eNews - 2 February 2023

Welcome back

Welcome back to all of our members.

There is no doubt teacher shortages have the potential to make this a very difficult year. The SSTUWA has been flagging this for several years and now it has really hit home.

A series of ad hoc responses, which don't seem to fit within any recognisable strategy other than fulfilling a vague promise to have a teacher in front of every class, are not helping. In some cases one off fixes are actively making the situation worse by targeting narrow areas for extra support prompting division and resentment.

Arbitrarily cutting qualification requirements, making random extra payments to staff in certain areas or subjects, puttingnon-specialist teachers in vital subject areas or appointing people without the proper experience or support to leadership roles will lead to more burnout and issues, not less.

The SSTUWA is working actively through the media to raise these issues for public discussion. We need a full and wide-ranging debate on the state of public education. With two-thirds of students educated in the public sector there are millions of Western Australians who want to see their children get the best possible schooling. We need to rally that support behind us.

Our message is that students don't just need **a** teacher, they need the **right** teacher – one who is fully trained, is an expert in any specialist subject they teach and one who has the right support around them. This goes for school leaders too – they need to be ready for the role and to have the support and backing they need.

The SSTUWA knows full well that many teachers will be lacking in the necessary experience and support. It has been extremely difficult for schools to recruit and we are losing far too many experienced teachers and leaders.

Via the media we have asked parents to be supportive and patient as new teachers settle in and to be respectful to every teacher and school leader, reminding them that a parent's example is what sets the standards for students.

As you will see below, we are taking our public education review team across WA to seek out submissions from members, the community and other stakeholders.

If you see issues arising around class sizes, DOTT or staff getting into difficulties, please let your rep know. If you need additional support or are at a school without a rep then contact Member Assist.

If you are new to teaching I urge you to consider joining our New Educator Network. Peer support is crucial in your early years and we want you to stay in teaching so seek support and advice when you need it. Find out more here.

We have a diverse membership. We will not always share exactly the same views on every issue. What we do all agree on though is the vital role of public education and how important it is to protect and nourish the sector. Our strength in that fight comes from you – our members.

Matthew Jarman, President

Salary increments

The SSTUWA can advise that the final round of salary increments has been included in this fortnight's pay run.

Members should also note that as fees are percentage based in relation to salaries that member fees will rise.

Review sessions

Public sessions of our commissioned review into the health of the public education system get underway next week.

We will be travelling across WA to hear from educators, parents and community leaders.

Many of you have already made written submissions. If you wish to you can find the process here, along with a full list of the public sessions and links for registration.

Reps and members can also download a poster advertising the review to print and display at their workplace.

Good news from NSW

At the heart of reform for public education is full funding in line with the minimum recommendations of the Gonski Review.

The failure for governments at all levels to meet those minimum standards, leaving public schools underfunded whileprivate schools get more than they need, is the root cause of many of the sector's problems.

There is encouraging news from New South Wales where the state opposition is guaranteeing to support 100 per cent funding to the Schooling Resource Standard if elected.

This pledge is down to the work of the NSW Teachers' Federation and we congratulate our colleagues on their efforts.

At the federal level Labor has made pledges about 100 per cent funding but then delayed negotiation on funding agreements. This leaves public school students behind for another year, at least.

The NSW opposition pledge is one that the state government in WA could not just make promises about, but actually implement. Currently WA state schools are getting 91 per cent of the minimum, when the state's special circumstances saw Gonski say the state needed 105 per cent. NSW Labor has set the example for others to follow.

Climate group

Are you passionate about climate action?

Join the new SSTUWA Climate Action Working Group.

The purpose of the working group is to further the principles of education for sustainability within TAFEs and Department of Education schools.

Planning and actions will address the current workload, funding and training issues that act as barriers to education for sustainability in our workplaces.

Submit your EOI by Friday 17 February here.

Elections

Information about election E2022/141 for SSTUWA State Council/AEU WA Branch Council delegates, including nomination form and election notice, is available here.

Education and training

Delegate training events in Term 1 - register today
If you are a newly elected delegate or a re-elected delegate for 2023, visit our website to view the range of training opportunities available.

Attending courses will provide high-quality training and ongoing support to ensure you are successful in your important role.

Term 1 events include the following courses:

Union Representative Training Level One: Schools (TUT)
Thursday and Friday 23 - 24 February

Education Specific Five-Day WHS Introductory Course for HSRs
Monday 27 February - Friday 3 March

Women's Contact Officer Training Level One: Schools and TAFE (TUT)

Tuesday and Wednesday 7 – 8 March

Union Representative Training Level One: Schools (TUT)
Thursday and Friday 30 - 31 March

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