



Valuing the teaching profession — an independent inquiry

What every parent and carer needs to know about the Gallop inquiry

The first inquiry into the work of NSW public school teachers since 2004 has just handed down its final report. The Inquiry, headed by former WA Premier Dr Geoff Gallop, has recommended major changes to the salaries and working conditions of teachers.

The report states the changes were urgently needed to help address teacher shortages, improve teaching and ensure we can recruit enough teachers to cater for rapidly increasing enrolments in public schools.

Four key findings

1. The inquiry found the dedication and commitment of teachers remains high but workloads have become unsustainable. All aspects of the work of teachers have been altered due to constant policy changes, advances in technology, curriculum changes and the increasingly complex needs of students. Teachers now have heavy administration workloads outside the classroom as well, including data collection and reporting and compliance work. On average, teachers work 55 hours a week.

2. Salaries of teachers have fallen compared with other professions. While the work of teachers has become harder and more complex, their salaries are now significantly below the average of all professions. This dangerous combination is leading to recruitment and retention issues and making it more difficult to attract the high achievers we need for the future.

3. Student numbers in NSW are set to increase and teacher shortages must be addressed. The inquiry found teacher shortages are an issue across NSW and said this had to be addressed ahead of a record increase in enrolments – 200,000 extra students – expected over the next 20 years.

4. Teachers need more time for collaborative work, planning and preparation. The time teachers have each week outside the classroom has not increased since the 1950s for secondary teachers and the 1980s for primary teachers. The inquiry found teachers need more dedicated time to prepare and collaborate with their colleagues, particularly given the increase in the number of students with higher needs.

Recommendations for change

Increase the preparation time teachers have. The number of hours outside the classroom should increase from two to four per week in primary schools and there should be a reduction of two hours in the face-to-face teaching hours of secondary teachers. This time should be dedicated to assessment, lesson planning and collaboration.

Reset salaries. An increase of between 10 and 15 per cent in 2022 and 2023 to recognise the increase in teachers' skills and responsibilities, help overcome shortages and recruit the additional teachers needed to cope with enrolment growth.

Lift the number of school counsellors. An urgent increase in counsellor numbers to reduce waiting times and address rising student mental health issues. There should be one counsellor for every 500 students by 2023.

Improve staffing levels. Permanent teacher numbers should be increased to overcome the shortages of casuals. The excessive use of temporary teacher employment should be addressed. Support services, previously provided by the Department of Education in areas such as curriculum implementation, student welfare and behaviour and special education, should be restored.

Investing in teachers. Acting on the recommendations of the Inquiry will help improve teaching and learning in NSW public schools. It will also make teaching more attractive so we can keep our best teachers in the classroom and recruit the additional ones required to meet rapidly increasing enrolments.

These changes are an investment in our future that will pay off for our kids and our country

More information about the inquiry, including a copy of the full report, can be found at nswtf.org.au/inquiry.

You can also register at nswtf.org.au/forms/parents-citizens-contact to receive regular updates on matters of importance to your child's education.

For more information visit nswtf.org.au/inquiry