

Take part in vital new research on workload

JOAN LEMAIRE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

All school-based members are urged to respond to a statewide survey on teachers work, to be distributed next February.

The survey is part of a research project Federation has commissioned. The research team includes Associate Professor Susan McGrath-Champ, Discipline of Work and Organisational Studies; Dr Rachel Wilson, Senior Lecturer in Research Methodology, Educational Assessment and Evaluation and Meghan Stacey from the Sydney University Business School and the School of Education and Social Work.

The purpose of the research is to assess the effects and extent of system-level demands, the intensity and complexity of work undertaken by teachers, executives and principals. The effect of the loss of consultants and other positions within the Department, resulting from the

introduction of Local School, Local Decisions and other changes, will also be examined and assessed.

The survey will identify how teachers, executives and principals describe their experience of work in relation to:

- hours worked at school and home
- the pace and intensity of work
- the number, type and complexity of duties and work undertaken
- the tasks or work demands that are seen to be unproductive or distract from the focus on teaching and learning
- the impact of change in relation to a range of matters including curriculum, technology and various "initiatives", programs, policies and procedures
- the level of support provided by the Department to implement these changes

- the level of control over decisions made about how work is undertaken.

A report on the outcome of the research will be presented to Annual Conference. The depth and breadth of the research project will provide information about the daily work of teachers, executives and principals in all NSW schools and teachers working in non school-based positions. Importantly the survey will give all school-based members the opportunity to describe their work and the factors that affect how they work.

Too often, the commentary on teachers and their work is made by people with no experience or expertise in teaching. This project will allow teachers, executives and principals to share their experience, expertise and knowledge about teaching and learning.

This information will provide a strong base for Federation to

pursue a range of issues identified in the research with the Department and Government. The research findings will also inform the development of relevant campaign action in the lead up to the next state election.

In addition to the research project, Federation will continue to support members to pursue issues related to excessive workload demands and/or work-related stress. Federation is currently revising support materials associated with issue resolution. These procedures aim to resolve issues at a workplace level and where this is not possible escalate these matters for discussion with the Department. Federation Organisers provide advice and assistance to Workplace Committees to address these issues and should be contacted when an issue arises.