

Dedicated Teacher Describes the Living Hell of Teaching

I will always feel personally responsible for every child I meet, and I will forever have endless respect for the teaching profession, despite the millions of people who give teaching a bad name. My parents have been in education for over 30 years and still can't believe that things are getting worse. I've been on an emotional roller coaster lately, to say the least, and the NAPTA website as well as the WBI website (Workplace Bullying Institute) have given me great comfort. I can't believe people like my administrators and co-workers exist outside of movies but they do, and when weak people gain unlimited and unmonitored power then are backed up by a few people without integrity they are truly capable of ruining lives. Looking back it's almost like they never even really meant to sincerely give me the job. I just seemed so confident at my interview that they thought breaking my spirit would be a fun challenge. They actually hired me on the spot. I felt great about the job at first, my kids really loved me, but even that was like a slap in the face to my administrators and the other members of "the team" that I was assigned to. They gave me "the worst" kids and I quickly changed their negative perceptions of school. Perceptions that had been blatantly reinforced over the years. After all, most of them are bilingual and/or brilliant artists, comedians, athletes etc. but they were in "third tier" the lowest achievers and they knew it. On top of that they were always being bullied by the same adults bullying me.

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After open house my principal asked me what I thought of my kids. I enthusiastically replied that they were angels, as I walked away I overheard him say let's see how she feels in two weeks. By the second day of school I had had 3 observations and was feeling a little nervous, my principal, my assistant principal, and literacy coordinator called me into an impromptu meeting and told me that my ESL teacher ~~Mrs. Sellers~~ complained about me, but he would not tell me what she said. Then he criticized my lessons as he had done openly in front of my class already that day. I was confused, and internalized everything they said, I even broke down and cried. It was the first time they had seemed satisfied since I got there, and unbeknownst to me it was the worst thing I could have done, because once they saw my weakness I didn't have a fighting chance.

I have a serious anxiety disorder, I always have, but it's only gotten out of hand twice. Once right before I got married (I'm divorced now) and now after working in CMS. The daily vomiting is very dangerous, it damaged my esophagus and waking up just hurts. Every day I wake up terrified with an overwhelming sense of doom, sometimes paralyzed, heart racing, gut wrenching pain. I currently have 8 prescriptions and have been to the emergency room twice. I had no choice but to resign. I've written A LOT about what has happened, and you're welcome to share my story. I have filed complaint with the EEOC for 3 violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and am going to sue CMS in Federal Court.

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Today, I wrote something and sent it to WCNC news and the Charlotte Observer and attached it to this email. It's all I can do right now, I feel very helpless and this judicial red tape is never ending. If either one of them take my story, I will be sure to mention NAPTA.

Lynn Beverly
NC Teacher

[Check out this email \(below\) that this teacher wrote to a new NAPTA member several years after writing this story.](#)

My name is Lynn Cole. I got your contact info from Karen Horwitz. I'm not sure what your story is, but we ALL have one. I'm currently in federal civil court with my former school district, so my story is a doozy. It took me a very long time to get to a place where I feel safely outside of the madness, and I know that still being on the inside sucks. My mom has been teaching for over 30 years, and when I talked to her during this "snow break" she sounded like she had just won the lottery. That's sad...we shouldn't have to pray that inclement weather rescues us.

You have to remember that you don't work for 40 years and then live your life-that's kind of "the dream" we've been sold, but this IS your life and you have to find a way to live it on your terms. The pursuit of happiness isn't a

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privilege-it's an unalienable right. While searching our legislation for ways to "fight back" I realized how behind our country is with anti-workplace harassment laws. The U.K actually has an "anti-workplace bullying law," while we're still lobbying for the "healthy workplace" bill. This ugly cycle is ruining our health, our careers, and our lives. When we hear about "bullying" it's generally limited to kids at school, but you and I know better don't we?

Because of the violence that has erupted in schools over the last decade or so, the country has been forced to address the issue in schools, but just for the kids...meanwhile, the anti-social adults continue to make life miserable for their targets. Around the time I had a FULL-SCALE mental breakdown, the "Workplace Bullying Institute" web site really helped me put things in perspective. <http://www.workplacebullying.org> . Dr's Ruth and Gary Namie have applied a social science to workplace bullying that breaks it down to the who, what, why, and how, and provides resources for pulling yourself out of a rut. It helped me to understand why my co-workers particularly my Principal, Assistant Principal, and members of the "support staff" were behaving the way that they were. Please take a look at it, sometimes understanding is the first step to coping.

Lynn