

Call for additional release time for all teachers



Henry Rajendra
Deputy President
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In line with a determination by members, Federation is demanding at least two additional hours of release from face-to-face teaching per week for all school teachers.

Federation Council earlier this month reaffirmed its call for increased release time for teachers across all mainstream and specialist settings, to be facilitated by the employment of additional permanent teachers delivered via staffing entitlements.

The release time demand was one measure in a raft of staffing improvements contained in a recommendation endorsed by Council, including

- addressing excessive workload generated by the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy
- appropriate needs-based funding to guarantee the delivery of a comprehensive curriculum
- converting the vast bulk of temporary teacher employment to permanent status
- the production of a campaign kit to engage members, parents, the community and politicians.



A section of the motion was directed at supporting students with disability, and comes after a significant gain when Federation's Time to Act campaign helped secure \$37 million funding for extra staff for Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) for 2020.

Extra staffing was the biggest need identified by members in SSPs in a survey conducted last year as part of the Time to Act campaign. Members' endorsement at mass meetings throughout the state on 5 December last year further helped secure this staffing win for SSPs.

Federation Deputy President Henry Rajendra said the funding would provide for at least one, and up to eight, extra staff for every SSP, which is a significant step in the right direction for students with disability.

A key priority of the union in 2020, as determined by members, will be to "campaign for increased permanent staffing levels, delivered as a staffing entitlement, including additional release time for teachers".

As well as the claim for the additional two hours of release from face-to-face teaching, Council demanded primary assistant and deputy principals be provided with additional release time commensurate with their secondary executive colleagues.

The recommendation stated that the NSW Government and the Department of Education have failed to address the increasing workload of teachers.

Federation maintains its opposition to the Department's Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, with its burdensome administrative demands on the profession, its preoccupation with data collection and compliance, and the subsequent excessive and increasing workload on teachers.

A campaign kit will be produced for Federation Representatives and workplace committees to engage members, parents, the community and politicians, and will include:

- background material and information sheets
- pro forma letters to communicate with parents and local politicians
- video and other online material.

Communities and MPs to be drawn into staffing campaign

Federation members in schools have declared they stand ready to seek broad support from their community and engage their local Members of Parliament to achieve the union's staffing priorities.

Resolutions passed by members at Federation workplace meetings state the NSW Government and the Department of Education have failed to address excessive teacher workload and ensure a curriculum guarantee for all students.

They outlined what could be achieved for teaching and learning outcomes if Federation's demands — related to additional permanent teachers, curriculum guarantee, additional release time and reduced class sizes — were met.

At the end of last year, mass meetings of members overwhelmingly reaffirmed Federation's commitment to securing betterments to school staffing.