SSTUWA concerned about principal well-being



The State School Teachers' Union of WA has serious concerns about the results of a new report, which found that high workloads and under-resourcing were leading to increased stress levels for principals.

The 2015 Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Survey Report included responses from more than 4,300 principals from government, catholic and independent schools around Australia.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said the survey found that principals were struggling with the quantity of work and lack of time to focus on teaching and learning, which was contributing to higher stress levels.

"The survey found that stress is 1.7 times higher for principals than the average population, and burnout is 1.6 times higher," she said.

"Principals said the kinds of things that were adding to their stress levels included dealing with student and staff mental health issues, resourcing and government initiatives.

"We are very concerned about the lack of support available for our school leaders, which is exacerbated by a lack of resources in the system.

"Almost $200 million dollars was ripped out of the WA education budget in 2013, and this has caused enormous problems for principals who are trying to find ways to make up for that funding.

"Members are also telling us that professional learning is becoming focused on the financial management of school budgets, rather than educational leadership and this has the potential to affect educational outcomes for students."

Ms Byrne said she was also very concerned about the report's findings that 41 per cent of principals had experienced threats of violence and 36 per cent experienced some form of bullying.

She said the report also found that more than one in three principals had experienced actual violence.

"This figure is eight times that experienced by the general population," she said.

“The issue of violence in schools is not just a problem for schools, it is reflective of what it going on in society, and as such, it needs to be addressed as an issue in society.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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