



Petition

Registration No:	24
Title:	Middle Point School
Presented on:	14 June 2006
Presented by:	Mr Ted Warren
Referred To:	Minister for Education (Stirling)
Response due:	17 October 2006
Response received:	25 July 2006
Response presented:	22 August 2006

Petition

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory:

We the undersigned parents and members of the school community of Middle Point School, respectfully showeth that we are seriously concerned about the ongoing teacher/teaching changes (6 in the lower primary in the past 3 years plus 3 in the upper primary by the end of this year), which is seriously affecting the emotional, behaviour and educational wellbeing of our children. We are a two-teacher primary school, with the current student population of 37. We feel our school is being treated as a temporary half way point for teachers on the move. But we acknowledge the temporary teaching changes that are already set in place for this year cannot be changed.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that starting next year the Education Department will treat our children on an equal status with other schools and we demand that the current practice of employing temporary teachers cease and that we be given two permanent teachers for at least the full 2007 and 2008 calendar years.

Response

Firstly I would like to confirm that staffing of Middle Point School is in accordance with DEET school staffing formula and guidelines. As such the school is staffed in line with NT Public Sector regulations. This means that officers can take leave or short-term positions and the consequential vacancies are back-filled when this occurs.

For the past six years the middle/upper primary class at Middle Point School has had the same teacher. In Term 2, 2006 he moved into a temporary position backfilling another officer who was on sick leave. In regard to the other class, it is agreed that over the past four years there have been four teachers in place. While staff continuity is a major goal, this is not always possible.

One of the difficulties when staffing Middle Point is that recruits often prefer either remote or urban locations. Middle Point School is neither. Two of the teachers recruited from southern

states were not suited to the situation at Middle Point. Unfortunately, this can happen in the Northern Territory and the department does not place mandatory periods of employment on staff.

Further, although there has been some turnover in teaching staff at Middle Point School there has been a lot of stability in support staff with the highly capable school assistants being at the school at least three years.

Although there has been a degree of instability in the junior class, the Multi-age Assessment results have consistently been exceptional at the school. This demonstrates that with a teaching principal in place for over six years and continuity of support staff, any staff movement has not adversely affected the quality and success of the teaching/learning program.

Should the school community still have issues regarding staffing at the school I would encourage them to contact Ms Leonie Jones, the Principal of the Top End Group School, on telephone 8999 3210. She has been in that position for at least five years, knows the school and students very well and can answer any questions raised.