

To: The Education and Innovation Committee,

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of my staff and myself, I am concerned about the deterioration of our education system in Queensland. The following points especially relate to the current Inquiry into Senior Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry Assessment:

As a parent I have been frustrated with the inconsistencies and requirements in criteria sheets (QSA standards). Some teachers are subjected to personal opinions rather than what the students deserves – there must be some compromise between marks (percentages) and criteria. The criteria are not specific enough for students to gain insight into what really is an A standard – the language is ‘up to interpretation’. Even with internal moderation, my staff and I often disagree with interpretation of the criteria.

How is it possible for students to submit similar papers, yet obtain very different marks? As a panel member, I see this every time I go in for monitoring or verification.

The extended research tasks and extended experimental investigations are as big as anything done at third year university. The standard of an ‘A’ is not the same as it was even 5 years ago. The bar has been raised so high that it is almost impossible for a normal student to come close to an ‘A’ – this is very stressful for students and teachers alike. The time these assignments take up, stops students from doing their other homework. They are HUGE even with great time management.

It's not right for students' grades to be based on these assignments, as they can be done by tutors or anyone. Senior assessment and university entrance are competitive, so the grading ought to be fair for students.

As a teacher teaching the abovementioned subjects, I find the hours spent marking up to 2000 words from each student is extremely time consuming (I have had up to 25 students in each class). Most of my free time is spent marking drafts and then final papers rather than preparing real world lessons for my students. It would not be uncommon for me, during exam time, to be spending up to 75 hours a week on school related work (including all weekend).

The whole senior education process currently seems nebulous and subjective. If schools used the same state wide external exam, then this would provide a benchmark for employers and ensure consistency and fairness across the state.

I would like to see an education system in Queensland that develops young men and women who are adaptable, can work under pressure and are rewarded for the work **THEY** do. A 50% ratio between a state wide exam and school assessment would be a perfect blend.

Yours sincerely
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