

Enhanced staffing — not cuts — needed to improve quality and equity

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Federation is calling on the State Government and Education Department to improve permanent staffing levels in all settings, in support of a high quality/high equity public school system.

Senior Vice President Henry Rajendra told Annual Conference that achieving this goal would “send the public school system to a place it has never been before”.

The union’s Annual Conference Delegates made the call for improved permanent staffing levels in the context of the Department’s Local Schools, Local Decisions Policy and its review of staffing entitlements.

“A devolved staffing budget cannot coexist with a staffing entitlement,” Mr Rajendra said.



Delegates reaffirmed the union’s resolve to protect school staffing entitlements — an industrial and political campaign will be triggered should the NSW Education Department move to cut permanent positions from school staffing entitlements.

Mr Rajendra said the State Government and the Department had failed to provide an increase in permanent qualified teachers commensurate with the \$1.4 billion growth in recurrent funding. To date, just an additional 59 permanent positions have been created.

“The money has been spent on casual and temporary teachers ... that does not provide stability for schools,” he said.

Federation asserts an increase in qualified, permanent teachers will provide long-term stability and greater capacity for school planning processes and the students those plans are meant to serve.

The expansion of staffing entitlements is critical to closing the large gaps in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged students, Delegates declared in the Annual Conference decision “Staffing entitlements, Teacher Permanency and High Quality/High Equity Public Schooling”.

Delegates noted very little of increased funding to equity areas had been used to establish permanent positions or adequate systemic statewide teaching and learning support for schools. For example, while the funding allocation to schools for English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) has risen by \$25 million since 2015 and the number of NSW public school students requiring EAL/D teacher support has grown by 28,000 in that same period, the statewide staffing entitlement of 896 full-time equivalent EAL/D teaching positions has remained unchanged.

“The stability afforded by the entitlement to more permanent, qualified and specialist teaching staff will provide schools with greater internal flexibility to meet the needs of every student; be it a student with disability, an Aboriginal student, a student attaining English language proficiency, a student from a poor family, a student in a remote or regional setting, or a student experiencing intersecting disadvantage,” the Annual Conference decision says.

Delegates also pointed out that for too long the Department has failed to adequately address the staffing and funding inequity of SSPs and support units. The baseload funding to SSPs fail to take into account the greater learning needs of students with disability.