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**To:** [stateeducationinquiry](mailto:stateeducationinquiry)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC: Submission to Inquiry into Victoria's State Education System  
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Organisation: Yallourn North Primary School

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Submission:

- Trends in student learning outcomes, including disparities associated with socio economic disadvantage  
Early intervention is the key to assisting students from socio economic disadvantage. While the initiatives to assist mental health and students who are behind have been targeted at secondary school, these problems existed in primary school. Rural primary schools need better resourcing to deal with the challenges that a modern world bring. If we are to break the cycle then primary schools need as a minimum: Mental health/play therapists. Principal class member that is outside the student numbers for funding to bring us in line with secondary schools who are funded in this way. Access to paediatricians Better linkage of government services utilising schools as a hub. The school is the centre of most small country towns and needs to be better equipped for this. Funding that enables tier 2 (small group targeted learning plans and intervention) programs to run for every child who needs assistance from Prep to Grade 4.

- State of the teaching profession including the administrative burden on teachers  
Teachers are burning out and quitting the profession in record numbers. Primary teachers need the recognition and time to do their job well. Secondary teachers get substantially more time to undertake the same roles as primary teachers with greater support networks of wellbeing, first aid, doctors and coordinators. Most country primary schools in Gippsland have no one of these.

Add to this the unreasonable amount of planning teachers do to comply with Department expectations and we see teachers choose a more sustainable career out in another industry. Tertiary courses are not delivering the type of graduates we need. Schools spend a large amount of time building teachers that are ready to teach. They have poor curriculum knowledge, do not understand instructional models and have not been taught how to manage a classroom. FISO 2.0 recognises the importance of wellbeing and yet teachers are not equipped with the skills to deal with trauma students or the general lack of respect that is present in society today.

Teachers spend as much time planning as they do teaching which is not sustainable. The teaching profession needs to adapt to current practices and be more flexible as the work from home movement is definitely playing a role in reducing the attractiveness to teaching as we are rigid and have set times for attendance and holidays.

- Student wellbeing, including measures to address poor mental health, school refusal and student disengagement  
School refusal is a major issue in my school as it is across the state. There are very few leavers to increase attendance when it drops off as the reasons behind are generally to do with home dynamics rather than the individual. The supports that are available to schools do not work to increase school attendance. The region has few staff tasked with getting kids to school and they do not have any bite. If kids don't come to school, there is little we can do. For some students school refusal is to do with mental health and accessing mental health services in the bush is difficult. When there is a high risk to student mental health, they are asked to go to Flynn at Latrobe Regional Hospital.

This has a lot of stigma attached to it and parents are reluctant to engage and follow through as they see it as a negative space. More targeted outreach via schools would produce better outcomes as they could meet professionals in a space they were comfortable in.