

Joint action brings a change in behaviour

November 22, 2020

Federation, with the support of the principals and parents and citizens organisations, have worked together to shift the Department of Education's intention to make unilateral changes to the suspension and expulsion policy from day 1, term 1, 2021.

After a joint statement issued by the teachers union, the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW, NSW Secondary Principals' Council and NSW Primary Principals' Association, the Department has committed to working with Federation and key stakeholders to develop a new Students Behaviour Policy, guidelines and procedures for implementation in term 3, 2021.

"The needs of our most vulnerable students are complex and despite the evidence and research, the NSW Government and Department have failed to provide the necessary early intervention programs, strategies, staffing and infrastructure to address their needs well before they manifest as inappropriate behaviours later in school life," Federation Deputy President Henry Rajendra said.

"Should the NSW Government and Department appropriately assess the provision of public schooling across the state, they would recognise the urgent need for additional specialist teachers (including school counsellors), improved school staffing entitlement levels (for classroom teachers and executive), smaller class sizes, additional release time for teachers, a significant expansion of public preschool provision, an upgrade and/or expansion in the provision of support classes and schools for specific purposes (SSPs), and an improvement in overall funding levels."

In its joint statement, the alliance called for:

- adequate public preschooling, early intervention programs and support for parents and carers
- additional school counsellors and other specialist staffing, support programs, therapeutic services, professional development, smaller class sizes and appropriate settings to assist schools in meeting the needs of all students
- additional funding, resources and support given to the implementation of the policy changes, which would enable schools to consult, plan, develop and deal with complex case management in pursuit of the highest standard of student behaviour
- effective whole of government processes to allow government agencies to work collaboratively to support students with the most complex needs.

