
From: lwtaggart [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 7:40 PM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: LAC committee addition

Hon. Diana Whalen,

Please submit this letter as an addition to the voices being heard at today's Law Amendments Committee.

My name is Lloyd Taggart. I am a teacher and parent from Amherst, Nova Scotia.

First of all I wish to state my disappointment with the current Liberal government's attack on unions and public education in particular. The way in which they have approached negotiations can not be considered fair collective bargaining. Their refusal to budge from any issue surrounding money shows a complete lack of respect for those they are meant to serve.

Personally, as a teacher I have no faith in a committee run by government (the minister has final say, no arbitrator). As long as I have been a teacher there have been similar committees and studies and the result has been the spending of money, more data collection and entry for teachers and less learning for students.

It is often impossible for teachers to properly do their jobs. Every classroom has diverse learners and today many classrooms contain students who require individual program plans. Other classes, particularly in smaller schools see two or more courses being taught by one teacher during the same block in the schedule. There is no way students in these situations are getting the education they deserve.

For every IPP the teacher must design a program, independent of the course being taught that is appropriate for the student. On top of that they are now required to enter reports in multiple software programs (PowerSchool and Tienet). Too often teachers are forced to complete the paper work (online now) in order to make it appear as if they are able to truly meet the individual needs of the student, even if they cannot.

How is this possible? Imagine a class of even 25 grade nine students. Three have individual program plans which means planning four different lessons for that one class. Add any student who needs adaptations (extras that allow them to compete the regular program). These adaptations must be documented online, meetings must take place and every classroom activity and assessment must account for them. Finally consider behaviour problems and attendance issues in the class. These take more of a teachers time and allow for less learning. That is one class of four or more the teacher is responsible for. To do it right is impossible.

What the system needs would take too long to list so here is my number one wish.

A discipline policy with teeth would allow students to experience a learning environment free of constant harassment and distraction. As a teacher I have seen students who are a daily source of terror for their classmates and a distraction from learning. These students are not suspended unless they fight, smoke on school property or demonstrate some other extreme behaviour. To be suspended the school has to prove their case to the board level and often face push back from parents no matter how poor the behaviour.

All students have a right to an education, but like other rights there comes a point where they have forfeited that right. They must not be allowed to negatively impact the learning of their classmates. To even remove a student

from class requires a teacher contact parents, administration and then log the incident online. This is more time that teachers do not have and it often makes teachers have to feel like they must defend their actions.

If these students were removed from the system class size would be far less of an issue. I much prefer a class of thirty students who are ready to learn as opposed to a class of 15 with behaviours that continually derail the learning experience.

Finally, a real discipline policy would come a virtually no cost.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Lloyd Taggart