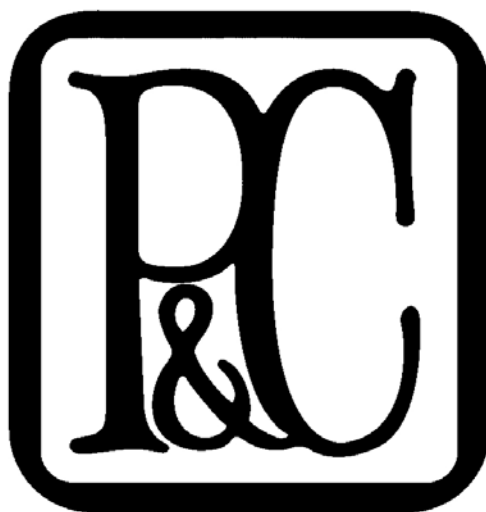


Federation of Parents and Parents and Citizens  
Association of New South Wales

**SUBMISSION**



**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**Inquiry into the Recruitment and Training of Teachers**

**February 2005**

## **PREAMBLE<sup>1</sup>**

The P&C Federation is committed to a free public education system which is open to all people, irrespective of culture, gender, academic ability and socio-economic class and empowers students to control their own lives and be contributing members of society.

This commitment is based on the belief that:

- All students have the capacity to learn;
- The Government has prime responsibility to provide an education system open to all, which is free and secular;
- Schools should be structured to meet the needs of individual students and should respect the knowledge those students bring to school and build on that knowledge to foster their understanding about the world.

Parents as partners in the education process, have a right and a responsibility to play an active role in the education of the children.

P&C Federation and its representatives share a responsibility of ensuring representative decision making for the benefit of all students.

## **P&C FEDERATION POLICY**

### 1A: THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION<sup>2</sup>

#### *PREMISE 1A*

Australia must place a higher priority on education than at present if desirable national and individual goals are to be achieved. It is the responsibility of State and Federal Governments to provide a system of free and secular government schools open to all in order to spread the benefits of education as widely as possible.

### 1A. THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION POLICY

1.1 A high national priority for education is important to promote:

- (a) equality of social, political and economic opportunity for all Australians;
- (b) personal development and the fulfilment of personal aspirations;
- (c) appreciation of the values and views of others;
- (d) the development and survival of Australia as a nation in terms of economic, technological, environmental, social and security considerations;
- (e) global understanding, proper participation in world citizenship and care of the global environment;
- (f) orderly resource development to achieve national goals and to help less well endowed nations; and
- (g) the removal of national, sectarian and racial intolerance, as well as intolerance on the grounds of sex, age and disability.

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction, Federation of P&C Associations of NSW, P&C Handbook 2003-4

<sup>2</sup> Section 1 Education and Human Rights, page , 2003-2004 Handbook for P&C Associations

## INTRODUCTION

The Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW congratulates the NSW Government Legislative Council's Standing Committee for Social Issues for the implementation of this inquiry. We also thank the Standing Committee for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry into Teacher Recruitment and Training.

The P&C Federation is a peak agency for parents and their children and young people in public schools in NSW and therefore shall direct its attentions to responding to the terms of reference in relation to the public education system in NSW and the obligation of the government of this state to children and parents in providing high quality teaching staff.

At the time of writing, a wide-ranging consultation is also being conducted by the NSW DET in relation to the future of public education and training in NSW (Excellence and Innovation, 2004-5). This Inquiry is therefore within the context of a suite of government interventions into the practices and policies of the Department of Education and Training, the Board of Studies and the Institute of Teachers.

The Department of Education as a bureaucracy has (recently) been restructured into a regional model (considered a work in progress), and has a new senior staff, including a Director-General with CEO experience outside the education industry. Whilst change can be unsettling, and can carry risk, a greater harm and a greater risk is likely to be incurred if an organisation fails to change in response to its business drivers. It is essential that the DET continuously renews itself with fresh thinking, stays in line with changes in the expectations of society; focuses on the needs of the child and adjusts to changes in the way children learn, think and behave; and fully takes advantage of the opportunities provided by new technologies and management approaches.

P&C Federation believes that the most important factor in providing education for our children is a well performing, motivated and enthusiastic teacher. DET's policy and management must be relentlessly directed towards this goal, employing best practice human resource and general management strategies and practices.

The move to decentralise after a decade of re-centralisation has implications and poses challenges for the delivery of and the implementation of statewide policy. However, P&C Federation supports the general thrust of this decision as it brings the opportunity for beneficial change.

Other activities within the DET are as follows:

- The Audit Office (DET) has made a number of recommendations regarding the use of Annual School Reports.
- Reviews of both Aboriginal Education and Special Education have been recently conducted and the review of the provision of Equity Programs within the Department of Education is underway. An internal review into the communication processes of the Department of Education is in progress.
- The recommendations from Professor Eltis "*Time To Teach Time To Learn*" has resulted in a review by the Board of Studies into the Mandatory Outcomes K-6, and by the Department of Education which has developed a consultation paper into the expectations of parents, teachers and schools regarding issues about Assessment practices and Reporting to Parents.
- The review into the establishment of the Institute of Teachers closes February 21, 2005. This may have implications for recruitment and staffing processes for the Department of Education and Training.

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- P&C Federation believes the task for respondents to these inquiries is to outline solutions that will make a positive impact at the level of students' experiences at school.

### ***Teachers and Teaching Environments***

The NSW Government's commitment to social justice is a key difference in the quality of educational provision between the competing public and private sectors. This is an important factor not explicitly acknowledged in the Inquiry document or the terms of reference.

Within the DET a number of programs (Priority Schools Funding Program – for example) reflect that commitment to special needs and/or disadvantaged students, their families and communities within the state.

P&C Federation understands that student educational outcomes are affected both by the opportunities to interact with material resources but more importantly, with well trained, (and continually resourced with professional development) quality teachers whose attitudes and values can accommodate this position.

