

Submission.

I've been a Secondary teacher in Regional Victoria for 25 years, from a young age it was all I wanted to do. I have worked in programs for students who are disengaged, behaviour problems, disabilities and indigenous as well as teaching VCE and VCAL. I'm a parent of a University student (ATAR entry) and another who completed a SBA along side completing a non scored VCE.

I'm sure in some areas of the state people still feel that our current system is working but I can assure you it isn't regionally. I struggle to think of a decision made over the last 30 years that have actually improved what we teach or the way we do it. I've watched our demographics change and can now see how inequitable the current system is to the students who need it most.

The removal of Tech schools 40 years ago coupled with increasing the leaving age whilst removing options for less academic students was the beginning. We then built open plan schools, removed consequence-based student management and replaced it with PBL, this coincided with mobile phones/laptops etc.

My understanding of the initial introduction of VCE in 92/93 was to remove the pressure on the all encompassing end of year exams, well we're back there and have been for more than a decade. All this and less than 50% of students use it to gain University entrance.

Whenever society has a problem it falls to schools to act as the defacto parent and address the issue, be it consent, violence, abuse, are these valuable...absolutely, do they take time away from what we were doing....obviously, does anything get taken out..nup. Gender/sexuality/climate/terrorism, the list is never ending. We are required to do compulsory online PD modules, which put bluntly are pathetic.

We've become way too data dependant, so people "gaming the system" and delivering good but questionable data are rewarded with promotion and it re-inforces their behaviour. On the surface our attendance data looks good, but we "hide" non-attenders by pretending we have a reengagement program and marking long term non-attenders in it, but it's a paper program only... it doesn't exist in real life. On top of NAPLAN, we do formal standardised testing for ALL 7-10 students twice a year (PAT Math and Reading), year 7 students also complete Fountas and Pinnell testing. Our students begin NAPLAN preparation early term 1.

In 2021, for the most part, we would receive good numbers of quality candidates for most teaching positions, with the exception of trade subjects, this slowed dramatically in 2022, by the second half of the year we were only getting applicants for TFI positions (targeted financial incentive 20 or 50K extra). In 2023 we aren't even getting applicants for those. Collectively we have advertised in excess of 100 positions and interviewed maybe 15, filled 2. The TFI positions, like the \$800 a day CRT rate for some doesn't solve a problem it just moves it and in some cases cause jealousy. Long standing staff are seeing teachers with a lot less experience getting a large bonus for moving.

Very few time fraction reduction requests and no leave without pay requests were approved for 2024. We have had to reduce the length instruction time (teaching) to skirt around the reduction in face to face teaching. In 2023 we delivered 285 minutes daily of the required 300 and in 2024 we will reduce this again down to 275 minutes, that's more than 2 hours a week below. This tips in about 120 sessions a week, leading teachers/learning specialists have all had to increase their teaching loads by more than 25% as have Assistant Principals. So no one has had a realistic reduction in teaching and we're getting screwed with 2% annual pay rises. This drives people out, which leaves more work and causes more burnout for those that stay.

So to summarise, teachers are tired, overworked and underappreciated, a large cohort of students are bored as the education system has little relevance to them, their lives or future. Public education is on the brink of collapse in the regions, we are by far the largest support network for these kids and I worry for their futures because this will get much worse before it gets better.

Matt