
From: Helene D'Entremont [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 2:09 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Bill 75

Good afternoon dear members of the Law Amendment Committee, I am sending you this email to voice my disappointment in our current Liberal government (which I voted for but will not next election unless this is stopped) for trying to legislate Bill 75 which breaks my Charter of Rights as a union member. Yes, I have heard Premier McNeil express his view on having achieved three tentative agreement with two different executives. However, I teach elementary school and never have I told students in 31 years of teaching, that after three tries, you should give up. There are other avenues that Premier McNeil could have chosen: mediation, arbitration, new negotiators, showing us good faith and making immediate changes in our daily work to ease the stress. Obviously, creativity is not our current government's forte. Premier McNeil chose not to do so and to dictate rather than continue to negotiate. I ask that all Liberal MLAs, specifically my MLA Diana Whalen, to reconsider and vote down this Bill.

The insinuation that students were being affected negatively due to WTR perplexes me. I have been in my classroom with my students covering the outcomes for my grade level. I have had a complete lunch hour during this time because miraculously our school board hired EAs to ensure that all classrooms were covered during lunch and to support difficult classes. Before that, teachers were staying in their class for a portion of lunch hour to make sure all students had their thermos opened, that they were indeed eating their lunch and that everyone was safe. When the decision was made to allow all students to stay at lunch for free, did anyone think of the ramifications if enough lunch monitors were not found? Do I not deserve a lunch break? So we have been used and abused because most elementary school teachers would never leave their students without proper care. If anyone has been having a hard time with WTR, it would be the teachers who have the minimum allowed prep of an average of 30 minutes per day, which I am a part of). On some days, there are teachers who have no prep time. I brought work home to complete and planned lessons from my house. But NEVER did I not do my job of teaching and assessing outcomes. If student lost out on clubs, sports, etc. It is because teachers volunteer a great deal of their time.

In the past 31 years of teaching, particularly in the last 15 years, I have seen many, many changes in the classroom and the great majority of them have not been positive. My mother, a retired teacher, told me to never let my students see me cry. I have followed this, but I have cried in frustration and in despair at home because of students whose needs had not been met due to lack of support staff. Never did I ever imagine the scenarios I now see in my classroom. Students with severe emotional needs who take the majority of my focus and who literally keep the rest of the class hostage. These are not necessarily special needs students, but students that come to us already broken. And they do not qualify as special needs so they are not supported by a EA. And despite their severe behaviour, they rarely are suspended or kept out of the class so that other students in my class get my undivided attention. Many behaviour issues are due to our current culture and a lack of accountability by parents. How are parents being held accountable for their part in the Education Act? When an elementary student is consistently late or consistently absent at school, it is the parents issue, not the student. And yet, even after talking with administration and social workers, these students continue to the following grade so that their learning gap can widen every year.

A quick fix as far as I'm concern is to eliminate PLCs. This will give teachers 30-60 minutes back of their prep time. True PLCs were never meant to be done in a 30 minute period as you keep looking at the clock because your students will be leaving gym class or music class any minute. We fill out forms that are never read. (I know that for a fact because my group has asked questions on our forms and have never received an answer!) They are placed in a binder so that we can show that our schools are doing PLCs. To what end? Teachers discuss program, students with difficulties, etc. on a weekly basis with other teachers of the same grade or previous teachers.

The disrespect from students and parents has increased ten-fold since my first years. And this current government has enabled the public to disrespect and trash us too. How you ask? When your employer disrespects you publicly, it enables others to feel free to do the same. We have seen this pattern recently in the US. I have never felt so disappointed in my employer than this year. The Premier had an agenda and will be pushing it through. Personally, I will not be negatively affected by my Service Award being cut in 2015. However, our Service Award was to compensate for years of no increase in salary, or even roll backs. When I signed my contract 31 years ago, I was not told that at year 29, my service award would end. If you would like to eliminate the Service Award, then it should start with the next group signing their contract. Indeed, you are breaking the contract (the promise) that I signed 31 years ago.

Let's get back to the table like adults. Let's show our students that adults can come to an agreement without one party forcing something on another party.

Sincerely,
Hélène d'Entremont
Grade 3 FI teacher
Ecole Rockingham School

Due to a horrendous cold, I was not able to speak today but I hope that someone will be reading my opinion and concerns.

Sent from my iPad