P&C Federation believes that equal employment opportunity, values driven equity programs and a focus on social justice for the children and students of NSW should be expanded as the theoretical underpinnings required to effectively recruit, training and provide inservice training to teachers in this state.

### ***Teachers in our society***

Teachers are an intrinsic part of the wider community. Teachers need professional development that reflects the current societal needs of their students as well as to build and maintain links with the agencies around them to remain connected to their community and not become isolated. Teachers also need the social status which flows from their own capability and performance, and from working in a well-performing, socially beneficial industry.

The P&C Federation welcomes the establishment of the Institute of Teachers NSW recently and we are hopeful that this organisation will address the issues of professional development over time. Other management initiatives aimed at improving leadership, providing better support and encouragement in improving individual performance, and better support in services to schools should improve morale, performance and professional image.

The state government policy initiatives like *Families First*, emanating from other Ministries as part of the 'whole of government' approach will continue to affect, and hopefully enhance, the functioning of the NSW DET. Cross-agency work like the Anti-Obesity Summit, developing interagency links with Health and DOCS will improve service delivery for children and young people as the notion of '*Schools As Community Centres*' extends and the P&C Federation supports this.

The DET is increasing the number of pre-schools and P&C Federation applauds this move. Whilst this and the move to implement the *Class Size Reduction Initiative* will have significant immediate academic and social benefit to young children and ongoing educational benefit as they progress through school, the recruitment of teachers who can teach these younger groups, and work with their families and communities will be critical. There is currently a shortage of early childhood teachers in the children's services sector and this will further impact on both sectors in relation to recruitment and training as well.

Australia is a Multicultural country and NSW is a state of communities that are multi-lingual. In response, the DET has 'best practice' literacy professional development for teachers<sup>3</sup> in low socio-economic status (LSES) schools.

The DET has increased their focus on schools serving LSES communities, which often have compounding areas of disadvantage, and this will be important to maintain equitable access to educational provision for marginalized students. The skills and attitudes required to teach in these areas must also be addressed within any teacher pre-training programs. Indeed P&C Federation would support the provision of inservice training that addressed this special aspect of teaching.

Teachers must be pre-equipped, and therefore have an expectation of working in these areas at least at sometime during their careers.

## **P&C FEDERATION POLICY REGARDING TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING**

### 10 A: GENERAL<sup>4</sup>- PREMISE (a) AND PREMISE 10A (b)

(a) The key to the continuing development of our public system of education is well educated, highly motivated, professional teaching staff, supported by a sympathetic education authority and working in close co-operation with the community. Teachers should be endowed with the following personal attributes: the ability to communicate a high level of knowledge and skill; imagination, enthusiasm, tolerance, judgment, sensitivity, perception and individuality; and an awareness of people, of nature and of the dignity of those whom they teach. It is self-evident, therefore, that teachers should be qualified for the work they do and sufficient in number to allow for effective school organisation, including remedial teaching, student welfare programs, career advice and appropriate programs for students with special needs. The selection of potential teachers and their training and development are of the utmost importance since the quality of schools is positively and significantly related to the quality of their teachers.

(b) Children must be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own learning. If this educational philosophy is adopted it follows that urgent attention should be given to reducing class sizes, particularly in lower grades. The early years of schooling form an all-important period crucial for the development of a healthy self-concept and a pleasurable desire for learning. It is also a period when individual differences should be recognised and catered for as indeed they should be throughout the school years. Allowances should be made for smaller classes or individual attention when this is educationally advisable.

### 10 B: SELECTION OF STAFF- PREMISE

Parents, through their representatives, should play an active role in setting general staffing policies for their schools and in establishing the criteria for selecting staff to fill particular vacancies as they occur. Parent representatives should also play an appropriate role in selecting staff to fill such vacancies.

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<sup>3</sup> as evidenced by the independent reviews of the Early Literacy Initiative (ELI) have been an important part of the targeted equity programs supporting early childhood.

<sup>4</sup> Section 10, Staffing, Federation of P&C Associations of NSW, P&C Handbook 2003-4  
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### 10C: PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING- PREMISE 10C

Methods of recruitment, selection and education for the teaching profession should take into account personal qualities as well as academic ability. If the desired high professional standard is to be attained and maintained teaching must be given the highest possible recognition by governments and the community.

### D: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND INSERVICE TRAINING- PREMISE

Staff development programs should be an integral part of the life of every school. A mutually agreed form of performance appraisal should be instituted with the primary aim of determining needs for assistance in the professional growth of individual teachers.

### E. SECONDARY SCHOOL STAFFING PREMISE

Staffing of secondary schools should take into account the need to provide a wide range of subjects to allow adequate choice for students in all schools.

### F: CENTRAL SCHOOL STAFFING PREMISE

Special attention should be paid to Central Schools to eliminate the discriminatory formulae with regard to staffing, funding and ancillary services that presently exist. Central Schools should receive executive and support staff that would be appropriate if their primary and secondary components were separately administered.

### 10G: ANCILLARY STAFF - PREMISE

The DET must ensure that adequate ancillary staff are provided to schools, as well as support services, to enable teachers to perform their professional roles to the students' greatest benefit. Ancillary staff should be qualified and properly trained before appointment.

## 4. C: SCHOOL PRINCIPALS<sup>5</sup>

### PREMISE 4C

Parent bodies in schools have the right to participate in the choice of new Principals and to receive regular, detailed reports from Principals covering all aspects of the operation of their schools.

Principals play a vital role in schools and hence their leadership and management of the school is a key to the student and school outcomes.

Review and evaluation of the Principal's performance should be undertaken on a regular basis to maintain high levels of student and school performance.

## F: CENTRAL SCHOOL STAFFING<sup>6</sup>

### PREMISE 10F

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<sup>5</sup> Section 4 Parent and Community Involvement, page , 2003-2004 Handbook for P&C Associations

<sup>6</sup> Section 10 Staffing, page , 2003-2004 Handbook for P&C Associations

Special attention should be paid to Central Schools to eliminate the discriminatory formulae with regard to staffing, funding and ancillary services that presently exist. Central Schools should receive executive and support staff that would be appropriate if their primary and secondary components were separately administered.

