



# Small Schools Newsletter

JUNE 2010

## Primary Activist Conference

On May 15 the Small Schools Committee attended the Primary Activists Conference in Sydney and conducted a workshop on teaching principals and teacher release in small schools.

This issue has been a priority for some time. In 2002 negotiations with the DET, agreement was reached that primary executive should receive the same pay and release as their secondary counterparts.

It was further agreed that primary schools should receive a further 0.1 release for each six full-time equivalent staff or part thereof.

The DET reneged on this agreement citing unavailability of funds.

The equivalent pay aspect was implemented in a subsequent salary negotiation. As we know there have been increased workload issues in P5 and P6 schools, particularly for principals.

Small schools comprise one third of all primary schools in NSW. The funds needed to implement this policy are less than 1 per cent of the total education budget.

Other education systems in NSW already have these provisions in place and it has been reported to have been in place in New Zealand for over 15 years.

Implementing this provision would also allow for the employment of specialist teachers and provide a greater opportunity for teachers to program and prepare.

It is hoped to get the P&C and individual parents involved in lobbying for the policy to be implemented.

The PPA has exactly the same position on this policy and is continuing to actively lobby for its adoption.

Now is the ideal time to lead up to the March 2011 state election to lobby the Coalition, Greens, independents and the Government for a firm commitment to the implementation of the policy.

## Small Schools DVD

The Small Schools Committee is updating its Small Schools Promotions PowerPoint DVD. In this DVD we show politicians and other interested parties the diverse environments which these schools are situated. We are asking small schools from both metropolitan and rural areas to send in photos that showcase their school and or community.

Photos should be sent to: Jeff Ainsworth, NSW Teachers Federation, Newcastle Regional Office, 406-408 King Street, Newcastle West 2302 or email: [newcastle@nswtf.org.au](mailto:newcastle@nswtf.org.au)

## Visit to Nicholson Street PS

During the last meeting of the Committee we had the pleasure of visiting Nicholson Street PS in East Balmain and meeting principal Abbey Proud and Federation Representative Nadine Nelson. The Committee was given a tour of the school led by school captains Louis and Awhina. The students demonstrated the school's commitment to environmental awareness in their vegetable gardens, composting, recycling and worm farm. The children proudly pointed out the improvements that have made to their school including the new basketball court, "fake grass", additional sports equipment and giant chess set.

The harmony in the playground was a feature as year 6 mixed with kindies and although only

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minutes from the bustle of the city, you could be excused for thinking you were in a rural school.

In discussions with Abbey, we discovered that her main concerns in regard to her position in a small school were shared by most small school principals across NSW. Top of list were issues relating to release time for teaching principal, BER issues, NAPLAN and funding support. It was a great opportunity for the committee to see a suburban small school and we'd like to thank Abbey and all the staff for their hospitality.



Small Schools Committee at Nicholson Street PS with principal Abbey Proud and local Federation Organiser Michelle Rosicky.

Brad Hunt stepped down from the Committee late in 2009, which led to the election of Christine Bentley, Goulburn East PS, at March Council.

Small schools play a vital part in their communities and offer wonderful opportunities to the children who attend them. Small schools are schools with less than 160 students, classified as either P6, with enrolments up to 25 children or P5 with enrolments between 25 and 159.

Over the past 12 months the Small Schools Committee has continued to represent the PP5 and PP6 schools across NSW, which number in excess of 600.

During the past 12 months the Small Schools Committee has been involved in various campaigns and projects.

The Small Schools Committee:

- visited Seven Hills PS and Cronulla PS
- met with DET staffing officers over executive release, primary principal classification, K-1-2 staffing and staffing of SAMs and SAOs
- held a successful Small School Conference attended by Minister Verity Firth, Shadow Minister Adrian Piccoli and the Greens education spokesperson John Kaye. At the conference the Minister made a commitment to engage the DET into looking into the funding around teaching principal release
- attended a mass rally at Rosehill Race Course to discuss school league tables and the damage they can cause to our schools
- conducted a campaign to promote Locality Allowances and various other allowances that some of our colleagues, although entitled to, were not claiming.

## Small Schools Committee Annual Report

The Small Schools Committee has met four times since 2009 Annual Conference.

Membership during the second half of 2009 consisted of Kim Taylor, Corindi PS; Mick Collins, Boomi PS; Michael Wood, Meadow Flat PS; Paul Faulkner, Bedgerebong PS; and Brad Hunt, Kellys Plains PS.

If you have any issues or concerns in relation to Small Schools please contact: Jeff Ainsworth, NSW Teachers Federation, Newcastle Regional Office, 406-408 King Street, Newcastle West 2303.