
From: Maggie Barnhill [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 11:10 AM
To: Office of the Legislative Counsel
Subject: Forced Teaching contract

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> I am writing to you as a parent, a lawyer and a teacher. I used to practice law, but left that profession and am now an elementary school teacher. I am also the mother of 3 children (grades 4,6,7). I can tell you, from the bottom of my heart, that our education system is broken.

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> I see it as a parent, whose youngest son was falling through the cracks in public school so badly that we have put him into private school (where he is thriving by the way). The administrators and teachers at his former public school were wonderful and knew they couldn't give him everything he needed, not from lack of want but from lack of resources. In fact that principal also confided in me that his child is also in Private School . What does it say about our system when public educators who have dedicated their lives to teaching kids realize that the public system doesn't support them all?

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> I see it as an educator, where year after year I have classes filled to the rafters (and far over the "soft cap" that the government loves to tell the public is in place"). Included in the insanely big classes are always multiple students on IPP (individual program plan, which is essentially teaching each of those their own curriculum), many students on adaptations (when are we supposed to find time to make all of the changes each of these require?), the average kids, the slower kids, and the gifted. Each needs my attention, and I have to decide who will get it. The truth is, I want to give all of them the attention they need and deserve, but the reality is that I simply can't. I don't have the time, and I don't have the resources. I must decide who is the priority, and others will have to make due.

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> Please, please, listen to the teachers. They need help. Nova Scotia's education system is broken and if the government would actually listen to what we are saying you would understand just how badly our schools need to change. We are the "experts" on education having both the formal education and experience to know what children need. We can help you figure out the changes if you would just listen. Please listen. As an educator I know that a student who listens learns far more than a person who doesn't. Teachers have knowledge to share with politicians. Please listen to us. We want to share our experiences and frustrations with you in hopes that you will see just how much the system needs and overhaul. We want students to succeed more than anyone.

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> Legislating this contract will NOT solve our failing schools. Things need to change at a classroom level, and this legislation does not adequately address that. WE don't need to spend 20 million dollars on consultants to figure out what needs to change. Ask the teachers for free, and then put the 20 million into the schools as they suggest. Teachers have the knowledge. We know what needs to change. Listen to us. Please.

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> Ask me what the issues were at his public school. Ask me why he is thriving at private school when he wasn't in public school. Ask me why this public education firmly believes that a private education is doing more for her son that the public system ever did. The teachers have the same education and salary, so why is private school better..... well that is a conversation in and of itself. I would love to tell you. Ask me. Ask other parents. We have the answers if the government will listen.

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