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Brisbane Catholic Education sells out students and staff in Seton College closure

Brisbane Catholic Education's (BCE) decision to close Seton College has been described as a 'sell-out of students, parents and staff' by the union representing employees at the school.

Independent Education Union of Australia – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEUA-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke said BCE's decision was wrong and Seton College should remain open in order to continue to provide inclusive education for families in the Mount Gravatt community.

"For 56 years the teachers and school support staff at Seton College have provided high quality education to the southside community," Mr Burke said.

"18 months ago BCE made a clear commitment in writing to provide schooling which specifically catered for students with disabilities but now BCE has simply decided to turn that decision on its head and claim that this is not the type of school they should operate.

"It's a clear contradiction of what College staff, students and their parents were told 18 months ago.

"It's a sell-out of Seton College students and their parents who enrolled them at the College based on BCE's commitment 18 months ago to operate a school exclusively for students with disability.

"It's also a sell-out of Seton College staff who have been committed to making this vision a reality for the last 18 months through their professional development and the creation of work programs.

"BCE has some serious questions to answer about how it can make such a decision when it has told parents and staff as recently as last year that it is committed to the College providing a high-quality learning environment for students with disability," he said.

Mr Burke said College staff also had serious concerns for the future of their students.

"Here we have a cohort of students who feel safe and comfortable in their current learning environment.

"However, BCE's plan is to just move them on to other schools, and most likely larger learning environments, which could pose a very daunting and challenging experience for these students.

"Our members have spent the last 18 months building relationships and connections to engage these students and no consideration will compensate for this," he said.

Mr Burke said the union continued to provide advice, support and assistance to its members at the College during this uncertain time.

"Our union is always there to support our members in such situations and we have and will continue to do so – a key part of that support being our ongoing advocacy to BCE that the College remain open," he said.

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The Independent Education Union of Australia – Queensland and Northern Territory Branch represents more than 17,000 education professionals across Queensland and the Northern Territory. www.qieu.asn.au