
From: Carol McKay [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 1:54 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Law amendments submission teacher legislation

To whom it may concern,

I was unable to speak in person at the law amendments committee regarding the proposed legislation of the teachers contract, but I would like my opinion formally included on the record.

I am a teacher of 23 years in this province and a mother of three school age children.

I am deeply disappointed in this legislation as both a teacher who loves her students and a mother who loves her children.

The Supreme Court of Canada has demonstrated in rulings over the past while that this type of legislation is illegal. I am not a lawyer or judge so will not pass judgment on that aspect yet, but personally I find it completely disrespectful.

The education minister and premier may think they are reaching out to teachers but it is completely misguided, too little and I'm afraid far too late. Trust has been lost in this governments ability to put their political motives aside and do the right thing, the difficult thing and make meaningful changes to our system.

I have seen a gradual decline in the resources and supports available to students in this system over 23 years but have noticed the biggest decline over the last three years. That is on the liberal governments watch. And yes, some of the problems were inherited from other governments but that will always be the case. A government that is truly willing to lead sees beyond that and steps up to the plate.

I teach high school biology and many of my classes are students in the IB diploma. This gives me a unique perspective on the conditions in our schools. Systemic issues in schools take time to filter up to the high school level. We are now seeing that filtering. The decline in resources and misguided, failed initiatives affect the quality of our student. The students I teach today are not as well prepared and are not as well educated as they were 20, 10 or even 2 years ago. The full impact of cell phones, no attendance policy, no homework or late policies, no resources, no failing, no support for EAL and resource... has hit a critical point.

Because I teach IB many of my students are for the most part dedicated and privileged individuals. They don't have the same socioeconomic issues many other Nova Scotia students do. There is a direct connection. These are the brightest students in part because of their privileged situation.

What concerns me the most is that the "overall quality" of education is declining. Teachers can only do so much. Students are getting to high school now with poorer literacy skills and decreased work ethic. When the system doesn't demand work ethic its human nature to not give that effort. Teachers have been going above and beyond to maintain expectations but when the system contradicts them it leads to the situation we are in now.

After 23 years of teaching I shouldn't be struggling to provide the same quality of education as I did the first few years as a new teacher, but I am. There are too many distractions, too little resources and too little time.

As a parent I am just as concerned. My kids are lucky, they are privileged, they want for nothing, they are good students. My two oldest kids are in grades 10 and 12 so will soon be out of the system, but it is my youngest in grade 4 who I worry the most for. Unlike my other two kids, my youngest finds school boring and he lacks motivation. Today's system

will not serve him well. He will not graduate with the same education my other two will. This scares me, especially since he doesn't have any of the many issues other students face (poverty, poor family support, learning disabilities, physical disabilities). I can't even imagine the worry of parents whose children have struggles.

I do not support this legislation and want it on record that I feel it will continue to erode the quality of education in this province and relationship the government has with the its teachers.

I love teaching. I love my students. I love my kids. Positive change is needed now. This legislation is not positive and is not going to effect any change.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol McKay

Sent from my iPhone