

## Department rejects catch-up program for public HSC students

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Public school HSC students have been left at a disadvantage after the Department of Education refused to pay for extra face-to-face learning hours as “catch-up” lessons.

Senior Vice President Amber Flohm said Federation had approached the Department in May to offer 10 additional hours of face-to-face learning for HSC students.

The approach was made after the COVID-19 lockdown, when it became apparent that a lack of class time had left HSC students at a disadvantage.

“It was meant to be a targeted catchup time for students who have been extremely disadvantaged this year,” Ms Flohm said.

“Federation proposed that HSC teachers be remunerated for up to 10 additional hours of face-to-face teaching from the beginning of term 2, with teachers contributing significantly more than this since the disruption to their HSC students’ learning.”



In announcing the proposal in June, President Angelo Gavrielatos said teachers always went above and beyond for year 12 students, but their task would be even greater this year due to remote learning, requiring a formal, system-wide approach to redress the shortfall in class time.

“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.”

He stressed that the HSC catch-up program would 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 at the time.

“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.

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 in those 2-unit subjects.

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