

## Inquiry underlines systemic neglect

April 01, 2021

The report of the independent inquiry into Valuing the Teaching Profession rightly identified schools populated by high numbers of English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students as being further affected by disadvantage.

Teachers who work in these schools cope with higher rates of complexity, a greater range of student abilities and learning needs, increased welfare and wellbeing issues; with a system that does not provide them with the support and resourcing required to fully meet the identified need.

In 2021, the Department identified 201,000 students in NSW public schools as requiring EAL/D support. EAL/D students now represent 25 per cent of students across the public system.

This growth in enrolments is also reflected in the number of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). This figure has grown to more than 291,000 primary and secondary students, with CALD students representing one in three in the public system.



In addition, our public schools have also had an increase in enrolments of students from refugee backgrounds, children of families who migrate to Australia through other visa classes and children of families who are seeking asylum.

Many of these children have refugee- like experiences and public schools are responsible for the “heavy-lifting” of educating students who have had disrupted or limited school experiences before settling in NSW.

Schools and teachers are required to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of all students, and must do so without the level of support or numbers of specialist teacher expertise required to address such levels of need.

Curriculum delivery must include differentiation to incorporate stage-appropriate learning experiences as well as integrate EAL/D pedagogy to develop the English skills necessary for attaining an academic-language level of understanding.

The day-to-day operations of schools has changed to include support for EAL/D parents and communities, and the wellbeing and welfare of students has become an ever-increasing focus.

Meeting the diverse and complex needs of EAL/D students has affected teacher workload and school time, with the responsibility of individual schools carrying this burden, rather than the system. [The Gallop Report](#) noted significant and ongoing policy and compliance change has further contributed to the intensification of

teacher workload. The pressure placed on principals, teachers and schools to address growing student need without adequate support is unrelenting and unsustainable.

The profession has been vindicated by the [Gallop Report](#) findings. It is not a lack of teacher quality, nor a lack of expertise, commitment or hard work that has placed more pressure on schools to meet the needs of their students. Systemic neglect and the under-resourcing of public schools is a policy failure that requires immediate change.

The reinstatement of specialist curriculum support and the permanent employment of additional specialist EAL/D teachers is paramount to helping teachers cope with the work complexity involved in teaching diverse students and supporting their school communities.

Our teachers need additional time to collaborate and plan, assess and program; as well as ongoing professional learning to meet the needs of our CALD, EAL/D, refugee and migrant students.

By engaging in Federation's campaign to collectively achieve the reset our profession and public system deserves, you can help to achieve the changes recommended in the [Gallop Report](#).

## **GET INVOLVED**

Federation advises all teachers of EAL/D, CALD, refugee and new arrival students to actively participate in school discussions about funded support and the current resourcing available to schools to assist teachers in meeting the needs of their students.

Accessing the Federation and Department of Education's jointly developed Equity Loading Policy for English Language Proficiency (ELP) will provide important information and guidance to schools to maximise the support available.

The ELP document reiterates that teaching allocations should be filled by qualified EAL/D teachers, the funding is to be used to support the English language learning of EAL/D students in the year allocated; and may also be combined with funding from other sources to support EAL/D students.

Of critical importance to note is the Memorandum to principals, DN/08/00291, which states: "EAL/D teachers are to be used to support the delivery of EAL/D curriculum programs and cannot be used in place of casual relief teachers or for creating smaller class sizes."

Please contact your Federation Organiser or the Multicultural Officer via [multicultural@nswtf.org.au](mailto:multicultural@nswtf.org.au) for further advice and support if needed.