

Win for small schools

November 28, 2018

Federation's ongoing campaign for improved support of teaching and learning in small schools won significant ground as revealed in a meeting with the Department last week.

The Department confirmed with Federation Senior Officers a commitment to allocate \$10 million next year to increase the number of release days — approximately double the existing entitlement — for small schools with teaching principals.

In figures released by the Department, Bilpin Public School, for example, which falls within the 26-103 student enrolment band, will receive \$40,279 in teaching principal's relief funding up from \$18,490, allowing for 76 relief days compared with 35 this year.

Increases in school funding achieved through the NSW Gonski agreement has allowed the realisation of this long-standing Federation policy objective.



"While this is a significant achievement for our union, members and students in small schools in particular, at this stage, this is only a one-off for 2019," Federation Senior Vice President Henry Rajendra said.

"As such, members are encouraged to continue the campaign for improved support for small schools as much remains to be achieved in terms of locking in this revised allocation as a recurrent entitlement and converting it and other RAM (Resource Allocation Model) funding into additional permanent teachers."

The commitment represents a marked shift in the Department's position with regard to small schools and teaching principals. As recently as 2013, small school principals were facing the loss of all administration time as a part of the Department's push to reclassify teaching principals as "lead teachers".

Federation was successful in opposing this proposal resulting in no change to responsibilities, leadership or authority for teaching principals and their release time was retained.

Following this victory, Federation has continued to advocate on behalf of teaching principals and in 2016, developed an information leaflet and poster for members in small schools that summarised our position that "the current allocation of administration days for teaching principals is inadequate [and] it must be increased".

Since 2012, teachers, principals, parents and supporters of public education have worked hard as part of the campaign for equitable, needs-based schools funding and this campaign has been specifically focused on small schools through the various equity loadings that are factored in to the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), upon which the Gonski model was based.

In particular, the school-size equity loading prioritised the need to provide additional funding to primary schools with fewer than 200 students.

This enhancement would not have been delivered without this campaign and highlights the need for us to intensify the [Fair Funding Now!](#) campaign in the lead up to next year federal election.

“It is this form of stability, certainty and program continuity that small schools and their students deserve,” Mr Rajendra said.

“This achievement is yet another reminder that we are a successful union seeking the best for the public education system and I congratulate all involved.”

— Scott Coomber