***A full extract of the policies developed by the Federation of Parents and Citizens surrounding teacher training and recruitment can be viewed in any current issue of P&C Handbook. The current edition (2004-2005) has been provided as an attachment to this submission.***

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. The best means of attracting quality teachers to NSW Public Schools and meeting the needs of school communities**

The P&C Federation believes the key to the continuing development of our public system of education in NSW is well educated, highly motivated, professional teaching staff, supported by a sympathetic education authority and working in close co-operation with local communities.

Teachers must be endowed with the following personal attributes: the ability to communicate a high level of knowledge and skill; imagination, enthusiasm, tolerance, judgment, sensitivity, perception and individuality; and an awareness of people, of nature and of the dignity of those whom they teach. It is self-evident, therefore, that teachers should be qualified for the work they do and sufficient in number to allow for effective school organisation, including remedial teaching, student welfare programs, career advice and appropriate programs for students with special needs.

The selection of potential teachers and their training and development are of the utmost importance since the quality of our public schools significantly and positively relates to the quality of our teachers.

The P&C Federation believes that only through appropriate rewards can quality teachers be attracted and importantly, retained within the profession in public schools. These rewards include appropriate and comparable remuneration for quality teaching and professional standards and skills development throughout their career as a teacher. In addition, there must be an appropriate level of material resourcing to the public education system and continuing quality assurance and risk management systems being implemented by DET regarding their work conditions within the classroom.

The P&C Federation believes that the federal and state government's financial commitment to public education is a vital component in this area.

The P&C Federation supports smaller class sizes in K-1 and believes that the maximum number of students in all primary classes must be reduced further. However, the implementation of small class sizes programs in this state will also depend on the ability to recruit more teachers who will stay teaching in the public system.

In addition, specific schools must receive additional and/or appropriate specialised staffing due to the specific and additional needs of the children and communities in which they are teaching. These include:

- nominated disadvantaged schools,
- schools having a high level of students where English is not their first language,
- schools with a high number of students from low socio-economic status (LSES) background,

- schools with a high proportion of Indigenous students,
- schools with a high number of students with disabilities and/or disabling conditions or conditions that affect their ability to learn
- specialist schools

This is critical to the issue of recruitment and maintenance of our teacher body because unless we support teachers in real ways in their workplaces we will continue to lose them. One example is the additional support for teachers that must be provided through the extra provision of *Support Teacher Learning Difficulties (STLD)* teachers. The allocation formula must be based on *identified need* rather than whole school numbers, which is currently the case. Sometimes using a numerical formula for the allocation of teaching professionals to address equity issues simply doesn't work and this must be reviewed and addressed urgently.

Although not in line with P&C Federation policy, some school P&C's and school communities who can afford it pay for additional staff to help children with learning difficulties, and other specialised teaching in areas such as performing arts.

***The P&C federation understands that this may be a more challenging method of allocation for the DET however, the continuing haemorrhage of teachers away from the profession in public schools is far more so. Where's the context for this?????***

Additional provision of full-time school Counsellors must be provided to our high schools as a matter of urgency. Students in middle schooling must receive every support to remain engaged with their education and the support for them and their parents cannot and should not be left up to teachers alone. Class one primary schools or Central schools also need full-time Counsellors, for the same reasons. The provision of part-time counsellors to smaller schools is acceptable however *where a demonstrated need is identified* it must also be recognised by the DET and Counselling services provided to meet that demonstrated need. P&C Federation believes that training, additional financial incentives, and more career flexibility should be present in the system in order to fill the current vacancies in school Counsellor positions around the state.

Staffing supplements that allow for the delivery of specific curricula areas, including child sexual assault, drug abuse, AIDS education, need to be provided to facilitate the delivery of these specialised areas of content to smaller groups.

### ***Teachers with Overseas Qualifications***

In meeting the needs of students in this state we must remember that NSW is a Multicultural population. Recent census data<sup>7</sup> has revealed that in Sydney for example more than half the population has identified themselves as Non-English speaking background (NESB). One educational and recruitment area that the DET must address, is the dual challenge of providing Multicultural education in schools to meet the target group and the recruitment of overseas-qualified teachers.

A glance at Teach NSW in the DET website will reveal a current perceived problem with the way the DET views overseas qualified teachers – all the example 'stories' are teachers from English speaking countries.

NSW has listed the secondary teacher shortage with the federal Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA). Therefore Australian embassies around the world have listed secondary teachers

<sup>7</sup> ABS Census 2001 revealed 51% of the population OF Sydney identified themselves as NESB, that is at least one or both of their parents were from a country where English is not the first or main language or they themselves were born in such a country.



specifically from the drastically shortage 'faculty areas' of science, mathematics, physics and computer studies in such a way that overseas qualified teachers in these categories gain more points should they apply for an Australian Skilled Migrant Visa<sup>8</sup>. The Skilled Migrant Visa category has been steadily rising in numbers during the terms of the current federal government and a major requirement is that the applicant be assessed with an IELTS score of seven (7) in all areas of English language assessment (speaking, listening, reading and writing).

The DET must review the level of English (according to this exam), which they use for overseas trained teachers in order to deem eligible to apply for an employment number. The practice of only giving them 'casual' numbers is also a terrible disincentive and disadvantage to a new migrant with dependants, as is often the case.

The P&C Federation understands that both English as a second language (ESL) and Languages other than English (LOTE) teachers are in severely short supply. It is absolutely critical that ESL teachers be actual ESL teachers and not teachers with 'left over' periods in their timetables.

Yet the DET appears to simply not able to recruit these teachers, who are evident in the community (many work for ACL, Job Network and the like as ESL teachers-even though they are actually secondary school teachers). We just cannot support the exclusion of these teachers as suitable recruits. Surely the DET must be able to provide a training program that includes cross cultural communication, discipline and welfare training as well as English to the level they (might) need to induct these teachers ASAP.

Ironically, many are located in the very areas that are currently experiencing the most severe shortages (South West and Western Sydney) or would gladly relocate to a non-coastal rural area because they value the lifestyle which is present in both.

