

New SIG to provide supportive network about sports education



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Despite mandated hours for physical activity in public schools and a strong research base highlighting the importance of student involvement in physical activity, sport in schools is largely being left up to individual teachers to ensure its effective implementation.

Our students' access to physical activity and participation in sport has changed over time, and teachers have been affected by this evolving environment. Challenges facing those involved in sport include, but are not limited to; the narrowing of the curriculum, increased enrolments, fewer green spaces, inadequate funding and resources in schools, provision of opportunities for students with disability, ensuring an appropriate balance between participation and competition; and the lack of support by some principals and executive for sport organisers — including the addressing of workload implications and the denial of teacher access to both professional learning and school sport events.



The current COVID-19 pandemic and its resultant social and physical distancing restrictions have further affected curriculum delivery and opportunities for physical activity in schools. Matters of equity and access are further disadvantaging students, sports organisers and those involved in school- and non-school-based sport positions.

Consistent with the 2019 Federation Executive decision to endorse the establishment of a statewide Sport Special Interest Group (SIG), Federation wants to ensure that teachers involved in sport have an organised and collective voice on union matters pertaining to this area in education.

Federation calls for members involved in school sport, PSSA, CHSSA, and other relevant public school sporting or PE groups to register their interest in joining this newly-established SIG.

SIGs are not decision-making bodies under the rules of Federation. However, the feedback and expertise they can provide are invaluable in the shaping of union policy and campaigns. While many members are already actively advocating for improved outcomes in the delivery of sport and physical activity in their schools and workplaces, it is hoped that with the formation of this SIG, teachers will find a supportive network of fellow activists and a forum for raising issues and concerns.

Adequately resourced and staffed sporting programs play an important role in supporting student health and wellbeing, which in turn contributes to academic success.

After the disruption to sporting programs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the reduced access to physical activity opportunities, our schools need to find innovative ways to move forward with curriculum delivery and organised sport. These issues, combined with the already identified issues of funding, staffing, access and equity, will now have a forum open for discussion and possible recommendations and/or future planning.

Federation's Sport SIG will commence with a meeting in term 3, at a date yet to be set. **Teleconference facilities will be made available for those members who find it more convenient; or for all members if social distancing restrictions remain.**

To be added to the Sport SIG's mailing list, contact Federation on (02) 9217 2199.

"Success is where preparation and opportunity meet." — Bobby Unser.

We all benefit from being provided with opportunity and those who are prepared, given the opportunity, have a greater chance of achieving success. The formation of the Federation Sport SIG is our first step in providing the opportunity for teachers to discuss how to improve delivery and promote access, equity and success in sport in our public schools.