

Erin Reilly



Friday 22nd March 2013

**Re: Inquiry into the Extent, Benefits and Potential of Music
Education in Victorian Schools**

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Erin Reilly and I have the privilege of being a Music and Learning Support teacher at Hurstbridge Primary School.

I provide a consistent program of music education for students Prep-Grade 6, comprised of one 50 minute classroom session per week, as well as offer extra-curricular programs, including Choir and coaching for the Victorian State School Spectacular. Our school also offers instrumental education in keyboard/piano, woodwind, drums and guitar via outside providers, who oversee our Band in return for operating within our school.

Our school is lucky. The Leadership team and School Council have made the decision to make music one of the school's priorities, and provide a trained music educator for their students (I have undergraduate qualifications in Music as well as post-graduate qualifications in Education). This is NOT the norm. Out of all of my musically-trained peers who went on to further studies in Education, I am the only one working within the Government system, and one of the extreme few who has full time, permanent employment.

Engagement in music studies is exceptionally high at my school. We regularly participate in national performance events including the Wakakirri Creative Arts Challenge and the National Songwriting Competition (in which four of our student received a 'Highly Commended' in 2011). We hold community performances and soirees, as well as expose our students to professional performances such as the Victoria Police Pipe and Rock bands, and Musica Viva incursions. For a school from the Northern and Western regions, this wealth of musical opportunities is a rarity.

When I discuss my subject area with other teachers and educators, many say they feel ill-prepared to teach Music themselves. Therefore is difficult to find replacement teachers confident to take my classes when I am absent. A number of my professional peers have also been directed by their schools to provide a regular Music or Performing Arts program with little to no professional development or further training in Music. I myself would only have received 4 workshop classes in Music if I had chosen to take them as part of the 'Arts' component of my Graduate Diploma. This is not good enough.

As a Music teacher in a privileged position, working within the Government system, I can see the huge benefit that Music Education continues to provide to our school's students,

staff, and the wider community. Why shouldn't every Government school student have the same opportunities that Hurstbridge Primary School students have? Further provision needs to be made for the hiring of qualified music educators in EVERY Government school. Failing this, teachers need to be given much more comprehensive musical training as part of their Education studies, enabling them to be confident in delivering a creative, innovative Music program for their students.

I hope you will carefully consider my recommendations as part of this inquiry.

Regards,

Erin Reilly - BMus (Melbourne), GradDipEd (RMIT)

Music/Learning Support Teacher, Hurstbridge Primary School.