The P&C Federation knows that the recently cancelled the SMPO program will place further deterrents and hardship on these skilled professionals whom Australian embassies overseas have opened their doors to, but for whom teaching in NSW public education has closed upon arrival.

### ***Information and Communication Learning (ICL)***

P&C Federation believes that additional support must be provided for teachers to support them with ICL. This can be achieved through the employment of non-teaching staff in these areas such as professional and commercial standard, IT support technicians in schools, rather than burdening teachers<sup>9</sup>.

With the current expansion of information and the increase access to information it is essential that teachers are provided with the skills that allow them to discern the quality, potential application and relevance of gathered information specific to the nominated topic. Teaching, while still focused on the delivery of content based curricula, needs to include these important skills as part of their own professional development provision.

### ***Hard to staff schools***

With specific reference to *hard to staff schools*, programs designed to provide these schools with additional resources and meet the needs of these communities should be continued and further developed. Examples include the PSFP, PAS, Schools as Community Centres and CAP. Currently these programs allow a level of classroom and school resourcing that assists teachers in meeting community expectations of their performance.

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<sup>8</sup> This visa type has specific criteria including at least 5 years experience in the profession, making them excellent, free to the DET trained and experienced teachers.

<sup>9</sup> Whilst it might be seen as a professional development opportunity to learn more about IT, for teachers, this must not be in order for them to fix the schools IT support problems.

Teacher training must include community engagement, involvement and development as more emphasis is placed on teachers' role in the community. Teachers should be helping students to succeed and this requires social and pastoral components in their skills, attitudes and knowledge.

Programs that directly assist teachers in integrating into a community are also essential. The provision of teacher housing offered in rural and regional areas being one area where further enhancement would assist teaching staff. It is our understanding that a review of teacher housing provision has been recently released.

Financial Incentives and other human resource programs for teachers willing to teach in isolated and rural settings must be established by DET and funding supported by NSW Treasury as a matter of urgency. Human resource strategies should encompass flexibility so that teachers become comfortable with moving between schools at regular intervals. There are perhaps many teachers who would consider a stint in a difficult school if departmental rules on transfers were more flexible.

New teachers entering the system require additional assistance, especially in 'hard to staff' schools. Teacher mentoring should be expanded with specific consideration given to the quality of mentors based on their enthusiasm for the profession. A dissatisfied teacher mentor may prove more damaging than the provision of no support. The current planned expansion of teacher mentoring will go some way in providing this additional support.

The P&C Federation supports encouraging children to move towards accepting more responsibility for their own learning. In accepting this responsibility it is essential that individual differences are recognised and catered for. In moving towards individualised learning programs the changes in the position description of teachers must be recognised and taken into account. Reductions in class sizes where individual attention can be increased and other initiatives may be required.

### ***Recognising and Retaining Effective Teachers***

The P&C Federation believes there are serious problems with the ways in which teachers are recognised which impacts upon the ability of the DET to retain them. We have addressed in *Terms of Reference 1*, what we believe to be the attributes, knowledge and skills of quality teachers, however, if the career pathway is not also built in ways that properly recognise quality teachers, allowing them to move up in their careers, then quality teachers simply move to another system or into another career that does.

The P&C Federation believes that when assessing teachers for promotion, greater emphasis should be placed on recognition of their enthusiasm, in the interest they display in their students and in the educational outcomes achieved, not simply how long they have been teaching.

The impact of the leadership of the school executive should not be underestimated in securing the very best out of a school staff. Enthusiasm for leadership in addition to general ability should not be underestimated in the promotion of school leaders. Conversely, positions such as head teachers must not be filled by teachers who lack the leadership and management qualities, attributes and knowledge and skills and performance reviews are absolutely essential to this process.

The P&C Federation believes that while opportunities should be given to future leaders in order to develop and enhance these skills we oppose the transfer of administrative responsibility and authority to teachers other than Principals. However, we do support a re-examination of management and human resource knowledge, skills and

ancillary staff being provided to principals, who are essentially managing a specialised, professional, diverse and very busy staff, in most middle sized (primary, secondary or central) schools.

Principals must receive professional development and Human Resources (HR) training to assist them in meeting their accountabilities. Such training should include, in addition to administrative training, the efficient and effective use of specialised, skilled staff to ensure that the learning and professional development needs of their teachers are appropriately utilised and enhanced.

The Principal has the responsibility to ensure the ongoing delivery of professional development and training opportunities and that all members of the school staff (including both teaching and ancillary staff) utilize them. These opportunities should be designed to meet both the needs of the school and the ongoing developmental, and career development needs of individual staff members.

The DET must also develop a process of succession planning to ensure that appropriate training and leadership opportunities are provided to identified individuals. This process should be the subject of position reviews from head teachers and principal positions to senior management levels of the Department. It should be a responsibility of each member of staff to ensure appropriate succession planning is adopted and implemented, rather than recruiting head teachers and principals 'on the run' so to speak.

The Department should recognise leadership skills provided by employment external to the Department. This is essential given the increasing number of professionals entering the teaching profession from other industries. These individuals bring with them a range of diverse experiences that have the potential to enhance the delivery of public education.

As with new teachers, newly appointed faculty and specialist head teachers and principals require additional professional development and support as they start to fulfil these positions. It is the responsibility of the DET as their employer, to ensure that quality support is provided on an ongoing basis.

Essentially, these positions must be filled by teachers who can demonstrate the appropriate skills, attitudes and knowledge and that they are financially remunerated appropriately for the increased management and leadership development and provision for these roles.

The P&C Federation recommends the immediate review of the current 'points system' for teachers to transfer and sometimes take up appointments into teaching and head teacher roles.

**2. The effectiveness and efficiency of current means of recruiting teachers to NSW Public Schools, including**

**(a) recent graduates**

**(b) career change teachers**

**(a) Recent Graduates**

Some argue that the image of teaching as a profession has suffered in the market place.

