Concern over reports of violent incidents in WA schools



The State School Teachers' Union has called for the State Government to re-invest in student support programs, after reports of dozens of violent incidents in WA schools this year.

There have been 63 reported incidents of physical assaults or threats using a weapon, including pepper spray, knives and scissors in the first four weeks of school this year.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said a number of factors were involved, a significant one being the loss of $250 million out of school budgets.

"As a result of this cut, about 600 teachers, 800 Education Assistants and 110 Aboriginal Islander Education Officers have been taken out of schools in the last two years," she said.

"It's led to larger class sizes in most schools - which may be within the maximum allowed - but are bigger than they were. Add to this the loss of EAs and AIEOs and the consequences are significant - for teachers and students.

"Programs designed to attract and retain students at risk have been reduced or cut altogether because of fewer available staff.

"This makes it much more difficult to engage those students, and we are starting to see the consequences."

Ms Byrne said parents also needed to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children.

"We are very concerned about the apparent lack of parental support for some students," she said.

"Parents need to be aware of what their children are doing. It is absolutely unacceptable for students to come to school with knives and pepper spray."

Ms Byrne said that while the number of violent incidents was relatively small, the government needed to re-invest in support programs quickly to ensure the problem didn't escalate.

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