



**Australian
Secondary
Principals'
Association**

*ASPAA is a Charter
member of
the International
Confederation
of Principals.*

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SUBMISSION to the Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training

55th April 2005

Janet Holmes
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Holmes

As I indicated in my email dated 23rd March 2005 the Australian Secondary Principals' Association's (ASPAA) is particularly interested in the issues being considered by the National Inquiry into Teacher Education. As you may be aware, ASPAA undertakes a variety of investigations across the country into a number of educationally relevant topics. It is my belief that the research undertaken by ASPAA into the attitudes, beliefs and experiences of beginning teachers regarding their preparation for the profession is of particular relevance to the inquiry.

I have included in this letter some of the findings of this research as an indication of the kind of information we are able to supply. Our work both reinforced our affiliates anecdotal evidence concerning the preparation of teachers for the profession as well as raising a number of other issues we believe need to be addressed. ASPAA has developed a policy which summarizes our beliefs regarding what should be included in teacher preparation courses. For your information I have included a précis of the main points included in the ASPAA policy related to the training and preparation of teachers for the education profession.

The Beginning Teacher research project involved teachers in the first three years of their careers commenting, in part,

- on the nature/content of their university preparation courses.
- the effectiveness of the practicum in schools and
- their induction into the profession.

Over six hundred teachers responded from across Australia. There were a number of issues which were highlighted by these respondents that we think need to be addressed. These include:

- the fact that a large proportion indicated that they were teaching at least one class in a subject field for which they did not have any subject expertise and
- that the respondents indicated that their colleagues at school had provided the most worthwhile support and advice with relatively little value being given to that provided by university personnel.

In relation to the unexpected outcomes of the research,

- a number of beginning teachers indicated that they were already in leadership positions for which they felt ill prepared and also
- a number indicated that they were already considering leaving the profession for an alternative career.

As a result of this research, ASPA has developed a policy representing the collective views of principals from across the nation regarding teacher preparation courses. As an Association we have a strong commitment to seeing that there are

- targeted places made available in universities to address the shortage of teachers in subject areas in which there is a shortage and that
- teacher preparation courses provided by universities are grounded in reality, ensuring that the new teachers are well prepared for life in the classroom particularly in the management and motivation of students. These courses need to be well structured and focused..

It is also our strong belief that **practising teachers** and **leaders** currently in schools need to be **actively involved** in the production and delivery of training courses. The development of tomorrow's leaders, whilst not being the foremost issue to be addressed, nonetheless also needs to be considered as part of teacher preparation courses. It is our belief that the amount of time spent by pre-service teachers in the classroom, working alongside experienced, quality teachers needs to be **markedly increased**.

As I indicated earlier in my letter ASPA would welcome the opportunity to present to the committee both our research findings and our policy regarding teacher preservice preparation in person. I believe that a tentative date of June 2nd has been set for our appearance at a hearing. I would like to advise that the persons making the presentation will be

Mr Ted Brierley, President, Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA)

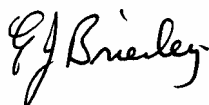
Ms Wendy Teasdale-Smith, Vice President, ASPA

Mr John See, Executive member, ASPA

We would anticipate that our presentation would take around 30 minutes, and would involve the use of a data projector and screen.

Can I thank you for your willingness to include ASPA in the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Ted Brierley
President
Australian Secondary Principals' Association