

Reduce the admin burden with actions, not rhetoric



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Changes to administrative tasks over the past three years have saved principals just 10 minutes a day and just four minutes a week for teachers.

The Department reports there have been 35 time-saving improvements for principals and seven for teachers over three years but acknowledge this “does not capture changes that have added administrative time for schools”.

Apart from the Government’s and Department’s new-found enthusiasm in their lexicon around reducing the administrative burden since the Federation- commissioned [Understanding work in schools: the foundation of teaching and learning](#) report in 2018, such pronouncements have not been matched with measures to provide any meaningful increase in the time or support for teachers and principals to adequately address the heart of education, the teaching and learning of students.



After the release of the 2018 report, the then-education minister Rob Stokes declared to Federation: “I share your concerns that a teacher’s core role of educating children ... can be adversely affected by their administrative burden ... reducing this burden is one of my highest priorities.”

This was quickly followed by the establishment of the Minister’s Reducing Administrative Burden Working Group in 2018 and pronouncements by the Secretary of “a school-centred governance model” based on “eight key principles” and “17 weeks of change free periods” during 2019 and 2020, all of which have been duly ignored in the rush to roll out “reform”, evidenced by the consolidated school schedules distributed each term to principals.

As teachers so often remind their students when they make commitments to their learning and wellbeing outcomes, actions speak louder than words.

Recommendations of the Gallop Inquiry and report go to matters central to this pursuit including, but not limited to: additional time for teachers and principals to undertake their work, central provision by the Department of additional professional specialist support services, reduction in the extra activities and programs imposed by governments, revision of excessive documentary constraints as related to lessons, planning, programming, NESA and other monitoring requirements.

The recently released [Valuing the Teaching Profession — an independent inquiry](#) report, commissioned by

Federation, highlights the unsustainable growth in compliance requirements and data collection, among other tasks, now required on a daily basis of teachers and principals since that time. [Click here](#) for further details on the inquiry's recommendations.

The inquiry also highlighted the Government's "unreasonable and unworkable plan" to introduce a new curriculum for all students by 2024 and recommended that this should be abandoned. Starting the implementation in 2022 is supported on the condition that teachers have time to work on the new curriculum, have access to professional development support and their administration and compliance responsibilities are reduced as outlined in the NSW Curriculum Review Report by Professor Masters.

There's inadequate system support or ownership of responsibility by government for the implementation of the continual requirements for schools, their teachers and principals, to pivot their teaching and learning in accordance with the latest announcement. The latest is the replacement of Local Schools, Local Decisions policy with the School Success Model, underpinned by systems targets of improvement based on crude and discredited measures in many cases.

Principals and teachers remain frustrated at the lack of progress as mandatory policy implementation, initiative after initiative, and government changes continue to be foisted on schools. The core business of schools is continually forced to take a back seat.