

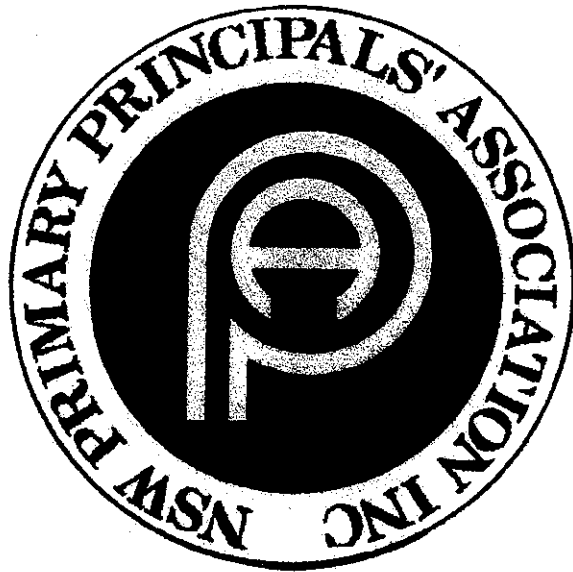
## INQUIRY INTO THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

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**Theme:**

**Summary**



**NSW PRIMARY PRINCIPALS'  
ASSOCIATION**

**Response to Recruitment of  
Graduates and Teacher Training**

**March, 2005**



## **NSW PRIMARY PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION Inc.**

[www.nswppa.org.au](http://www.nswppa.org.au)

### **RESPONSE TO TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER RECRUITMENT**

The NSWPPA strongly believes that teaching is an honourable and important profession that has a major impact on Australia's future.

The status of teachers in the community is crucial if we are to attract people to our profession. This status is affected by the image presented from the government of the day, the media and individual politicians. Clear messages about the value of teachers, support for their role and consequently, unconditional support of public education is required. There needs to be an understanding of the difficulty of the teaching role in today's society and the fine job that teachers are doing across NSW.

There are some key issues that we would like to address:

- **The recruitment of people needs to be more attractive and more flexible. Ideas for consideration**
  - **Increasing scholarships for trainee teachers**
    - **Awarding scholarships with a 12 month opportunity to start the course. This would allow a break for the students who are concerned about going from "school to school."**
    - **More pay incentives to attract young people to "hard to staff" areas.**
    - **Offering places to out of state high achievers.**
    - **Expansion of Teach NSW with enthusiastic teachers highlighting the positive aspects of teaching as a career.**
- **The responsibility facing teachers and workload issues need to be addressed if we are going to attract people to the profession.**

Teachers have to be politically correct at all times. Rules and regulations e.g. Occupational Health & Safety, Child Protection have had an enormous impact on schools. All eyes are focussed on teachers and the pressures that can be placed on teachers by the community can have a detrimental effect.

In addition, teachers face an increasing workload as society's problems and issues become a school solution. Revisiting the recommendations in the Vinson and Eltis Reports is necessary to ensure that workload issues are being addressed.
- **Specialisation in primary schools could be an incentive for people to join the teaching service.** People with expertise in music, PE, art and technology could be more interested in teaching these areas than just general primary. Many teachers in general primary feel less confident in teaching these areas. Primary students are entitled to specialist teachers to nurture their love of the cultural side of education and to enhance their technological skills. This specialisation could also attract more male teachers.

The NSWPPA supports the Government commitment to early childhood and furthermore believes that the specialisation in this area has attracted more people to the profession. This could be extended to specialisation in the middle years.

- The work experience component of senior students to be aligned to the work experience in the nursing profession. Work experience in schools could be restructured to attract credits towards a teaching scholarship or teaching qualifications. This would require links with Universities providing teacher education and a set of criteria developed so that this incentive could occur.
- Emphasising the job satisfaction side of our career in all promotional material. One of the most rewarding, yet undersold aspects of the teaching profession is teamwork, relationship building and friendship that occurs between staff members in schools. In addition, the satisfaction of watching students acquire academic and social skills is extremely rewarding. It is a very attractive side to our career and can provide a level of career satisfaction that is not found in other professions.
- Expanding the NSW Teach program to government and non-government schools. There is a focus on providing incentives to attract teachers to hard to staff areas including rural areas however, we need to have students attracted to teaching in all areas. Promotional visits to schools as part of Vocational Educational Courses so that all students are aware of the options available. Expanding Career Expos and using young teachers to promote teaching and defining a career path.
- More stringent measures needed in the recruitment of overseas teachers. High order communication skills must be a priority and an understanding of Australian culture, our education system and its values.

The issue of attracting more male teachers to our profession provides a dilemma for educators. Although male teachers provide a balance and offer the necessary role models that some students need in today's society, our schools require good educators rather than an influx of teachers who are deemed attractive because of their gender. The focus of this inquiry should be in attracting good teachers to our profession. If some of the issues that we outline are addressed then the gender balance problem could be resolved.

