



Courier Mail
Monday 22/02/2010

Page: 1
Section: General News
Region: Brisbane, AU
Circulation: 211230
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 436.42 sq.cms.



slice
slicemedia.com

press clip

FAST LEARNERS

Become a teacher in six weeks

EXCLUSIVE

Tanya Chilcott
SCHOOLS REPORTER

TEACHERS could take charge of the most challenging classrooms after just six weeks' training under a controversial strategy being considered by the Queensland Government.

People with professional qualifications will be sent to teach in disadvantaged schools to plug a shortage of specialist teachers under the Teach for Australia program.

But unions have slammed the strategy – which aims to attract high-performing professionals and graduates from fields including law, economics, engineering, science, mathematics and English – as disrespectful to teachers and a Band-Aid solution.

Teach for Australia chief executive Melodie Potts said research showed similar models overseas produced more effective teachers.

Education Queensland assistant director-general Craig Allen confirmed the program was being considered and talks were being held with Teach for Australia.

The program involves six weeks of intensive training for six days a week at university, with teachers then placed in disadvantaged secondary schools.

Their university study continues part-time for two years and includes a mentor and adviser.

Mr Allen said the department was “exploring the potential of Teach for Australia” to attract and retain “high quality individuals in teaching”.

The teachers are given a reduced workload to help concentrate on study.

Queensland has a shortage of some specialist high school teachers and a massive over-supply of primary school teaching graduates.

Current graduates have to complete four years of study in Queensland to register as a teacher.

“The department has commenced discussions with key stakeholders, including the Queensland Teachers’ Union,” Mr Allen said.

Continued P2 »



press clip

Six-week crash course for new teachers

» From P 1

But the union has already voted not to accept the program unless issues such as enterprise bargaining are addressed first.

QTU president Steve Ryan said six weeks was not long enough to prepare a teacher for the classroom.

"That is just a total lack of respect for teachers," he said. "That's the Band-Aid solution and all kids in the education system deserve better.

"Our view is that all students should be able to be taught by qualified teachers, and teachers with education qualifications."

Queensland Independent Education Union general secretary Terry Burke said the course undermined the professional standard the community demanded of teachers.

But Teach for Australia's Ms Potts said the course attracted highly talented individuals, many of whom had leadership roles, and would not otherwise have considered teaching as a career.

The Opposition's education



How it will work

- Professionals/graduates undergo intensive training six days a week for six weeks.
- They then work in schools with a reduced load, while studying for a two-year postgraduate diploma in teaching.
- In Victoria, a similar initiative attracted 800 applications for 45 places in the program.

spokesman, Bruce Flegg, said he supported the strategy.

"It's one small step in the right direction of attracting high-performing people into teaching," he said.

Victoria is the first state to

take on the initiative, with Teach for Australia teachers starting in classrooms there last month.

Nearly 800 graduates vied for 45 places in the program.

In Victoria they will be paid

at one band below their beginning teacher counterparts, before they achieve their degree.

It is unknown what the pay conditions would be in Queensland schools.

Editorial» P22