

Inexperienced teachers should start in kindergarten where it's 'less demanding': Que. education minister ^[1]

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Excerpts

A Quebec kindergarten teacher says the education minister is out of touch with the realities of her profession after he said in a recent radio interview that her work was "less demanding" than other teaching jobs.

"I do not understand that I can hear that from the mouth of my Minister of Education," said Jo-Annie Blais, a kindergarten teacher and graduate from the Université de Laval, in an interview with Noovo Info.

Faced with a shortage of about 5,000 teachers to start the 2023 school year, Minister Bernard Drainville said earlier this week that less experienced teachers should be put in kindergarten classes to mitigate burnout.

"You teach through games, children take naps, there's no homework," Drainville told 98.5 FM's Paul Arcand, who expressed concern about young teachers leaving the profession prematurely because they're overwhelmed.

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After hearing his comments, Jo-Annie Blais said she felt compelled to set the record straight and wrote an open letter on Facebook describing in detail what it's like to teach the youngest students and how she had to take a leave of absence twice due to burnout.

"To hear today that kindergarten classes are the easiest to teach has caused me great disbelief," she wrote in her letter, which described issues such as referring students for professionals "and their long wait lists," hours spent on tailoring report cards for individual students and dealing with students in crisis in the classroom.

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Drainville has also said there might be more non-legally qualified teachers in Quebec classrooms this year to deal with the labour shortage.

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Reacting to the lack of teachers, the head of the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ) said the current situation was "discouraging."

"We find ourselves in a situation we could have foreseen years ago," said Josée Scalabrini, president of the FSE, in an interview with Noovo Info

"We didn't value the teaching profession. And now we're faced with a serious shortage - I repeat, a shortage that was foreseeable and that we've been denouncing for 10 years."

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: workforce ^[4]

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