

Hopes staffing research will advance campaign for more permanent teachers

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Federation has commissioned an independent research project into the staffing of the NSW public school system, as a means to achieve improved staffing arrangements for the benefit of teaching and learning.

Deputy President Henry Rajendra said Federation was well-aware of the problems with the existing system and hoped an academic analysis would provide compelling evidence to convince policy makers and parents that change was needed to better support teaching and learning.

“The current situation is inequitable and untenable,” Mr Rajendra said.

“The responsibility of the NSW Government is to provide every school with adequate permanent, qualified and specialist teachers, to ensure every student has access to the full breadth of the curriculum. Namely, a curriculum guarantee for every student.

“Sadly, though, many schools are not provided the necessary permanent classroom and executive teachers by the Government and Department to ensure this guarantee.”

The students most affected by this lack of permanent staffing provision, Mr Rajendra said, are those with disability, Aboriginal students, students acquiring English language proficiency, those from low socioeconomic communities and students in rural and remote settings.

The research will examine release time for teaching principals and executive staff across all settings. “Our members in all settings are overwhelmed by their workload and need more time for lesson preparation and collaboration with colleagues,” Mr Rajendra said.

“All these problems could be solved by the NSW Government and Department of Education increasing the number of permanent teachers, allocated as an increase to school staffing entitlements, to ensure a curriculum guarantee for every student, a minimum two hour increase per week in release time from face-to-face to teaching for every teacher, an increase in release time for primary executive to be aligned to release for secondary executive and corresponding adjustments for teaching principals.”

Associate Professor – Teacher Education at the University of Canberra Philip Roberts will undertake the research project. Dr Roberts will interrogate the relationship between staffing, teaching loads, class sizes and the provision of a comprehensive curriculum with a focus on the implications for equity and student outcomes. Members from a range of school settings will be interviewed, case studies compiled, existing research examined and domestic and international comparisons analysed.



“The case studies will humanise the problems and provide strong arguments for our policy position,” Mr Rajendra said.

An interim report will be provided to Federation in December with the final report to be published in February 2021.