*The recruitment of people in the teaching profession hinges on the perception of the status of teaching as a career. This issue needs addressing to support any other new initiatives or programs to recruit people into teaching.*

## **TRAINING OF TEACHERS**

**Best practice teacher training is crucial so that early career teachers are appointed feeling confident to perform the important role of educating young people in today's society.**

**The NSWPPA has been engaged in numerous discussions concerning teacher training and there is widespread dissatisfaction. The inconsistencies between teacher training institutions is a major concern.**

**.The key issues to bring to your attention are:**

- **“University elitism”. An example is the DET initiative on Quality Teaching (co-designed by the University of Newcastle) which is completely ignored in some universities. Newly appointed teachers have little knowledge of this project and in some cases, there is no knowledge of this whole pedagogical change.**
- **The lack of curriculum knowledge in some of our newly appointed teachers. This relates to the BA trained people who have elected to study for an extra year to gain a Bachelor of Teaching. There is not enough rigorous curriculum studies in this one year course and teachers are appointed to schools who are unprepared and lacking confidence. As a result, many of them leave teaching.**
- **The lack of connections that are made between theory and practice. Many of the courses have rigorous theory but there is a difference for students when they start their practicum or are appointed. Students and early career teachers have difficulty applying theory into practice. A lot more time has to be given to the student in order to make those connections.**
- **Practicums are beneficial to trainee teachers but are often poorly timed and too short. Universities want larger groups of students placed at the one school for their supervision convenience but this restricts smaller schools with excellent teacher role models taking on students and also prevents a “quality control” at the school level. Principals should be able to ask teachers who they believe are excellent role models to take on trainee teachers.**
- **Lack of knowledge of school organisation, teacher responsibilities and teacher entitlements is a major concern. Dealing with the issues of being a casual teacher or a temporary teacher is virtually unknown. There is a lack of knowledge about the system generally.**
- **The workload of trainee teachers during the most important time of their learning cycle, the practicum. As students are trying to cope with applying theory to practice and prepare lessons for their class, teacher training institutions set assignments to complete during the practicum. There is little understanding or recognition of the workload in schools in preparing for our diverse students.**
- **The lack of knowledge by some of the staff in the education faculty who have not been in schools for numerous years. The teaching of programming is often out dated and not relevant to the teaching/learning cycle or syllabus currently used.**
- **The practice of having elective courses in special education, aboriginal education, gifted and talented, ESL and Reading Recovery should be abolished. These courses should be compulsory for all trainee teachers. These areas are basic requisites for teaching in government schools today.**

- **Informing students early in their training if they are not suited to the profession. The universities supporting schools where there has been a strong indication that the trainee teacher will not be a good practitioner needs consistency.**
- **The lack of real life situations to prepare trainees for teaching full time. Looking at videos and talking about best practice teaching style cannot replace watching a teacher and class in action.**
- **The funding issues in relation to the cost of practicums that restrict the amount of time that trainee teachers can spend in schools.**

#### **Some recommendations:**

- **Consistency between universities in teacher education with a rigorous approach to theory and links made at all times to the practice.**
- **Specific courses in aboriginal education, gifted and talented, ESL, Reading Recovery, special education and classroom management made compulsory for all trainee teachers**
- **Best practice teaching practice links between schools and universities. Universities request expressions of interest to forge links with schools re demonstration lessons or specific projects.**
- **Internships for trainee teachers so that there is more on the job experience. The internship could be throughout their teacher training rather than in the last year. This will reduce the number of early career teachers who leave in their first year of teaching.**
- **Incentives for hard to staff areas that are not just offered to early career teachers. Early career teachers could take the places of some of the experienced teachers for periods of one to two years while the more experienced offer their knowledge and expertise to harder to staff schools.**
- **In staffing rural areas, not to place early career teachers in P5/P6 schools where they become Principals in their first year. This is a situation that has proved to be detrimental to the development of the new teacher. They need guidance and mentoring in schools that can offer them support and mentoring in their early years.**
- **Every early career teacher leaves university with a professional learning subsidy so that they can engage in professional learning courses throughout the year without having to rely on school funds. This would assist casual teachers who would be able to access courses.**
- **Reviewing the targeted graduate selection process with more weight given to the practical side of their degree rather than the standard of their assignments.**
- **The support of mentoring programs for all new teachers in all schools. The mentoring initiative has been extremely successful and has prevented many new teachers, particularly in difficult or hard to staff schools, in leaving the system.**
- **Using retired principals and teachers to have two year tenure at teacher training institutions to provide more relevant, current information. These people could also be employed in a mentoring role or to provide professional learning sessions during the teacher's first year.**
- **A more rigorous approach to teacher training with more compulsory units and fewer electives.**
- **Trainee teachers need to see examples of best practice and be able to engage in professional dialogue. A return to demonstration lessons is required with interaction with the teacher prior to the lesson and after the lesson a necessity. Real life class situations where trainee students watch a lesson and observe students learning and interacting.**
- **Flexible and innovative projects between universities and schools where students and teachers can exchange ideas and learn from each other. The University of Wollongong is leading the way in this field.**
- **Reviewing the system of supervision of trainee teachers so that the workload is reduced and encourages more practising teachers to accept students. In addition, perhaps there should be**

different incentives offered to teachers to accept a trainee teacher e.g. credit to mentoring certificates.

The NSWPPA strongly supports the inquiry into teacher training as there are teachers who have the enthusiasm but lack the knowledge and preparation to feel success in their first year of teaching. Without any extra entitlement at a school level it is difficult to consistently support these teachers. The mentoring program that has been introduced in some areas is an excellent initiative. It needs to be in place for every beginning teacher to ensure that they stay in the system.

If we fail to adequately train people and support them in their early years of teaching then the shortage of teachers in the future will reach a critical level.

The NSWPPA supports any initiative that will provide the public education system with quality teachers.

**Kerryanne Knox**

**Vice President NSWPPA**

*On behalf of the New South Wales Primary Principals' Association*

*17<sup>th</sup> March, 2005*