

Parents back teachers' wages and work claim

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A significant majority of NSW people believe teachers deserve a pay rise and more time to prepare lessons, a new poll has found.

Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos said the NSW Government needed to act urgently on those issues – uncompetitive wages and unsustainable workloads – key factors behind widespread teacher shortages.

The poll by YouGov also revealed that, during the pandemic, parents viewed the value of teachers' work in a more positive light amid concerns children were falling behind while learning at home.

"The poll shows a recognition that teaching has become a far more difficult and demanding job and with schools finally reopening we need to be investing in our teachers to ensure no child misses out on the education they need," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"We cannot fix the shortages problem until we fix the wages and workload problem."

The YouGov poll of 1542 adults was conducted in NSW between 2 and 13 September, and shows:



- 57 per cent support a pay rise of at least 5 per cent a year for teachers, compared with 28 per cent who back the Government's position of capping increases at 2.5 per cent
- 66 per cent support an increase in weekly release from face-to-face (RFF) to four hours, with 64 per cent of Coalition voters backing the increase. Just 18 per cent said the current entitlement of two hours was sufficient.
- 57 per cent of public school parents said they had a more positive view of the value of teachers' work due to the pandemic and remote schooling, with 30 per cent saying their view hadn't changed and 13 per cent saying their view was more negative. (Among all adults, 41 per cent had a more positive view, 12 per cent more negative and 47 per cent said their view hadn't changed.)
- 67 per cent of parents with children at school said they were concerned about their learning falling behind due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and long periods of remote learning.
- Overall, 47 per cent think teaching is a less attractive career option now compared with a decade ago and 10 per cent say it is more attractive. More than half believe the workload has increased along with the difficulty of the job and the complexity of student needs.
- 21 per cent said they had considered becoming a teacher at some point. Almost one in five said the pay compared with other professions and the workload were reasons they were not in the profession. (Among those aged 25-34, 27 per cent nominated pay and 26 per cent workload as reasons they were not in the profession).

The industrial award that determines the salaries and conditions of teachers expires in December, with negotiations with the Department commencing this week.

In line with the recommendations of the independent Gallop inquiry, teachers and principals are seeking a salary increase of between 5 to 7.5 per cent a year and an increase in preparation time of two hours a week.

Mr Gavrielatos said the fact that only one in 10 people believed the profession was a more attractive career option than a decade ago underlined the need for action on workload and wages.

“We have to make the profession more attractive through competitive salaries and realistic workloads if we are to fix the shortages and recruit a minimum of 11,000 more teachers required just to meet enrolment growth over the next decade,” he said.

“Teachers are skilled professionals doing increasingly complex and challenging work. If we aren’t properly supporting them, we aren’t properly supporting students.

“The community’s expectations about what teachers can do in schools has never been higher but their pay compared with other professions has never been lower.”

The NSW Government’s own survey of teachers in 2020 revealed only one third of teachers believe they have time to do their job well.