Technology, communication and student needs highlighted as Gallop inquiry enters final week

November 10, 2020

The rise in the volume and complexity of student needs, changes in technology and the efforts teachers go to in order to communicate with parents and caregivers wereagain highlighted to the Gallop inquiry on 9 November.

Here's what your colleagues had to say when they gave evidence to the inquiry at the commencement of the final week of public hearings.

Student complexity

"*When I first started you would have ... straightforward depression or straightforward anxiety, now for example, [a school deals with] complex developmental trauma. So, the level of complexity has increased probably tenfold in the past 20 years.*"

"*Earlier on, we had the capacity to deal with the lower-level stuff ourselves, because the demand wasn't so huge, but now because of the uncapped caseload, we can't deal with that lower-level stuff... That means everything that myself and my team deal with is high-order stuff, which is really draining and leads to burnout, but we have no choice because the volume is so huge.*"
Merryn Connolly, Senior Psychologist Education

"*We've got a lot more students with way more complex needs...*"

"*Teachers now need to be aware of a wider range of student needs and behaviours and be able to implement a range of strategies in mainstream classes, but with less access to advice and support*"
  Amanda Leach, Science Teacher

Technology

 "*Technology has greatly increased the capacity of what teachers can do. BYOD [bring your own device] policies have added extra work ... if you do want to use tech you have to book devices as you can't presume the students can do so on their own devices*"
  Amanda Leach, Science teacher

On the need for more time

"*Teachers love talking about teaching. But sometimes [the time to] have those conversations is really reduced. Having time to actually discuss our practice is what teachers are really calling out for.*"

"Thinking about all of the administration you have: data collection, data reporting, parent emails. Teachers just want to spend time on their core business which is teaching and learning. These additional tasks take them away from doing that. Ultimately who loses in that is students. If their teachers are so pushed to be doing all these other requirements and they're not spending that time on teaching and learning, no one benefits in that system,"
Natalie Hudson, Senior Education Officer

"One of my recommendations is that primary classroom teachers be given release from face-to-face teaching that is parity with our secondary teachers"
Alex Lau, Primary School Teacher

Societal expectations and communication with parents

"When I was first teaching, we would have parent teacher interviews, but the amount of extra, ongoing contact that we have [now] is way more."

"I have a lot of contact with the parents of the LEAP Academy [an alternate learning program allowing students to complete cross-curriculum projects instead of following a mainstream timetable] students just because of the nature of the students... I like to know if there's something going on outside of school that's going to impact on how the student is going to operate at school, so [we have] very open communication via text messaging and email just so that everyone knows what's going on. That level of communication has definitely increased."
Amanda Leach, Science Teacher