

**INQUIRY INTO TEACHER SHORTAGES IN NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My name is . I have been a teacher in the Department of Education for 30 years and a Head Teacher for the past 10 years. I was suspended due to the vaccine mandates and have not taught since the mandates were introduced. It is my intention to return to teaching once the mandates are removed.

Clearly, the vaccine mandates have impacted on teacher shortages in NSW. Demanding that teachers participate in a medical experiment is reprehensible, and a violation of human rights. If the Department of Education wants to attract teachers, vaccine mandates cannot be allowed to be part of the entry requirements for this profession. This must be written into DOE policy so that people who are interested in pursuing teaching cannot be forced into taking a drug to maintain their position.

There are several reasons for the current teacher shortages.

Currently, apart from the vaccine mandates, teachers are leaving the profession because of the enormous and constant administrative workloads. The (electronic) paperwork that teachers are required to produce daily is enormous and untenable. It detracts from their ability to deliver quality lessons because they are constantly distracted by completing and filing electronic documents including justifying what they have taught, how they deal with behaviour issues, mental health recommendations, parent/caregiver contact, Professional Learning records, meeting notes, programming, registrations, truancy etc. Either teachers must have the paperwork demands reduced or they must be given adequate time to complete this.

Discipline issues with students have become a constant issue within the teaching profession. Students have become more difficult to deal with and teachers find the constant challenge of student behaviour management, damaging to their psyche. Teachers are often sworn at, belittled, undermined by groups of students and physically assaulted. The hierarchy in the school often do not support teachers who are dealing with difficult students and teachers are often asked to accept the poor behaviour because students have a difficult home life. This discourages teachers to remain in the profession.

The responsibilities of teachers have exponentially increased. Teachers are now expected to be parents, social workers, sporting coaches, musical directors, etc. There is no recognition of our expanding role and the time in the classroom is often a battle of competing interests instead of the focus remaining on delivering quality lessons.

Teachers often do not feel supported in their role because of poor leadership in schools. School Principals and Deputy Principals are often those who have the skills to do well at interview, rather than those who are talented at leading and managing a school. Principals are not made accountable for falling results. Principals who lack talent are not removed from schools, but rather remain in place as the school falls apart. Often, they shift their workload down, so that other staff members of the school must take on more responsibility. Principals and Deputy Principals are not visible elements in the school and spend far too much time in their offices. They devise additional programs for the staff to address falling results and these programs just become an additional, unnecessary burden for staff rather than improve results. Principals also institute shifting demands and the workload for teachers becomes an ever-changing series of projects that do nothing to improve quality educational outcomes for students.

Phones need to be removed from schools. This must become a blanket rule across all Department of Education schools in NSW. Those schools who have removed phones from the school grounds

have evidenced an improvement in educational outcomes and less social disruption. The DOE must be brave and make this a priority.

Social progressivism needs to be removed from the curriculum. Rather than concentrate on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes, teachers are being asked to utilise the vehicle of activism to teach and this becomes their priority. Teachers should not be asked or allowed to teach cultural Marxism in schools. Look at the syllabi for various courses in the DOE. For example, Year 11 Standard English students are required to learn about contemporary possibilities and Stage 4 and 5 HSIE students must learn about climate change, as though the science is settled. The DOE is concentrating on diversity and progressivism rather than achieving quality educational outcomes. The curriculum, in its current form, is harming student academic development, instead of creating inquiring minds.

University courses turn out graduates who are ill prepared for the daily realities of teaching. The quality of graduates is poor. They often have poor literacy and numeracy skills which ensures that they are not able to specifically help their students. Increasing the requirements for entry into university teaching courses (and adhering to them) would make teaching a more prestigious course to get into and could improve the societal attitudes regarding teachers.

The DOE needs to stop advancing students if they do not reach a minimum competency for each stage level. Some students who enter Year 7 cannot read and often have poor numeracy skills and this disparity increases as students progress to each year group. The DOE rewards (whilst at the same time inadequately supports) failing students by pushing them through the system. This creates a differentiation burden for teachers in every classroom. What happened to the Reading Recovery program in primary schools to help students learn to read?

Local Schools, Local Decisions is a policy which impacts staff shortages. Principals can hold positions open as casual positions for many years. Staff who want permanency therefore become dissatisfied with this untenable position (because it is impossible to get loans etc when working in a casual position) and move on.

Societal views about teachers are poor. The media supports the denigration of teachers and there are often criticisms levelled at teachers, including that they only work 9am to 3pm. This is simply not true, and a cultural shift is required if teacher shortages are to be addressed.

In my current school, Head Teachers are timetabled to teach above the award and the principal has failed to address this. Head Teachers also continuously get more and more responsibility passed onto them with no time allowance. I am responsible for all electronic record keeping for the department. This means that I must create all the electronic folders, create all electronic reporting formats for each reporting period and ensure that each teacher remains up to date with their individual electronic record keeping. My department is the largest in the school and I receive no time allowance to ensure this happens. I am responsible for 9 teachers and yet, other faculties which have 3 staff, have the same timetabled hours as me. That is inequitable. I am also required to use a P-card to order and pay for all resources for the HSIE Department, including all textbooks, stationery, joining professional associations, etc). The office staff are no longer required to do this. I often feel like a glorified secretary. None of this helps to improve the learning outcomes for students. I am also required to have 'whole school' roles, such as Head of the Literacy team, in order to fulfil the demands of principal. To be an effective Head Teacher requires that I work 12 to 14 hours a day, 5 days per week, with additional hours put in each weekend and holiday period. How is this tenable? It is understandable as to why people are leaving the profession as a result of the enormous and constant demands placed upon staff.