

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the review panel examining the role and running of the Teachers' Registration Board.

I have three areas I would like to address. I am a four-year trained primary school teacher. I taught full time in government primary (regional and metropolitan) schools from 1989 to 2002 and then took several years off to raise a family. From 2008 to 2014 I delivered Christian Religious Education lessons under the umbrella of YouthCARE as a volunteer, working in classes from years one to seven in one school. From 2015 to the present I have been working part time as a relief teacher in the same single school, working towards full registration. It is in my context as a part time, returning to service, relief provider that I couch my submission.

### **Meeting the Professional Standards – Graduate Teachers and Return to Service Teachers**

In applying for full registration I need to provide evidence that I can meet all seven of the professional standards, with a total of 37 focus areas, through the presentation of a portfolio. As a graduate teacher I went through my probationary period and was awarded permanency on evidencing competency against the standards of the day. I left in good standing in 2002 and would be able to furnish references from past and present employers that reflect my competence to teach. I believe providing evidence of competency for graduate teachers is an appropriate and important part in the formation of good teachers however it seems unreasonable to ask that of experienced teachers re-entering the workforce.

My question is whether the TRB can work into their registration requirements a two tier system – one for graduate teachers and one for returning teachers - that takes experience, references and immediate functionality into account for teachers returning to the workforce, while acknowledging that returning teachers will need to update their skills and knowledge in relation to current policy as a part of their return to work.

### **Meeting the Professional Standards as a Relief Teacher**

I work only as a relief teacher and in this capacity I move from classroom to classroom delivering lessons left for me by absent classroom teachers and filling gaps as required. Occasionally I get a run of days in one classroom with the capacity to do some personal preparation and planning however it is actually impossible for me to provide evidence of competency in several of the focus areas as a relief teacher. There are certain aspects of the professional standards that I simply do not see as a relief teacher.

My question is whether the TRB can provide a tier – or a layer of exemptions in meeting the professional standards - that caters particularly to the needs of the those who wish to work only as relief teachers. There is a particular set of skills that proficient relief teachers demonstrate that are not taken into account in the existing standards and as stated, a number of skills that can't possibly be demonstrated by a relief teacher.

### **Meeting the Professional Development Requirements as a Part Time Teacher**

Finally there is an inequity issue for part time, and more particularly, relief teachers in relation to professional development. I fully expect to do some professional development to get myself up to date with current practice and policy however completing 100 hours of professional development, even over five years in order to meet the requirement for full registration is a challenge for part time and relief teachers. On attaining full time registration there is an on-going expectation of completing 20 hours of PD per year.

One hundred hours is the equivalent of approximately 17 full time work days. My full time colleagues are paid to complete their 20 hours of PD per year. Some is completed during staff development days while the remainder is covered through PD opportunities often run during the course of the working week. Attendance for these courses is generally paid for by the school and relief is obviously provided so that they can attend. Part time teachers occasionally land some professional development on the days they are paid to work and must supplement the remainder at their own time and expense. Relief teachers, such as myself, must complete all professional development in their own time and at their own expense. I have been invited by the school where I do all my relief teaching to attend their professional development days, for which I am grateful, but I do so in unpaid capacity.

As stated, 100 hours represents approximately 17 full time work days. At my current rate of pay (top tier of level two teaching) that amounts to almost \$7,000 that I can't earn because I am volunteering my time to gain PD hours, in addition to costs incurred for attending training. Twenty hours of on-going PD per year amounts to 3.5 working days (\$1,400 in income.)

My question whether the TRB again can develop a tier of registration for relief staff with a reduced Professional Development requirement to address the inequity issue. A level of professional development to keep abreast of current policy and terminology and specific school programs is an absolute requirement. Another solution is to make PD requirements on a pro rata basis for part time staff. The current requirements of the TRB are inequitable and untenable.

#### **Why are these issues important?**

I know of many teachers who left service as I did and refuse to re-enter because the process of becoming registered again is unnecessarily arduous and demeaning. I also know of several relief teachers in similar circumstances to mine who will work for five years and when they have not been able to complete the requirements for full registration will then leave teaching. Both scenarios are a great loss to the education system. Many schools are finding it increasingly difficult to secure relief staff and I believe the registration process for returning teachers is contributing to this problem.

Thank you very much for taking my submission into consideration.

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