



RUNNING ON GOOD WILL SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**CPSU/CSA REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OCTOBER 2018**





Introduction

"If these ladies ever decided to stop giving so much good will, our entire education system would collapse."
- Manager of Corporate Services, Department of Education. September 2018.

The Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association (CPSU/CSA) is a Western Australian (WA) Union that represents 630 occupations in over 130 public sector agencies. We make work life better for over 40,000 people; our members make WA work.

The CPSU/CSA has drafted this report based on a four-month period of data-gathering and face to face conversations with support staff in Western Australian public primary and secondary schools, employed by Department of Education (DoE). Feedback was sought from Managers of Corporate Services (MCS, previously titled as Business Managers and Registrars), School Officers, Library Officers, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support staff and Lab Technicians. The purpose of the report is to inform the Department on the current range of issues affecting schools' operations following resource cuts at Central Office, as well as inform reform to develop a more effective and professional schooling system which has the education of Western Australian students as its focus.

METHODOLOGY

From the 28 May to 21 September, the CPSU/CSA enlisted the assistance of four CPSU/CSA delegates who each had an extensive career history with the Western Australian public school system.

These delegates included a Manager of Corporate Services, two Library Officers and an Aboriginal Education Coordinator. During this four-month period, the delegates visited 175 schools and conducted one-on-one conversations with 825 public servants serving in school support roles.

- 326 School Officers
- 219 Managers of Corporate Services
- 130 Library Officers
- 59 Miscellaneous Staff (eg casual and relief staff)
- 56 Laboratory Techs
- 36 ICT Staff

Due to the busy nature of the school environment and the variation in demand, some conversations were lengthy and detailed while other conversations and question and answer sessions were brief. CPSU/CSA Delegates engaged in inquiring conversations to gather as much information as possible about current issues of concern within support services. Queries were kept neutral and conversational, to allow staff to volunteer information, rather than lead the conversation to a particular topic.

In addition, all staff were asked to rate their workload between 1 and 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the maximum limit. 672 staff out of 825 responded with a valid numeral. The total overall average score was 7.97 out of 10. The results were as follows:

- 19 ICT workers – average score of 8.40
- 190 MCS – 8.24
- 24 Lab Techs – 7.96
- 269 School Officers – 7.86
- 122 Library Officers – 7.64
- 52 Miscellaneous Staff – 8.13



Section 1

Breakdown of results

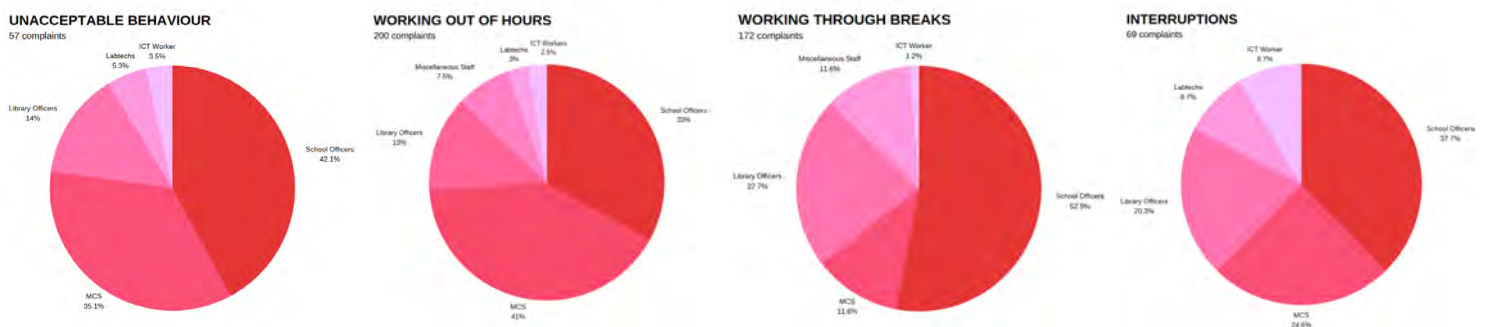
From the 825 individual conversations conducted, the following major issues were identified:

- 396 (48%) school support staff raised unacceptable workload
- 203 (24%) staff raised Duty of Care
- 200 (24%) staff raised concerns around working during out-of-work hours.
- 172 (20%) staff raised concerns around working through allotted breaks.
- 101 (12%) staff raised problems with Inadequacy of the Professional Development system.
- 74 (8%) staff raised issues with a lack of support from Central Office.
- 69 (8%) staff raised issues around interruptions affecting productivity.
- 69 (8%) staff raised issues around RAMS being no longer fit-for-purpose.
- 57 (6%) staff raised issues around unacceptable behaviour and violence in the workplace.
- 38 (4%) staff raised problems with the One Line Budget

It is worth noting that for resourcing and workload issues discussed, often these issues were closely related to the one-line budget — although the staff member never explicitly mentioned budget. Some examples of these included the problems with principal staff profiling, widespread lack of access to TOIL, a lack of backfill and inadequate hours for the number of duties.

Another factor to be considered is whether the respondents felt safe enough to relay honest accounts of the situation given the lack of privacy of the conversations. As visits occurred within the workplace and there were no provisions for private spaces for conversation, there is the possibility that many staff may have self-censored their responses if they felt that honest reports may have adversely impacted relationships within their workplace.

For the figures below, miscellaneous staff include all positions not covered by one of the other five support categories (MCS, School Officer, Library Officer, Lab Technician [LabTech], ICT worker).





