



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

Ground Floor, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank, Victoria, 3006
Phone : +61 (0)3 9693 1800 Fax : +61 (0)3 9693 1805
Email : aeu@aeufederal.org.au Website : www.aeufederal.org.au

4 February 2007

NATIONAL PRINCIPAL SURVEY REVEALS PROBLEMS WITH TEACHER SUPPLY, SCHOOL MAINTENANCE

A national survey of public school principals conducted by the Australian Education Union has revealed significant problems with teacher supply, class sizes and school maintenance.

Key findings from the survey of 1052 public school principals across Australia include:

- Over 60% of principals surveyed had experienced teacher supply problems in their schools
- Over 70% said their schools needed a major upgrade of facilities with the most urgent priorities including toilet blocks and new classrooms
- Over half of those surveyed were concerned that some facilities or equipment in their schools did not reach OH&S standards.
- The top three priorities for additional funding were: More help for individual students (62%), Building and maintenance improvement (50%) and More teachers (49%)
- Over 70% rated the Australian Government performance in regard to public schools as very poor or poor.

AEU Federal President Pat Byrne said the Federal Government's failure to adequately fund public schools is making things harder for students.

"Public school principals are telling us that they don't have enough resources to maintain facilities properly or to give students with special needs the attention they deserve."

"Principals are frustrated and they have given the Federal Government a fail mark on its performance."

"Schools across Australia are now getting \$1 billion less per year than they would have been if the funding share for public education had been maintained at 1996 levels."

"This is creating an unequal and unfair system for Australian public school students."

"Government research shows that our public schools need \$2.9 billion per year in additional recurrent funding in order to meet national goals for schooling."

"That funding would help to provide schools with extra teachers and other resources they need to ensure every Australian student gets the opportunity to reach their full potential."

For further information, please contact:

Pat Byrne
AEU Federal President
0411 693 244 – Mobile

Erin Farley
Media
0409 510 879



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

*Ground Floor, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank, Victoria, 3006
Phone : +61 (0)3 9693 1800 Fax : +61 (0)3 9693 1805
Email : aeu@aeufederal.org.au Website : www.aeufederal.org.au*

Media Release

Media Release

Media Release

AEU National Principals Committee State of Our Schools Survey 2007

1052 Public School Principals responded to the national survey conducted in late 2006.

Key Findings

- Over 70% rated the Australian Government performance in regard to public schools as very poor or poor.
- Over 60% of schools have experienced teacher supply problems in the last year and nearly half of principals reported the problem was worse than the previous year.
- 60% report changes to Commonwealth Indigenous education funding have had a negative effect on programs and resources.
- Over one third of principals surveyed reported classes with over 30 students at their schools.
- Over 70% reported their schools need a major upgrade of facilities with toilet blocks and new classrooms.
- 82% of principals say their school needs a major upgrade of equipment with IT/computers, playground equipment and air-conditioning named as priorities.
- 54% of school principals are concerned that some facilities or equipment do not reach OH&S standards.
- More funds for building and maintenance, adequacy of overall resourcing and principal and teacher workload were named as top concerns.

Teacher supply

- Over 60% had experienced teacher supply problems in the previous year
- Nearly 17% reported they had been unable to fill fixed term or contract positions
- Over 8% reported they had been unable to fill ongoing/permanent positions
- The greatest area of difficulty was finding teachers for casual relief teaching, 41.25%
- Nearly half (47%) reported that teacher supply problems were worse than the year before.

Class sizes

- In 36% of all schools the largest class was 30 or more students
- Over half of principals at secondary schools reported classes of 30 or more students at their school.
- The largest class is most frequently in years five and six of primary school.

Priorities for Additional Funding

- In order principals' key priorities for extra funding are:
 - extra help for individual students (62%),
 - school maintenance and improvements (50%),
 - more teachers (49%), and
 - more support staff (36%)
 - Welfare support, Information Technology, more professional learning and more learning resources were also priorities.

Facilities and equipment

- 73% of principals believe their school is in need of a major upgrade of facilities.
- The biggest priorities for facilities upgrades were toilet blocks (32%) and new classrooms (30%).
- 83% say that their school needs a major upgrade of equipment, with IT/computers (53%) being the most often mentioned, followed by playground equipment and air conditioning (both 38%).
- Over half (53%) have concerns that some facilities or equipment do not reach O.H.&S. standards.

Indigenous education

- Nearly 60% of principals affected by changes to funding for Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student programs reported that these changes had had a negative effect, whilst only 13% felt that they were an improvement.

For further information, please contact:

Erin Farley
Media
0409 510 879