To: Dr. Erika Paterson, ENGL 301 99A Instructor
From: Syed Ahmed, ENGL 301 99A Student
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Subject: Proposal for increasing teacher morale at TNS Beaconhouse, Pakistan.

**Introduction**

TNS Beaconhouse is a pre-eminent private school located in Lahore, Pakistan that offers schooling in the International Baccalaureate program starting from Early-Years (EYP) through Primary-Years (PYP), Middle-Years (MYP) and leading up to the Diploma Programme (DP). In trying to offer the best possible education, the school supplements the high standards of the International Baccalaureate Program by implementing the philosophies of Project-Based Learning and the acclaimed Reggio Emilia Approach which is based on the principle of “Learning By Doing”. As a result, TNS Beaconhouse has its students consistently achieving the highest scores in Pakistan in their MYP and DP results, which are the two programs that have externally assessed and internationally moderated assessments. Based on these exam results, TNS ranks amongst the top 3% of all IB World Schools. However, while a lot of things are working well for the institution, many teachers are overburdened with work which adversely affects teacher morale and student outcomes. This severely impinges on ‘raison d'etre’ of the school for being a model school that offers the best possible education to its clientele.

**Statement of Problem**

As TNS is growing in popularity and student enrollment is increasing. Most teachers are expected to teach multiple year levels and often multiple subjects. They also have a ‘hidden’ workload that is unaccounted for. This includes class substitution duties and an array of staff duties. Furthermore, there is no systematic way to account for how much work load has beyond simple accounting of hours taught in the classroom and an expectation that a minimum number is taught. As a result, many teachers are strained to breaking point, whereas, others are unutilized. Such disparities in hidden workload arise most crucially due to factors such as failing to account for class sizes and supervision work for “Internal Assessments” and “Extended Essays” in the case of DP teachers. Furthermore, the teachers at TNS have had their salaries cut by 10% to account for school fees collection shortfalls arising out of the covid19 pandemic situation. At the same time, teachers feel their workload has increased as they simultaneously have to teach to students in-person and those that are on-line and attending class virtually. As a result, teachers at TNS are becoming severely overburdened with work which is affecting their productivity, effectiveness and morale.

**Proposed Solutions**

It is widely accepted that happy teachers make for happy classrooms and elevate student learning outcomes. Happy and motivated teachers teach better and have more time and energy to cater to the collective and individual needs of their students (McLean, Leigh et al.). Teachers that are well rested contribute to students reporting more academic motivation and in-class satisfaction (Poon, Cyanea Yui-Sum et al.). Improving teacher morale at TNS will directly lead to improved learning outcomes for students and decreasing the high rates of teacher turnover that is a source of disruption to classroom learning.

The following steps may contribute positively towards increasing teacher morale:

* Devising an objective method to account for the actual workload of the teacher. This calculation would account for all hidden workloads in addition to the existing model of counting classroom teaching hours.
* Ensuring that all workload is evenly distributed across all teachers to create a sense of fairness and preventing the overburdening of some teachers.
* Create a responsive mechanism whereby teachers can raise concerns about their workload and have their concerns listened to.
* Minimize administrative overhead on teachers, such as by eliminating duties or paperwork that is deemed unnecessary.
* Provide effective IT support to teachers to facilitate them in streamlining their online classes.
* Extending counselling services to teachers.

**Scope**

The scope of this report is to find ways to increase teacher morale at TNS that require minimal or no additional budgetary allocation. In order to develop these prescriptions, I plan to explore the following areas of inquiry:

1. What are the different factors that can create ‘hidden’ or ‘unaccounted for’ workload for teachers?
2. How can we develop an objective measure of the actual workload for a teacher?
3. What ways can be used to ensure that the work is as fairly distributed across all teachers as possible?
4. How can the teachers be made aware of the formula that is used to assign them work responsibilities in order to create a sense of transparency and fairness?
5. What is the best way to implement a system where a teacher can raise concerns about their workload?
6. How can the burden of administrative tasks or staff duties be minimized on teachers?
7. What IT support do teachers require?
8. How can teachers best benefit from counselling services?

**Methods**

My primary data sources will include interviews with existing and past employees of TNS. The interviews will be carried out in person and through anonymous surveys. As the prescriptions are being developed, I will present them to school management so their feedback can help shape them, with the goal being to maximize the final report’s practicality and acceptance for all stakeholders.

Secondary sources will include publications on metrics and determinants of teacher satisfaction and their relationship to student outcomes.

**My Qualifications**

I have a MSc in Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology from the University of California. I have worked at TNS Beaconhouse for the past 3.5 years as a teacher for the subjects of Biology and Environmental Systems and Societies for Diploma Students as well as Biology for Middle Years students. I have also supervised many Internal Assessment and Extended Essays for Diploma students as well as supervised Personal Projects for MYP students. As a homeroom teacher, I am also responsible for ‘housekeeping’ responsibilities for a classroom and am familiar with all the extra duties and hidden work that teachers have to carry out including staff duties, grading, providing test and exam feedback, parent interactions, record keeping, counselling etc. As a result, I am intimately familiar with systemic issues in the workplace that have contributed to flagging morale amongst teachers. My existing knowledge and familiarity will allow me to frame the right questions in order to fill in the areas of knowledge I have identified in the scope and get the empirical data to develop this report.

**Intended Audience**

This report is intended for the management of TNS Beaconhouse so they can implement it at the school-level to make the school a more successful and happier place. It can also be passed on to the management of the the Beaconhouse system, which is a private school system operating 100s of schools in 9 countries.

**Conclusion**

This report will present actionable prescriptions that can increase teacher morale at TNS. The implementation of the prescriptions will not require significant additional budgetary allocation. Increasing teacher morale should have positive impacts on student learning and increase student achievement outcomes while decreasing the negative impact of employee turnover at the school.

**References:**

McLean, Leigh et al. “Associations among teachers' depressive symptoms and students' classroom instructional experiences in third grade.” Journal of school psychology vol. 69 (2018): 154-168. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2018.05.002

Poon, Cyanea Yui-Sum et al. “A well-slept teacher is a better teacher: A multi-respondent experience-sampling study on sleep, stress, and emotional transmission in the classroom.” *PsyCh journal* vol. 8,3 (2019): 280-292. doi:10.1002/pchj.282