Some parents report that they and their children do not consider teaching as it compares unfavourably with other career opportunities in terms of status, career flexibility, lack of well paid promotional positions, lack of recognition for performance, negative feedback from burnt out teachers, shabby staffrooms, lack of equipment such as lap-tops, and negative images portrayed of teachers during salary disputes. There is also the issue of greater competition for graduates, particularly amongst women, compared to previous times.

However, teaching is an inherently satisfying career for those with the right aptitude, and there is a good story to tell. Just as there is a need for change in meeting the expectations of society in teaching the children, there is also a need for improving the performance of the service providers as employers-of-choice of teachers and other staff.

This requires modernising the DET so that it is seen as an employer-of-choice by graduates.

Changes required include:

- Improved leadership and management strategies within the senior echelons of the DET, and within the schools
- Better relationships between the DET and the union
- Better university courses which equip graduates to interest and engage the students, which is the core business of a teacher
- More interesting courses and teaching methods in schools, which support individualised learning, more teamwork amongst students, and greater engagement, thus making the job of teaching more interesting and more satisfying
- More emphasis on extra –curricula activities, such as sport and dance, which can improve school spirit, and motivate those students who are not interested in academic subjects
- Better role modelling by teachers within schools, which is the perfect recruiting opportunity
- Better professional development and practical mentoring support

### **(b) Career Change teachers**

The P&C Federation supports a level of flexibility in school staffing relating to job sharing and the recruitment of mature professionals into teaching.

Job sharing practice would assist in attracting trained teachers back into the system where these individuals may not wish to engage in full time employment. Given that there would be a direct impact on classroom practices, it is essential that:

- parents are consulted at the inception of the process;
- limits be placed on teachers “sharing” a single class;
- all teachers must be available for parent interviews; and
- that principals consider the past learning experiences of the children before determining which class is assigned job-share teachers.

It is also essential that a high level of coordination between *job-share* teachers be supported by a system that encourages this practice to ensure a seamless delivery of curriculum.

Many professionals are looking for career change in their mature years for a range of reasons. These people have the capacity to bring management and work skills from another industry and have the capacity to enrich the skills mix at a school. There are too many barriers to entry for what could be a valuable resource.

### ***Recruitment of Leaders who can Manage Recruitment***

In order for the Department to better implement succession planning, they must also address their own approach to senior management recruitment. The current Director General is from outside the teaching profession, and there are encouraging signs that external recruitment of senior staff is increasing.

## **3. Differences and similarities between primary and secondary school recruitment needs**

### ***Primary Teachers, Secondary Teachers and the Middle Years***

Teachers must be recruited who are flexible in the provision of their teaching skills, subject (s) knowledge, understanding of their students and communities and also provided with the structures to allow that flexibility to flourish. There is also a place for specialist teachers eg people who can impart a real love of maths, physics, music, etc), particularly those who can work in a team environment with those teachers with greater generalist and/or pastoral skills.

Much has been said over many years regarding middle schooling and the P&C Federation has participated in advisory /reference groups over those years (see attached draft report from the Middle Schools Reference Group for DET, 1997)

In discussing the differences and similarities of primary and secondary schools' recruitment needs, we must consider where teachers can be most flexible in working across the two locals. This is the middle years of school<sup>10</sup>. There are a number of models regarding middle schooling and the structures of our schools. The P&C Federation believes that a wider variety of these models must be presented to schools (with guaranteed funds and teachers to match), so that the structure serves the students in the school, not the other way around. The follow examples are some that may assist students during the middle years of schooling where P&C Federation is aware the greatest risk of disengagement<sup>11</sup> by students exists. Advantageously it is also where the recruitment of primary and secondary teachers converge.

- Integrated curriculum<sup>12</sup>
- Variety in the models of Primary school class organisation<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Middle years referrers to years 5,6, 7,8 and possibly 9

<sup>11</sup> A term used to describe student's who lose connection with the education experience and process.

<sup>12</sup> Consideration should be given to integrating the curriculum across stages 3 & 4. The aim being to provide a balance of negotiated and mandated curricula. Thus helping to make learning relevant to students' personal and global needs. There needs to be a strong focus on language and literacy for learning and unpacking meaning from multiple literacies.

<sup>13</sup> Known as 'looping', that is keeping the same class and teacher together for more than one year. Also be considered "stage based teaching" and could also include a variation of team teaching where teachers 'swap' classes for particular areas of KLAs.

- Variety in the models of Secondary school organisation<sup>14</sup>
- DET provision of Pastoral care<sup>15</sup>
- Develop philosophy courses designed specifically for years 5 – 8<sup>16</sup>

### ***Across both primary and secondary***

The DET must recruit teachers who can provide an educational experience that acknowledges students need to understand not only what they are learning, but why. What they study must be relevant to them and challenging. Students need to be able to see for themselves their (concrete) successes.

Teachers must be able to facilitate Curriculum Work Education, Year 7 to 10<sup>17</sup> Work education syllabus structure would be an example of how to structure 'academic' learning while learning about the work place. The Vocational learning programme of the DET is another 'passport' to integrated curriculum.

Teachers in both primary and secondary schools must develop learning programs in ICT not just adapted for ICT, as the students currently in 'middle years' schooling have never lived in a world without ICT.

Teachers need a workplace where they can develop more understanding about visual learning. "Comic book Shakespeare", "Tabloid Ancient Myths" as middle schooling students are often visual learners in style<sup>18</sup>.

They must be able to structure teaching and learning scaffolding that gradually encourages students to be empowered to take responsibility for their own learning.

We need Primary school teachers with experience and training of Integrated curriculum (no separation between individual subjects), which is where the closest model currently exists, to work in the middle schooling sector as P&C Federation believes this is a better model for middle schooling.

NSW needs teachers who can deliver a vertical curriculum (developmental levels of learning) covering years 5 to 8 and stages 3 and 4. We need teachers who can teach across the middle years. P&C Federation is concerned that it sometimes seems that the only reason for separating the curriculum into subject areas is to encourage students to become teachers of the subject and continue the recursion.

The DET needs teachers who can teach content that is relevant to the population, especially in the middle years and that requires teachers who have the time and attitude to work in community development projects with other relevant agencies (such as youth health services for example) and industry bodies.

