

## Systemic, funded approach needed to remedy lost learning time for HSC cohort

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Federation has pursued the NSW government and Department of Education for more than a month seeking provision of a “catch up” program for HSC students, to make up for the loss of face-to-face lessons during the COVID-19 emergency.

President Angelo Gavrielatos said teachers always went above and beyond for year 12 students, but their task would be even greater this year, requiring a formal, systemwide approach to redress the shortfall in class time.

He stressed that the program would have to be flexible, contingent on individual school and student needs, and would provide students with an extra 10 hours of teaching in each of their 2-unit subjects, to mitigate the disruption.

“We believe allocating 10 hours per subject would be implemented flexibly, either after school, before school, in the holidays or even on a Saturday for a catch-up program,” Mr Gavrielatos said.

“That flexibility will ensure that the timing suits students and teachers alike in a stage when year 12 teachers have a busy schedule anyway. But it comes down to a desire by our members to look after our HSC students, recognising the impact the HSC has on their life opportunities.”

Mr Gavrielatos said the program would need to be funded and participating teachers appropriately remunerated.

“Teachers do all sorts of things on a voluntary basis to further assist year 12 students,” he said. “But this is a pandemic and, in the context, we need to move beyond whatever may or may not happen voluntarily to a systematic approach for kids.”

“As such, the expectation is that teachers would be paid accordingly for the extra hours involved with any catch-up program.”

In explaining the rationale behind the 10-hour program, Mr Gavrielatos said 2-unit HSC subjects have a timetabled allocation of four hours a week — six 40-minute periods.

“At the time of the 'emergency mode of operation', the disruption to face-to-face teaching for HSC students amounted to a five-week period that equates to 20 hours of lost teaching,” he said, adding that further discussions would be needed to for 3- and 4-unit courses.



“Given that there was some level of ongoing teaching and learning during the 'emergency mode of operation', Federation's position is the catch-up program could be a dedicated 10-hour program of face-to-face HSC teaching.”

Mr Gavrielatos said the proposal put students front-and-centre, and noted the profound inequities impacting HSC students as a result of the pandemic.

**Scott Coomber is the sub-editor/journalist**