
From: Carla Bernier <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2015 11:19 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Opposition to Bill 148

Dear Chair of the Law Amendments Committee:

My name is Carla Bernier and I am writing to oppose Bill 148. I wanted to come in to speak; however, I was informed that the list was full this evening and the only time available would be when I am teaching.

Teaching has become an incredibly difficult job and the government's Bill 148 is going to worsen these conditions. Not only has the government stripped us of our constitutional right to fair collective bargaining, but this bill also impedes our ability to advocate for funding that would improve our students learning environments which are our working conditions.

I have had classes of 30 plus students where more than half needed resource support while a forth were on individualized personal programs. These students were several grades below the grade I was supposed to be teaching. Without proper support, teachers cannot meet every students' individual needs. We as teachers take a lot to heart. We want to do everything possible to help our student however we feel hopeless in this effort as we don't have the necessary support to do so. The demands on teachers have increased. The government wants to implement reporting over the internet, which is very informative for parents. It requires a great deal of time to do these tasks however we don't receive allotted time to do this. The time to do administrative work is taken from preparing for our classes. We are expected to post homework and update our web pages to further communicate with our students and their parents. If proper time was given we could do this while delivering interesting lessons to our students.

Teachers benefit greatly by meeting with other teachers through professional development. We are able to share ideas and assessment methods instead of wasting time reinventing the wheel. This is virtually non existent.

The never-ending and ever-changing direction on procedures and policies and protocols has also affected the increased workload. Just when you have started to settle in with a procedure with your students and their parents, it changes. For example the reporting process.

The class composition has also changed. We are supporting students with diverse mental, social and physical needs. We have students with PTSD, ADD, autism, behavioural issues, depression, schizophrenia, students who are struggling with their sexual identity, gay, transgender, etc.

There is a lack of human and physical resources. I don't have enough textbooks for my students. They are unable to take them home to do work. We don't have resource support for our French immersion students. This then becomes my responsibility.

I have been teaching for 18 years and it pains me to see my beloved profession be devalued as it also means that my students are being devalued. I teach them the importance of standing up against bullies in many different contexts especially ones where they are in the majority. I urge all Liberals to have the courage to vote against Bill 148; to show Nova Scotia's youth who will build up our economy if we allow them an opportunity, that you support them and their educators. I expect all members of the Conservative and NDP parties to vote against Bill 148 because it is wrong and it violates workers' rights.

The only way for this province to develop to its full potential is for our government to invest in its future; its people. Build people first and everything else will follow.

With hope and respect,

Carla Bernier