Survey reveals high workloads and stress for school staff



A survey of almost 3,000 public school teachers and principals has revealed that increasing workloads are leading to very high levels of workplace stress.

Read the full report here.

The State School Teachers' Union survey found 82% of teachers and 79% of principals reported 'high' or 'very high' stress levels.

The figures also revealed 95% of full time teachers were working over 40 hours a week, with 17% working over 60.

One quarter of principals surveyed were working over 60 hours a week.

SSTUWA president Pat Byrne said there were a number of reasons given by teachers and principals for their increase in workload.

"Teachers told us that reporting assessments, lack of classroom support and bigger class sizes were contributing most to their workload," she said.

"Principals said their workload was due to compliance requirements, staff selection processes and budget cuts."

Ms Byrne said work related stress had increased partly because of a loss of support for public school staff.

"Along with budget and staffing cuts to public schools, the middle District Office tier of support that schools had, has been removed," she said.

"There have also been cuts to administrative staff working in the Department of Education, which means fewer people are available to assist principals in resolving issues at school.

"For example, at the same time as introducing the Student Centred Funding Model and devolving total budget responsibilities to schools, the Department cut the number of staff available to provide budgetary advice to schools.

"This meant long delays for principals seeking answers to problems and significantly increased frustration.

“The IPS initiative has increased workloads, particularly for principals, as tasks previously done centrally are now expected to be done at the school level.

“The level of compliance reporting being sought by the Department has also increased enormously.”

Ms Byrne called on the State Government to increase the number of support staff to help reduce the workload on teachers and principals.

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