Any model that creates challenges in Year 6, which is often treated as a time for 'treading water' or simply a preparation for secondary school, which it is neither. Year 6 could possibly be one of the most dangerous times for disengagement from school.

Circular model of teaching, this is a whole school approach, where teaching staff deliver their specialist area and children are kept in the same class, in the same room, but the teachers move around.

<sup>14</sup> Team teaching and/or reducing the number of teachers students have to relate to (the Federation recognised many schools have now moved to a four period day which is an appropriate response to this).

Prioritising teachers for years 7 and 8 so that stronger relationships are formed with individual teachers diminishing further disengagement in Years 7 and 8.

<sup>15</sup> The DET must not simply provide for welfare and discipline but active pastoral care. Students in this developmental stage need to be recognised as individuals. US research tracked how often a student connected with an adult during school time other than 'class talk'. When the number of 'connections' for students was found to be extremely low (once every eight weeks) a strategy was put in place that encouraged teachers and other adults on campus to initiate a connection, as simple as saying 'good morning' or some such nicety. From such simple beginnings came valuable two way communication and students who felt valued as individuals.

<sup>16</sup> but perhaps a more realistic approach is giving weight to this within the Civics and citizenship syllabus.

<sup>17</sup> Board of Studies 2004

<sup>18</sup> "Fractals", the level creator behind the game "Doom" (visual maths) is another example of visual learning across the curriculum

Consider the current observations to tertiary education, where it appears that there is a burgeoning increase in the number of students doing combined degrees. The public education system and its structures need to embrace a much more flexible range of models, in which teachers can be employed.

A system change such as we are suggesting is possible but can only be embraced by teachers who are able to evaluate and conduct research on what is currently out there and working for middle school aged children.

### ***Implications for teacher education and employment conditions for Middle Years Teachers***

The recruitment and retention of quality teachers, who are able and willing to develop in their chosen field, are essential in order for any one of these options are to be successful, let alone a complete reframing of primary and secondary school with a priority of middle school as is suggested here.

'Research has consistently shown that of all the things that schools can control, it is the quality of the pedagogy that most directly and most powerfully affects the quality of learning outcomes that students demonstrate'<sup>19</sup>.

P&C Federation suggests the term 'specialised' rather than 'specialist' teachers the difference being that current and soon to graduate teachers could then take on these concepts and suggestions with further inservice training after their initial employment.

We believe that in the longer term, teacher-training institutions must create courses for Middle Years Teachers. Further, we believe it essential that such courses include a strong literacy and numeracy teaching and learning pedagogy component along with knowledge of the social and emotional development of young adolescents.

In the shorter term we believe that in servicing for teachers to acquire 'missing' skills to work with middle school students must be provided and taken up by the teaching profession.

Additionally, there are already a number of points in 'agreement' for teachers to work across the artificial divide. Employment conditions would need further negotiation but provisions are already in the 'agreement' for teachers to work in both halves of the system<sup>20</sup>.

### ***Changing to a Systemic Approach for Recruitment***

The P&C Federation advocates a *systemic approach* to the question of recruitment of teachers. The DET must look at the words we use to describe the system. P&C Federation believes we must find another term for 'feeder school' as it just reinforces the idea that nothing has happened before the student gets to secondary school. One suggestion is developing a system of 'partnered schools'.

Secondary schools need to consciously recognise and properly articulate that students starting in year seven have a wide range of skills and an accumulation of knowledge that needs to be built on.

P&C Federation supports the recruitment of teachers in both primary and secondary who have a focus on literacy and numeracy. Teachers in primary schools need to have more resources in the upper primary years or the first two years of middle school, to address the needs of students who have not acquired appropriate levels of numeracy and literacy. Better still, these deficiencies should be more comprehensively addressed at younger ages.

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<sup>19</sup> AECG & DET, The Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education 2004

<sup>20</sup> see Appendix attachment which clearly identifies teachers being able under their employment agreement to teach up and down to cover the middle years question

These resources include, Human resources, such as more and better-trained staff (school counsellors with no vacant positions for months on end) and front desk ancillary staff with higher level of skills in cross cultural communication and relationship management skills) who will support teachers. Teachers also need progressive program based resources (programs available to teachers to support them in the middle years literacy) and this obviously requires financial resources.

P&C Federation believes that a structured systemic cooperation between the receiving secondary school partner and the releasing primary school partner with continuity of resources/measures/programs to maximise the optimal outcome for the student is urgently need in our schools (Student centred/ reconceptualise the idea of ‘school”).

The P&C Federation recognises that there are a number of excellent transition programs in operation throughout the state, however there is no evaluation of what makes them effective, and their transportability. We don’t know what makes a good teacher training course for this area at the present moment, and we should.

P&C Federation believes that more resources in secondary schools specifically to assist identified (target) students who are still in need of scaffolded and/or explicit teaching in order to gain satisfactory levels of literacy and numeracy. This is urgent in order to stem to flow of students from the public system.

### ***Teachers in Schools who can Work with Parents***

We believe that a systemic commitment to making sure that parents are fully informed and aware of the process of transition. ‘If you are not going to ask us for it we are not going to give it to you’ has to change in relation to information provision to parents to abate the disconnection. Teachers must be able and willing to deal with this level of interaction and must not be over burdened with heavy class loads, large class sizes and low and/or incompetent levels of professional management and continued inservice training from DET.

With regard to the exchange of Information, systemic flexibility to streamline and smooth the exchange of important and pertinent information between the releasing and receiving partner schools is essential. This must be ongoing where necessary (*mobility – teachers and families- can’t run kindergarten orientation every second year- There is no Christmas Miracle.*)<sup>21</sup>

A systemic, not individual school only approach to support of parents’ involvement at secondary level<sup>22</sup> means teachers who can and are willing, unencumbered by artificial barriers that have long passed their ‘use by date’.

