill 2023

A Bill for an Act for the provision of disability education in Victoria. This Bill legislates the introduction of mandatory disability education for students and teachers. This is for the purpose of ensuring a greater understanding and appreciation of those who are living with a disability and what disability means in an educational and societal setting.

Additionally, this Bill seeks to form a Board of Disability Education to facilitate policies within all Victorian secondary government schools.

As society progresses, it is important for increased education in inclusiveness and understanding to be integrated into the education system. In the current education system, students with high need disabilities are encouraged to attend specialist schools, while mainstream schools encourage students to formulate disability plans without a comprehensive understanding of different disabilities. This has been shown to be detrimental to the mental and physical health of students with disabilities, and withdrawal rates are shown to be twice as high as that of general education students.

This Bill seeks to address the inclusion of disability education for teachers and students within the governmental secondary education system, whilst enforcing the essential support for students living with disabilities through student and teacher education.

A Bill for an Act relating to Disability Inclusion in Victorian Secondary Education.
To be enacted by the Y's Victorian Youth Parliament.

PART I—Preliminary

Clause 1 Purpose

The main purposes of this Act are;

- (a) To provide an educational platform to raise awareness of disabilities;
- (b) To raise awareness on the importance of having an adequate understanding of students with disabilities;
- (c) To improve Victorian students' and teachers' understanding of what it means to live with a disability;
- (d) To ensure persons with disabilities are understood and included in Victorian society and education institutions;
- (e) To provide curriculum updates to the secondary education system.

Clause 2 Commencement

This Bill shall commence upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

Clause 3 Definitions

In this Bill;

- (a) **Access needs** means disability accommodations for someone to communicate, learn and take part in an activity;
- (b) **Accessibility** means the physical needs of the environment including wheelchair access, lighting, ramps, elevators;
- (c) **Curriculum** means the course design including content, support materials and other learning resources in accordance with course accreditation;
- (d) **Co-design** means involving people with a lived experience into the teaching environment to deliver and create the course content;

- (e) **Disability** means a person with a sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury or any combination thereof, which;
 - (i) Is, or is likely to be, permanent;
 - (ii) Causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication;
 - (iii) Requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support;
 - (iv) Is not related to ageing;
 - (v) Is an intellectual disability or a developmental delay.
- (f) **Disability advocate** means a person or organisation who is acting, speaking or writing to promote, protect and defend the human rights of people with disabilities;
- (g) **DEVB** means Disability Education Victoria Board;
- (h) **DEYAG** means Disability Education Youth Advisory Group;
- (i) **Inclusive language and imagery** means to discuss or speak to or about any person with disabilities in a way that respects their personhood, uses respectful terminology and addresses a person in a way that puts them first and focuses on their participation in life and society;
- (j) **Ministerial Order** means an order created under the authority granted to a minister under a statute or regulation;
- (k) **Stakeholders** means people such as parents and guardians, disability organisations, healthcare providers, insurance providers, and union officials.

PART II—Establishment

Clause 4 Establishment of Board on Disability Education in Victoria

- 4.1 The Disability Education Victoria Board (DEVB) shall be established.
- 4.2 DEVB shall consist of ten members including;
 - (a) More than one half of the members of the board shall be persons with a disability;
 - (b) Remaining persons shall be secondary educators within interested Local Government Areas.
- 4.3 DEVB shall guide and formulate content and materials for increased disability education in the Victorian Secondary Education Curriculum.
- 4.4 DEVB shall be advised by a Youth Advisory Group called 'Disability Education Youth Advisory Group' (DEYAG).
- 4.5 DEYAG shall;
 - (a) Be comprised of 10 young Victorians between the ages of 12 to 24 with a diverse range of backgrounds and disabilities;
 - (b) Select the 10 members through an application process;
 - (c) Be led by a representative from DEVB.

Clause 5 School Council Representatives

- 5.1 A mandatory teacher representative from each school shall be appointed to engage with DEVB;
 - (a) The representative per secondary school shall be approved by the respective school council;
 - (b) The representative appointed shall be mandated to guide the implementation of increased disability education in Victoria.
- 5.2 The school council shall recommend a disability representative on the respective schools' Student Representative Council.

Clause 6 Disability Education in the Victorian Curriculum

- 6.1 DEVB shall increase disability education through the Victorian curriculum for all government secondary school students.
- 6.2 This shall be achieved by DET developing and providing guidelines to all government public secondary schools.

Clause 7 Content of Disability Education in the Victorian Secondary Education Curriculum

- 7.1 The DEVB shall formulate the content of increased disability education through the following means;
 - (a) Round table discussion;
 - (b) Consultations with;
 - (i) Disability organisations;
 - (ii) Other relevant organisations.
- 7.2 The planning and development of disability education content shall;
 - (a) Use inclusive language and imagery;
 - (b) Identify types of disabilities including;
 - (i) Invisible disabilities;
 - (ii) Visible disabilities;
 - (iii) Relevant examples to the topics.
 - (c) Use examples of access needs and accessibility requirements;
 - (d) Include the Models of Disability;
 - (e) Include terminology commonly used for and around people with a disability;
 - (f) Incorporate respectful practices at school and in the workplace.
- 7.3 The content shall be updated in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum for all secondary education year levels.

- 7.4 DEVB shall consult with the following parties to shape the disability education;
- (a) Disability advocates;
 - (b) University lecturers;
 - (c) Other relevant stakeholders.
- 7.5 Teachers shall educate in a co-design process;
- (a) Involving third party resources such as;
 - (i) Disability advocates and speakers;
 - (ii) Inclusion officers to run incursions/excursions.
 - (b) Educational techniques shall be performed to the appropriate year level of teaching.
- 7.6 A term of learning shall run throughout a 12-week period at the schools discretion;
- (a) There shall be a minimum of two incursions or excursions per term.

Clause 8 Teacher Training and Education

- 8.1 Disability Inclusion Training shall be included as part of standard teacher education. Training shall include;
- (a) In person training;
 - (b) Two hours of online course material;
 - (c) Course tests including;
 - (i) A passing score of 90% or higher;
 - (ii) A re-test for any individual who scores under 90%;
 - (iii) An inability to obtain a passing score after three attempts shall instigate recommencement of the entire training course for the individual.
- 8.2 A teacher shall have a valid reason to not attend the training;
- (a) If satisfactory, the teacher may take the course solely online.

- 8.3 A teacher without certification shall be deemed unfit to teach the subject matter.
- 8.4 Graduate teachers applying to Victorian secondary schools shall already have this certificate;
 - (a) Existing teachers shall be required to complete the training within three years of commencement.
- 8.5 Teachers shall update their certificate every three years in line with curriculum updates.
- 8.6 Teacher inclusion training and education content shall be created by and consulted with;
 - (a) People with disabilities;
 - (b) Disability advocates;
 - (c) Disability Inclusion University Lecturers;
 - (d) Relevant stakeholders.