Facing the Facts on fixing education in WA



The SSTUWA is not affiliated with any political party. We are calling on all candidates in the forthcoming state election to face the facts, consider our position and the ample evidence to support it – and commit to action on nine key education issues that affect our public schools and TAFE colleges. You can read responses from the parties in this issue of *Western Teacher* here and you can see the SSTUWA's full election document here.

1 - More funding and better expenditure

To address rising costs, compensate for repeated cuts and build a better and fairer public education system, the education budget must be increased. Additional funding cannot on its own improve public education, but the reforms so desperately needed require further investment.

2 - Class sizes

To reduce teacher workloads and improve student outcomes, class sizes in WA public schools must be reduced; WA public school classes are the highest in the country. The SSTUWA seeks the most substantial reductions to be made in schools with significant proportions of students who are educationally disadvantaged, and across Pre-Primary and Years 4 to 10.

3 - Infrastructure

To deliver immediate and ongoing capital works improvements the state government must commence an ambitious and long overdue public school building and TAFE college investment program. Giving WA public students and their local communities shared community infrastructure provides an immediate and long-term investment return to the future of WA and delivers a social dividend to the wider community.

4 - Teacher, lecturer and school leader attraction and retention in regional WA

To improve regional attraction and retention, public school and TAFE college staffing processes, incentives, supports and

working environments must be improved. The centralisation of services and growth of the Independent Public School model has not met the needs of students or staff in regional WA.

5 - Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) availability, cost, quality, safety and security

The consequence of 2006 changes to the GROH program has been a loss of housing stock, employees often living in unacceptable temporary arrangements for significant periods of time and creating an overall disincentive for public sector employees to work in regional WA. Lack of housing, poor quality housing, cost of housing and matters of home maintenance, safety and security are significant barriers to attracting and retaining teachers, lecturers, school leaders and school psychologists.

6 - Support and services for students, teachers, lecturers and school leaders

To better serve students and address the workload implications of growing student disadvantage and complexity, adequate levels of local support must be provided. Support services must be reviewed to ensure they are more accessible, more responsive to local needs and better resourced to support schools' administrative and educational needs.

7 - Aboriginal education

A comprehensive strategy to encourage culturally responsive leadership and develop concrete actions to support the implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework must be implemented. There must be strong and authentic student, family and community engagement, as well as place-based co-design, if we are to impact connection, attendance, aspiration, learning and achievement.

8 - Safety in schools

To ensure everyone in every school community feels safe and able to engage in their learning or their work, a comprehensive and strategically coordinated approach must be implemented as a matter of urgency. The causes of inappropriate behaviour, violence and aggression are manifold – they require a commensurate response.

9 - The early years

Addressing children's needs, especially in the earliest years, has implications for and beyond education. It goes to the growing complexity of needs as well as the impact of growing disadvantage and challenges in communities. Better support for infants and children is required to ensure school readiness and sufficient wellbeing and security to effectively engage in schooling.



By Lindsay Hale
School leader consultant

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