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Let me tell you why I'm here:

I am here because I am in mourning for the future of education.

Let me tell you who I am:

I am a woman and a mom; I understand the system from the perspectives of gender and parenting.

I am Metis; I understand the system from the perspective of minority.

I am a public school teacher; I understand this system from the perspective of those who make it work.

I have taught in three private schools; I understand the system differences between the collegial model and the business model.

I have six degrees, including Masters in Special Education and Counselling; I understand the system from the perspectives of inclusion and mental health.

I have written curriculum, and been both Department Head and Vice-Principal; I understand the system from the perspective of an instructional leader.

Let me tell you what I know:

I know lots of great things.

I know that an octopus has three hearts.

I know that Henry VIII had six wives: three Catherine's, two Annes, and a Jane.

and I know that standardized tests have their place,

But

I also know that standardized tests are the basis for this legislation and

I know that standardized tests don't measure skills, they tell us who is good at taking tests.

I know that standardized tests don't tell the whole story.

What is the whole story?

I know that the kid with acute anxiety probably knows their stuff but will never show it on a standardized test because it's timed.

I know that the kid with ADHD can articulate verbally the information on the test but can't sort out their thoughts enough to write it down.

I know that the kid with a learning disability can't process the text on a standardized test fast enough and because they feel stupid they stop trying.

I know that to truly teach you make it interesting and the kids will listen just like you are now.

And what do I know best? What I know best is my students. I know how to get the best out of them and I know it isn't by testing.

I know that students aren't standardized,
that they are a vibrant spectrum

and to base systemic change on PISA scores is doing them a disservice.

Why won't you base your legislation on the whole story?

Let me tell you what I say to them:

I say

Do you trust me?

That's what I ask my students on the daily.

I've asked that question a thousand times

And never once been told no.

Do you trust that I am qualified to be in charge of your learning?

Trust I will keep you safe, Physically and emotionally?

Yes they say, and open themselves up, vulnerable.

Do you trust that I will ensure you are respected in my space,

That you will learn to walk in the shoes of others
So you know their motivation?
Yes they say, and understand that kindness and listening are essential,
because I set the example and practice what I preach
and I know a gentle push and firm support accomplish more than a steamroller.

You seem to trust me to babysit your kids.
Why do I say babysit?
Because you send your kids to me but then when I offer my expertise you aren't interested.
If you were interested, if you trusted me,
Your steamroller would have been an offer to collaborate FIRST.
Trust isn't earned after the fact, it is earned before.

It's the same trust that I have for my admin, who are teachers to a class called staff.
I work with them, not for them.
They are the conduit through which I understand government directive,
They should not actually BE the directive;
That is the difference between management and collaboration.
Trust me that this collegial example trickles down to the students.
I practice what admin preaches,
I teach using their example,
and they know a gentle push and firm support accomplish more than a steamroller.

Please ask me, do I trust you?
Your title says Honorable, will it be name only?
To be honoured, you must be trusted.
Consider, do you want your title to be meaningless?
Earn my trust, and give me yours.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see.

Do you?

Please...amend Bill 72 to allow administrators to stay in the NSTU, even as a separate bargaining unit.