



Gallop Inquiry Fact Sheet



Background on the inquiry

In February 2020 the NSW Teachers Federation commissioned an independent inquiry into the work of teachers and principals and how it has changed since 2004.

Inquiries of this nature were previously conducted as “work value” cases in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission. Each case between 1970 and 2004 found significant changes in the work of teachers and adjusted salaries to better reflect their expertise and responsibilities and maintain the attractiveness of the profession. In 2004, teachers were awarded salary increases of 12 to 19.5 per cent.

The NSW Government’s wages policy now prevents such work value cases being conducted.

The expert panel that conducted the independent inquiry in 2020 was chaired by Dr Geoff Gallop, former WA Premier and Education Minister. The other panel members were Dr Tricia Kavanagh, former Justice of the NSW Industrial Court and Deputy President of the NSW IRC and Patrick Lee, former Chief Executive of the NSW Institute of Teachers.

The panel received more than 1000 submissions from teachers and schools. Submissions were also made by professional bodies, academics, economists and education experts. Two rounds of hearings were held with experts and teachers.

Main findings

• There have been profound changes in the work and workload of teachers

“...we have seen significant (and still ongoing) increases in the volume and complexity of work generated by government decisions and heavily influenced by the social, economic and technological environment. Coupled with this has been a similarly significant increase in the responsibilities required of principals, their executive teams and classroom teachers.”(p8)

• There are many factors contributing to the intensification of teachers’ work

These include: constant policy changes, significant increases in student need, rapid changes in technology, the expansion and reform of the curriculum, new compliance, administration, data collection and reporting responsibilities, and higher community expectations of what schools and teachers can do. Specialist staff support for schools was stripped away as part of the failed 2012 Local Schools, Local Decisions reforms.

• The dedication and commitment of teachers in public schools remains high

“The evidence before the Inquiry demonstrates the effort and commitment of principals, other senior staff, and the classroom and specialist teachers in responding to the significantly changing realities of the student populations, the social contexts bearing on teaching, all within a period of dramatic organisational and policy change affecting schools.” (p133)

• The level of change exceeds that found in previous work value cases, which delivered large pay increases

There has been a “scale and intensity of change experienced by the public school teaching profession in NSW that dwarfs the findings in each of the assessments found in the 1970, 1980/81, 1990/91 and 2003/04 industrial decisions and the Vinson report.” (p8)

• Salaries have declined compared to other professions and urgent action is required

“At the same time as these increases in work, complexity and responsibility there has been a decline in the relative position of teacher salaries alongside that of other professions and a reduced attractiveness of public sector teaching as a career; this being a contradiction that needs urgent attention by way of a significant upgrade in teacher salaries and an improvement in career options.” (p9)

• The Government’s plan to cap wage increases at 1.5 per cent will make it impossible to fix teacher shortages and recruit the additional teachers required

“...such an approach would undermine the standing and attractiveness of the teaching profession and be unjust given the evidence of change, intensification of work, increase in skills and expertise, and the value of the profession’s efforts for the public good in NSW over the past 17 years. Without a significant increase in salaries, the State Government will not be able to address the significant shortage of teachers in NSW or recruit the additional ones to meet rising enrolments.” (p14)

“Taken with the fragile and inadequate staffing mechanisms currently in place, the salary levels in place and projected for the next three to five years are dangerous for the public standing of the profession, and for the quality of education available to the students of the state’s public schools.”(p133)

• To help cope with the growing complexity of their work and improve results teachers need more time for lesson planning and collaboration

“Without it, much of the quality of practice espoused in Government policy documents is simply not attainable in the context of the changing complexities of the educational endeavour.” (p12)

Key recommendations

1. Salaries

An increase of between 10 and 15 per cent in the next wages agreement (covering 2022 and 2023) to recognise the increase in skills and responsibilities, help overcome shortages and recruit the additional teachers needed to cope with enrolment growth.

2. Preparation time

An increase in the hours teachers have for collaboration, planning, assessment and monitoring student progress. An additional two hours should be provided for primary teachers along with a reduction of two hours in the current maximum face-to-face teaching loads for all secondary teachers (including head teachers and deputy principals. "Non face-to-face" teaching time for primary executive staff to match that of secondary executive staff).

3. Staffing

To better address student disadvantage and overcome the failure of the Local Schools, Local Decisions policy, the staffing and resourcing of schools should be reset. That should include the return of centrally employed specialist staff who can assist teachers. Permanent teacher numbers should be increased to overcome the shortages of casuals. The excessive use of temporary teacher employment should be addressed.

4. Promotions and career structure

A new statewide, standards-based promotions system is required. There should also be a more expansive career structure for teachers, including new categories of expert teachers.

5. School counsellors

An urgent increase in school counsellors is recommended to overcome shortages and address the significant rise in student mental health issues. Counsellors should be provided on the basis of at least one for every 500 students by 2023.

6. Curriculum and administration

The government's "unreasonable and unworkable plan" to introduce a new curriculum for all students by 2024 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 Masters' report.