

Ms Heather McLaughlin

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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As a hardworking classroom music teacher in two state Victorian schools I feel I contribute to the broad cultural education of children which is more important today than ever. It's hard work, but I feel that it is significant.

I teach officially half time and see around 380 children each week, some of them for various other groups in addition to their classroom music lesson (40 minutes each at one school per class per week, 30 minutes at the other). I offer, at lunchtimes and in my 'spare' APT, marimba groups, recorder groups, string orchestra, choirs and special performing groups (for example those who can take part in Oxfam fundraising concerts, Hearts in Harmony community Music Days etc.)

Although I am exhausted at the end of each teaching day and find every minute of every lesson challenging on many levels (social, physical, intellectual, emotional as well as musical) I am sure that my work is truly important. It helps children to make aural and visual connections through singing, handsigns, listening and music reading.

Seeing the 'lightglobe' go on in a child's eyes when they recognise a song or truly understand how a rhythm can be written is very satisfying, and in both schools I work with classroom teachers who are also hardworking, committed, capable and caring teachers.

If only some politicians could see more what actually happens in a normal school day in a 'normal government school they may appreciate better what we teachers are doing in the development of the next generations.

I appreciate that in one school I am relieved of yard duty in recognition of giving up my lunch hour to offer extra music groups. I also appreciate not being expected to report on students through the use of Portfolios or 'dots' for VELs but just make comments

Personally I am somewhat grateful to be in permanent and regular employment at the age of 61, and this leaves me free to carry out additional volunteer work in music education and the community.

Useful supports to me are professional organisations, specifically the Victorian Orff Schulwerk Association which offer courses, workshops and conferences where I can share experiences and teaching ideas with other music teachers. Other meetings of music teacher

networks are also a big help to morale and personal support in my work.

Please recognise and support those of us who are fully trained and working hard to offer children in government schools a good music education.