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13th September 2013

Please cover my contact details in the Public view.

I am a retired teacher, who retired earlier than I should have due partly to the unhelpful procedure in schools, e.g. overload of administrative tasks such as money collections (5 collection for excursions/event is 10 weeks) which is one a fortnight, teacher aid management tasks (5 different teacher aides allotted to my class (why 5 different people), rapid enrolment of new student (5 in 10 weeks) that is also one a fortnight. Bear in mind the money takes at least 2 weeks for parents to send in and the new students take sometime longer than 2 weeks to settle. I also have among other qualification a Masters Degree in Education (Behaviour Management)

Language of behaviour.

There is such an emphasis on what is positive and wonderful – which is great. We assume that student know clearly what is wrong. If we look at the language use in State Schools we see only the positives used. Turn everything into positive language, which is good, but only half the story.

We no longer face reality, the other side. We see clearly this reality with the climbing unacceptable behaviour statistics.

But we never hear any clarification in schools of what is right and wrong, The language of wrong, naughty, what is off limits, what obedience and disobedience is, bad manners. We no longer talk about using “Your Best Manners”

Students do not have “clear boundaries” for behaviour.

That said I propose some solutions.

Include more teaching about right and wrong and include some realistic language, as mentioned above.

Employ more behaviour management staff. Give every teacher or year level (6-7 classes) an administrative person to do all the admin for these teachers and also be an On the Spot trained Behaviour Management person. Job Description Admin/BM – no more than 6-7 classes. So a large school might have 8 new staff members. This will take some administration load off the teachers.

Administration tasks such as collection of Excursion money, bus pass collections, meeting and settling in of new students after enrolment. These behaviour staff need to be qualified teachers, who also help the teacher, manage teacher aids who come into the classroom. A benefit would be to have this person close to the situation – not on the other side of the school as happens now. Another benefit would be that this person will know the news students and troubled students well and be able to call parents immediately thus begin to provide immediate intervention, leaving the teacher to teach the curriculum subjects to the rest of the class.

I support early intervention Prep - 3. I also support immediate intervention, which is why I mention the staffing model above. Short effective suspensions would,/should be less expensive than long drawn out suspensions which would quickly loose their meaning.

Workplace Logistics.

The classroom physical environments need to be seriously looked at. High traffic areas, as opposed to low traffic areas. This can cause students to get in each other's space and get upset. It is not the students themselves it is the layout of work areas or port/bag racks.

Interruptions, both at the door and by the phone. Sometimes the call is for the teacher next door who is on the oval.

Location of phones, Computer access, visual supervision of students at all times, best use of the space, and power cord safety. All these factors eat into a teachers teaching time and if poorly designed cause tiredness and accidents to teachers and students.

Noise

Crows in stairwells daily during prime teaching time can be unbearable. Other noises can trigger some students behaviour.

Light

Location of windows which do not have proper curtaining can cause glare on Blackboards and even more so on Whiteboards.

Ventilation and Temperature

Lack of fresh air because the louvers have been nailed shut because of vandals, puts a good case for air-conditioning – even in Brisbane.

Workplace Health

Mould is found on concrete where students walk and sit for eating times. I can smell the Mould and I am further away than the students as I stand. The Mould affects me so some students health will definitely be affected.

The List goes on further – this is a starting point and in Conclusion

I would like to suggest that along with the Principals duties around increased powers for managing student behaviour they also try to reduce or eliminate some of the triggers.

Workplace Logistics experts to check the layout of school, playgrounds, port racks, walking and playing areas and noise levels. Including detailed Best Practice Classrooms designs.

Workplace Health and Safety checks need to be diligently completed by highly qualified and proven personnel to enhance the physical environment for safety and health. Money would be better spent here.

I do not think Saturday detention is the way to go. Too expensive and long winded. Teachers don't need more work, just give them some support in the classroom and have qualified WH and S matters attended to diligently and things will be fine.

The teachers are fine upstanding people and all deserve more honour including from the parents.

The students are all wonderful they just need direction as they grow.

