

Good afternoon. My name is Ginger Williams, and I have been teaching for over fifteen years, the last four years in Moorhead, Minnesota.

As a Language Arts teacher, prep time is everything to me! My ability to grade the work that my students submit within a reasonable time and with the necessary feedback is directly tied to the amount of prep time I am allotted. There have been years when my class sizes were small and my prep time was significant. ~~_(at least an hour a day)_~~ I completed almost all of my grading at school, ~~without working late into the night,~~ giving my students clear and helpful feedback on their work. ~~In the last few years, S~~ince ~~my move to~~moving from North Dakota to Minnesota schools, I have seen an increase in class sizes (some of my classes this year have over thirty students) and a decrease in the amount of prep time ~~that is available to me~~. These days I work to make sure that my rubrics are as clear as possible, knowing that I simply will not have time for effective feedback. I work late into the night grading, even with the rubrics, and am exhausted the next day when I need the energy to reach my students with excitement. Making matters even worse this year is the extreme sub-shortage that we have been facing. I have had to give up my prep time at least twice a week.

Outside of the ~~se~~ issues, ~~involved for me personally,~~ there is the added need for collaborative time with my team. We follow a team model, with a group of core teachers all serving the same group of students. Our team meets to discuss the student's strengths and issues, work to find solutions, communicate with parents and guardians, and ensure that every student's needs are met. Due to the sub shortage, our team members have been required to give up that collaborative team in order to cover other classes. ~~Our team, until last week, has been unable to meet as a whole since early December.~~ It has been frustrating, ~~to say the least,~~ to watch what was an incredible year of progress and growth in serving our students, come to a halting stop, as we lose that precious time to work together for the good of our students.

All of these factors are beginning to lead me to burn out and question my ability to continue as a teacher. It is so hard to continue on in this profession that I love when I feel myself being ~~handicapped limited~~ by the constraints of time and availability. I want to be the best teacher that I can be. I want to give valuable feedback and give meaningful assessments. I want to see my students grow and collaborate with my colleagues for their benefit. Please, give teachers the margin that we need to do our jobs successfully!