*Support for parents* who may be having difficulty in helping students in the transition and throughout secondary school. There is sufficient anecdotal and academic evidence to suggest that children whose parents are from an NESB or low socio-economic background, overall do less well in school. The DET has carriage of TAFE as well as public schools, P&C Federation suggests TAFE outreach courses for parents such as ‘how to help your child at school’ might be linked with Community Liaison Officers. Parents are often disempowered themselves to help their children, and thus generational low academic achievement amongst these groups has occurred<sup>23</sup>.

The P&C Federation recommends that the DET and the system known as public education, sees itself a whole, continuum from preschool to year 12 not as separate Departments. Each part may be discrete but the entirety is more important.

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<sup>21</sup> Professor Toni Cross, 1995 Newcastle University

<sup>22</sup> research indicates parental involvement improves outcomes, does not differentiate between primary and secondary school

<sup>23</sup> Research- students whose parents have a higher level of education do better. How do we create an equitable environment to achieve parallel outcomes for those students whose parents do not have this level of education?



We also believe that the DET refer to its own draft documents and strategise the notion to 'Reconceptualise the notion of *school*', from a properties and educational perspective (see the attached appendix A - School organisation Strategies for State Office)

We also recommend that the DET identify the middle years of schooling as a system priority<sup>24</sup> with reference to the 1997 report, and bring together the information from all that has been happening with schools taking the middle school approach.

P&C Federation also recommends that DET recognise in action that, middle schooling initiatives, programs and strategies must be driven from the primary school perspective, as an integral developing part of the continuum. That rather than the focus being on years 7 and 8, middle years school conceptualisation needs to be driven from year 5. And also that the DET acknowledge in practice the indications that disengagement has been demonstrated as beginning for some students as early as year 4. The DET must assist primary schools to make a greater effort to prevent this disengagement, not simply try to get students to re engage in high school.

Teachers who are recruited must lead this change and change management is another area of training that teachers must have in order to cope with the future of public education as we move forward into the next decades.

2.

- (c) recent graduates
- (d) career change teachers

#### 4. Existing initiatives and programs of the Department of Education and Training, including

- (a) Teach NSW
- (b) Scholarships for undergraduates
- (c) Accelerated training courses

#### **(a) Teach NSW (b) Scholarships for undergraduates and (c) Accelerated training courses**

*Teach NSW* must be equipped, as a matter of urgency with the authority and resources it needs to order to raise the profile and standing in the community of teaching as a high profession, and develop pathways that can recruit from a variety of sources including:

- Career Change Professionals from many fields still young enough to change fields, but who can build a log term career in teaching and
- Career Change professionals old enough to bring the depth of maturity and understanding of industry and life experience to the experiences of students (there are large group of mature workers who remain long term unemployed or under employed) and
- Teachers who have been initially trained in countries whose first or major language is not English

<sup>24</sup> There is no credible data regarding middle schooling for example  
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The DET in conjunction with university faculties must discover *how to assess*, what makes a good teacher. P&C Federation believes a process derived for selection that looks at other selection criteria such as his or her psychological aptitude, attitude and skills to working with diverse and often challenging groups of children for example.

When panels are assessing undergraduates for entrance to university based education degrees, scholarships and accelerated training courses, the potential of undergraduates who express an interest in becoming teachers is not always evident by their aptitude to their subject area and high UAI scores.

Overseas-qualified teachers must be offered funded, Accelerated training courses to assist them to enter the profession here in NSW, without reducing the quality of teaching in our schools. Whilst we accepted that high levels of English proficiency are very important, we would highlight that many, many overseas-qualified teachers are entering Australia on Skilled Migrant Visa<sup>25</sup>. It is incumbent on the NSW government, through the DET to engage with these professionals and assess their requirements and then provide it. Many experienced teachers with similar ethnic backgrounds to the students in so called 'difficult areas' also live with them, in the same communities. The cultural and linguistic enrichment for students which is currently being squandered by the DET is a tragedy for students and an unnecessary and ridiculous hardship for the teachers, who after all, have heard and responded to our call for more teachers. Many are also highly interested in living in rural non-urban and non-coastal locations (for lifestyle reasons) and/or live in Western and South Western Sydney.

The P&C Federation believes that someone must address the inconsistencies across university courses that train our teachers. Teaching and learning practice must be consistent and reflect the needs of the children and communities in which they will find themselves located upon graduation. Most importantly, they must equip the teacher to engage the children in learning.

P&C Federation believes the universities should be targeting *career change teachers and mature professionals* who may wish to move into teaching. We know that some work in this area is already being done but much more work is needed, urgently.

P&C Federation understands many teachers have left the profession and believes the state government must make re-entering teaching easier and more rewarding both financially and in their future employment with DET.

If the state government wishes to get serious about retaining our graduate teachers, then the DET must look to the global teacher market for indicators of remuneration, professional in-service development and workplace performance standards or we *will* continue to loose our newly qualified and quality teachers overseas, rather than retaining them to teach in NSW schools. .

## **5. The role of the NSW Institute of Teachers and its accreditation and endorsement requirements**

Institute of Teachers must perform the important role of teacher accreditation and not just a 'club' style system that does not assess the quality of teachers, monitor their professional needs for training inservice and link them with registered training organisations that are also effective trainers.

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<sup>25</sup> DIMIA Visa category, secondary teachers are listed on the list of 'shortage' professions in embassies overseas  
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The Institute must not succeed in adding bureaucratic layers to the life of a teacher, at the expense of the time and energy they have for their core business of entertaining the children in the classroom, instilling a love of learning, and providing them with sustainable learning skills.

Teaching pedagogy must not only move with the changes in theory in education internationally, but more importantly, must support the changing needs and expectations of students and society.

In-service training courses should be available to enable Principals, teachers, support staff and parents to keep in touch with modern concepts of education and community needs.

Training courses should be readily available for teachers interested in teaching migrants, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with physical or intellectual disabilities, and in all areas where specialised training is required. However, these in-service and specialised training courses should be accepted as a continuation of normal, professional development training and not something only specialist teachers do.

