

Submission
No 34

INQUIRY INTO INQUIRY INTO THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Organisation:

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Theme:

Summary

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Inquiry into the Recruitment and Training of Teachers

To the Director,

Attracting Quality Teachers from the Private/Catholic System

At the beginning of my teaching career 10 years ago I commenced at Cathedral School, Bathurst as a classroom teacher. I stayed there for 7 years before I moved to Bourke Public School which was considered to be a hard to staff school.

By moving on from the Catholic system was a most rewarding and challenging experience as there was a lot of professional and personal benefits. It was a decision that I will never regret and given the chance again I would have made the move a lot earlier in my career.

The following points may be of interest to the inquiry as I feel that they are of relevance to a teacher in a similar situation as I experienced:

1. The NSW Public school system does not encourage teachers to swap systems as they give up their long service entitlements. I received a payout from my previous employer, most of which went in taxation.

Recommendation

That the NSW Department of Education and Training put in place systems to encourage experienced teachers to take on teaching positions in hard to staff schools by allowing teachers to transfer their long service from the private system.

2. There was a significant reduction in my take home pay as I commenced my time when the Temporary Teacher scheme started in 2001. This saw me three pay steps below where I would have been if I had stayed with the Catholic school system. This was described to me as to be bad luck as it was the start of a new scheme for temporary teachers. This decision saw me receive considerably less pay as my colleagues who were permanent.

Recommendation

To establish systems to ensure that teachers engaged on temporary contracts are paid at the same level as their colleagues on the permanent pay scales.

Training of Teachers

When I commenced my teacher training at university I was able to complete my studies in three years. This was considered as an acceptable amount of time to prepare a teacher for the classroom. At the conclusion of my studies I was appointed to my first teaching position at Cathedral School, Bathurst and then completed 2 years of fulltime teaching before I commenced further studies and I am now considered to be four year trained.

3. The university students that are now graduating are four year trained before they graduate and then start their teaching careers. This decision to now only have 4 year students graduating has had a profound impact on the way schools now operate.

There are no longer the teachers available to fill casual and short term teaching positions. It is impacting schools in the city and large regional centres and the problem is much worse the further isolated the school. Schools are unable to attract the newly graduated teachers until they have completed four years of study.

Recommendation

That the NSW Department of Education and Training work closer with universities by putting in place systems to allow pre-service undergraduates to graduate with three year status and therefore meet the requirements to be able to teach with a teaching number from the department. This will allow them to be able to continue their studies while they taught on a casual basis. The casual teaching crisis would be quickly improved as there would be more teachers available to teach on a casual basis.

Please contact me on my business number (02 68747308) if you would like to discuss these strategies further.

Yours sincerely

(Emailed)

Michael Wood