



## Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

### **Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023**

#### **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

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Asked by Ms Nicole Lawder MLA on 16 November 2023: Mr Matthews took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard uncorrected proof transcript 16 November 2023 [PAGES 6-7]

In relation to: Top three most common reasons for teacher separations

**Mr Matthews:** Again, I might ask my colleague, Mr Ackland, to come and help me if we need further details, but again, in the annual report we do report on the separation rate every year. What we have reported on in this annual report is that our separation rate was a bit higher than it has been in the past, and there are a range of reasons for that.

We have certainly found in a post-COVID environment that many people who postponed decisions around retirement or taking longer-term leave or all those sorts of things—some of that has been brought forward. We have also done some technical work around something which is called forfeiture of office, so if you are no longer working but you have not resigned, you are still technically on the books. We worked through a number of those matters, and what that did was increase our reported separation rate in the last annual report. What I can say: the indication certainly is that since that time, our separation rate is easing off and going back towards more historical levels.

**MS LAWDER:** You mentioned post-COVID. There are a range of reasons. What were the top three reasons for separations?

**Mr Matthews:** I can give a general impression, Ms Lawder. Obviously, if you wanted us to do a bit more analysis, we have got some exit data from teachers, but not everybody does complete an exit survey. But the sort of things obviously we looked at is the age of the person, so if they are towards the end of their career and are looking at retiring or transitioning, versus younger staff.

I think there is no doubt that there is a range of reasons why. One of it is just those personal decisions that I am sure we have all experienced through and after COVID. There is certainly some additional pressure felt by teachers in the workplace, and that has been represented by the union publicly and in other sorts of forums, like the national work that is currently taking place on teacher recruitment and shortages. There are range of different factors that go in. I would suggest that that is broadly representative of it, as well as some individual—

**MS LAWDER:** Perhaps you could take it on notice: what are the top three most common reasons? You have given a range, but I am just interested in the most common ones. If you do not have that right this moment—

**Mr Matthews:** With the available data, Ms Lawder, we can see what we can provide, but it will not be complete data, is what I was referring to earlier.

Ms Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The three most common types of separation in the 2022-23 financial year for classroom teachers were:

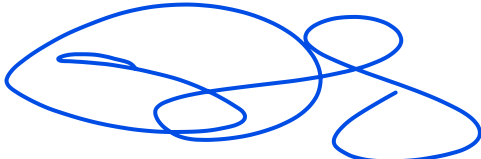
- Resignation;
- Retirement; and
- Forfeiture of office procedures.

Of the teachers who separated from the Directorate due to resignation, the most common factors reported through completed exit surveys (by 17.5 per cent of all staff who ceased employment) were:

- Employment conditions, such as work life balance and flexible work;
- Type of work, such as interesting, challenging, and different work; and
- Quality of senior leadership.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:



Date: 27/11/23

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Ms Yvette Berry MLA.