The P&C Federation is concerned that no training is provided for secondary teachers to teach in other subject areas than their original. High quality in service training courses (with both on line and face to face options) in subjects with a current shortage of teachers should be offered to qualified teachers/graduates to ensure quality instruction in a wide range of subjects in secondary schools. This will also provide our quality teachers with more opportunities to stay in the public education system due to greater flexibility and command of their provision in the system.

The P&C Federation believes that the school executive, including the Principal must focus and commitment to improving the teaching practices of ineffective teachers. As the educational leaders of the schools, principal has the responsibility to ensure that all teachers are effective. This responsibility must be reinforced with Principals with the aim of reducing the tolerance that currently exists towards ineffective teachers. Where efforts to improve an ineffective teacher's performance fail then procedures to remove the teacher from the profession should be instigated.

The Institute should provide professional development training courses for principals as many struggle to execute their duty in this area and obviously need support. There appears to be a lack of human resources management knowledge, tools and practices in schools at present to support principals.

## **6. The role, distribution and effectiveness of university pre-service teacher education**

The P&C Federation believes that teacher education institutions must retain full independence and should be linked with multi-discipline institutions; they must establish a closer liaison with school programs to ensure a more pragmatic response to the needs of children, their families and communities in NSW.

While many training institutions offer full time training in teaching there is little provision on a part time basis. The P&C Federation would welcome the introduction of part time teacher training as a further means of attracting experienced individuals employed in other industries and/or professions (as is the case with adult education).

Distance education with practice teaching components could also be used to assist undergraduates who are located in rural or non urban cities or where universities are located.

*Cadetships* should be made available for teacher trainees showing promise in their final year of training so as to attract graduates to the NSW Department of Education and Training teaching service. Where targeted graduates are identified from teacher training institutions every effort must be made to secure these individuals as early as possible.

The number of students admitted to tertiary programs should be such as to permit the training of sufficient personnel in short-supply areas (e.g. therapists, counsellors and teachers in some specific and specialised subject areas). To fill all positions in 'hard to staff' districts, recruitment drives and tailored approaches in the areas would be a useful strategy, raising the profile of teaching and building further capacity into the community.

*Special consideration* must be given to recruiting bilingual/bicultural and Aboriginal students to teacher training. Recruitment functions such as Teach NSW, must consider targeting individuals who might be slightly older, or advanced in another occupation, rather than trying to recruit them straight from HSC. Some of individuals may hold attitudes regarding their responsibilities to family (and family wellbeing, settlement, welfare etc) as premier. Their ability to commence and finish teacher training may be impacted by this by requiring either a greater maturity or later entry to tertiary studies or both and this must not be forgotten.

Secondary student teachers are currently not provided with practice teaching components of their courses until late in their training course. This is completely inappropriate because these undergraduate teachers who upon finishing university are being set up to fail or burnout or both.

In all instances, *Internships* should exist to give first-year teachers lighter teaching loads allowing them to receive on-the-job assistance and to continue their relationship with their training institution as part of their certification. A young burnt out teacher is not only a loss to the DET of one teacher, but will provide negative information to the community about the experience of teaching in our schools. The DET must address this issue urgently as the average age of teachers remains high, and has done so for many decades in NSW. We have anecdotal evidence from parents that many areas of NSW have barely ever seen a younger teacher. The DET's Human Resource policies tend to encourage teachers to aim for a "good" school and "retire" there for the last 20 years or so of their career – hardly a situation designed to stimulate and motivate a teacher.

All teacher training should include components that relate to dealing with behaviour problems; the value of parent participation; Aboriginal and Multicultural education; aspects relating to child abuse and student welfare; physical education (including level 1 accreditation in at least one sport); first aid and swimming safety training; and a conflict resolution and cross cultural communication skills development.

The P&C Federation believes that all teachers must receive training in the accepted methods of teaching literacy. Such training should extend to the recognition of literacy giftedness, addressing literacy difficulties and dealing with literacy disabilities (including the variety of disabilities and impairments that may effect the development of literacy including young people reaching adult literacy).

## 7. Any other matter arising from these terms of reference

### *Flexibly work practices*

The P&C Federation also supports a level of flexibility in school staffing relating to job sharing. This practice would assist in attracting trained teachers back into the system where these individuals may not wish to engage in full time employment. Given that there would be a direct impact on classroom practices, it is essential that:

- parents are consulted at the inception of the process;
- there be no more than two teachers “sharing” a single class;
- both teachers must be available for parent interviews; and
- that principals consider the past learning experiences of the children before determining which class is assigned job-share teachers.

It would also be essential that a high level of coordination between *job-share* teachers to ensure a seamless delivery of curriculum.

The P&C Federation believes that schools, with strong input from a duly elected parent body nominee, should have the ability to determine both the general and specific criteria for school appointments. These criteria should be established within a framework of the schools educational needs, goals and philosophies.

The P&C Federation believes that staffing strategies and practices must ensure that all government schools are adequately and equitably staffed. Current strategies have allowed the development of “hard to staff” schools, and until this situation is properly redressed, there will always be a tension between allowing schools to make their own selections and the aim of broad equity. The P&C Federation believes that a positive strategy aimed at eliminating “hard to staff” situations coupled with initiatives to improve not just the quality but the performance of teachers, is a better way forward. This is preferable to the pessimistic concept sometimes articulated of sharing the poor teachers around equitably.

The P&C Federation is aware that the selection of staff is an emerging issue for specialist schools. The P&C Federation believes that each child has the right to be taught by a teacher who can meet their needs. This is true for the range of students, including the disabled, socially disadvantaged, those gifted and talented in specific areas, and the vast mass of children in the middle. Specialist and specialised schools bring with them the opportunity to attract people with special talents to the mix of teachers and school staff in public schools. Again, DET should be looking at working on the positives, rather than following any notion that equity means dull uniformity instead of allowing each child to reach their maximum potential.

Children must be encouraged to move towards responsibility for their own learning. In accepting this responsibility, it is essential that individual differences are recognised and catered for. If there is an increased work load for teachers and other staff in moving towards individualised learning programs, this must be recognised and compensated by reductions in class sizes, or other strategies which allow the needs of the individuals to be met.