

Your workplace contacts

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Knowledge and experience are qualities to bring to the role of Federation Representative, but Lurnea Public School's John Joy believes commitment is also vital to the position.

Mr Joy, who grew up in a family that was very active in industrial relations and politics, has been Fed Rep at Lurnea for almost four years, with two further years under his belt at his previous school.

"It is an important position as you can be a trusted conduit between the staff - who may want to raise industrial matters - and the Federation Organiser, as well as the local Association, and when required sometimes with the worksite manager, the principal," Mr Joy said



"A combination of experience, knowledge and commitment to provide teachers a democratic voice to support a public education system that provides quality learning opportunities for all students.

"A supportive workplace committee and Federation Organiser are necessary for you to be effective.

"You have to form positive professional relationships with your co-workers and gain knowledge on the award and industrial conditions. Attend local Association meetings to become more informed and speak with members from other schools."

During his time as Fed Rep at a previous school, Federation held major industrial action.

"Federation was taking a number of stopwork actions in support of a significant wage increase that had significant research to back its claim," he said.

"Gaining the principal's support meant we had the entire staff - many who had large mortgages - support the industrial action. It is a last resort, however it was necessary to look at the bigger picture to pursue industrial conditions that keep the profession and public education as strong as possible."

Mr Joy said that one of the main bugbears on the ground for teachers was the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy.

"Decentralisation has created what appear to be inconsistencies in implementation of NSW Department of Education policy at a school level, as well as reduced curriculum support," he said.

"Not to mention increasing workload and data compliance.

"Other important issues include the demands on teachers dealing with increasingly rapid social change, including pressures to engage with social media.

“And, of course, deteriorating infrastructure in many schools.”