Breakdown of Results

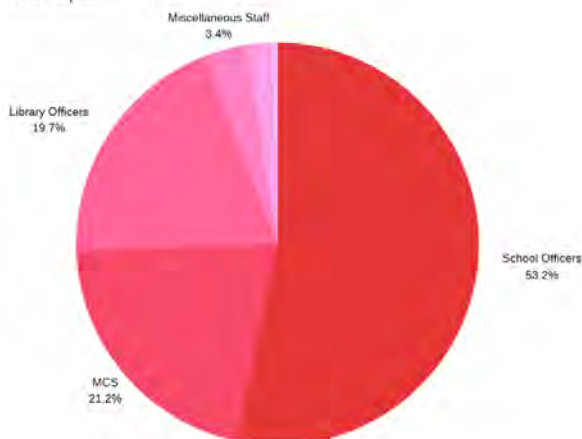
1.1 SHARED ISSUES ACROSS ALL SUPPORT STAFF

During the review, some issues were raised repeatedly by all professional groups within support staff classifications. These comments include:

- Principals do not have the industrial relations, human resources, financial management and general management training or knowledge to undertake staff profiling successfully or adequately support MCS or ICT staff across schools
- Poor standards of enforcing occupational safety and health (OSH) rights for school support staff and students
- A normalised culture of working after hours (including school holidays) and throughout breaks with no access to TOIL or overtime
- Incorrect, falsified or incomplete records of staff hours worked
- Lack of internal communication/consultation from DoE to school support staff around change management
- Lack of protection/regulations in Independent Public Schools (IPS) to prevent nepotism in hiring
- Existing policies are not enforced and do not reflect operational reality
- Lack of professional development opportunities for school support staff
- A structural reliance on good will of staff and misuse of the perception of staff that they must fulfil other duties as required
- Widespread feelings of dissatisfaction and feelings of powerlessness in ability to set aside 'quality time for the kids'
- Perception of classification snobbery in schools with support staff treated as 'second class citizens'
- Bullying, intimidation and lack of professional respect towards support staff from teachers, parents and students
- Overuse of online training as a method of training for time-poor staff

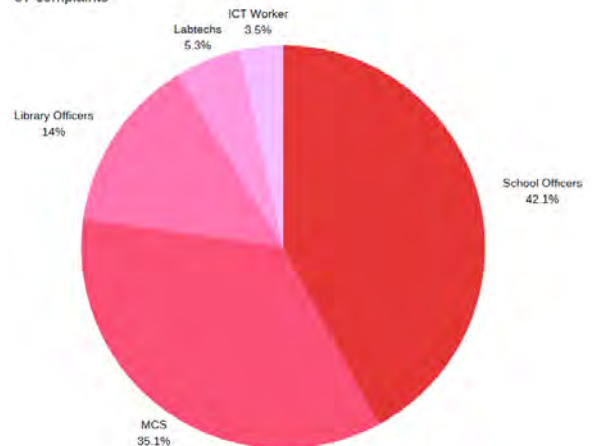
DUTY OF CARE

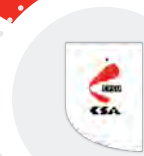
203 complaints



UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

57 complaints





1.2 SCHOOL OFFICERS

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1.3 LIBRARY OFFICERS

Library Officers (LO's) faced specific challenges due to the perception that they were responsible for physical infrastructure within the school, in addition to the considerable responsibilities of supporting students.

With some schools having over 1500 students on campus, the Library Officer can be responsible for any of them based on students heading to the library or if a teacher assigns children to the care of the library officer.

Repeated issues included:

- Duty of Care during lunch breaks and periods after school hours, children being deposited in the library without the staff member's informed consent, education or training
- Lack of professional respect, teachers believing they can direct orders to LOs and intimidating LOs
- Libraries are open five days a week but only appropriately staffed two to three days a week, creating loss and destruction of school assets and high workload to repair the school's infrastructure
- Due to lack of FTE LO's work throughout breaks and during school holidays
- High risk of loss of working hours due to IPS budget changes, inadequate budget under IPS
- Level 1 Library Officers undertaking Level 2 duties without proper pay or recognition
- Education Assistants and School Officers replacing LOs, despite JDF role not related to libraries
- High needs children left within libraries, with an unreasonable expectation that LOs can manage their needs while supervising many other students
- An unreasonable expectation that LOs can also fulfil role as an ICT support officer or resource manager
- Before school events (eg breakfast club) entrusted to LOs despite no teaching staff present.



1.4 ICT SUPPORT OFFICERS

Technology has an increasing role in Australian classrooms yet ICT support staff in schools faced multiple challenges owing to the lack of a centralised authority that fully understood and valued their specialist skills and expertise.

Issues included:

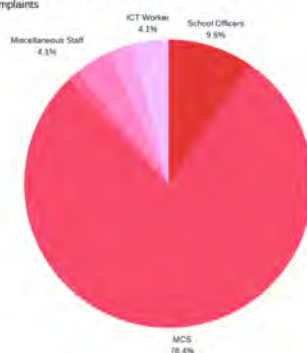
- Management ignoring staffing levels and responsibilities, leading to staff performing work and taking on responsibility far higher than their pay grade (eg L2 Technical Support Officers being expected to fulfil the functions of a L5 ICT Project Manager)
- Outsourcing to external contractors, leading to job insecurity and lack of ICT specialist experience and knowledge in-house
- ICT staff are expected to be available for contact out of work hours
- Lack of professional respect from teaching staff
- Widespread lack of knowledge from management around ICT services offered, widespread view that if an electronic device is defective, the ICT worker will automatically be able to provide a solution
- Rapid issue resolution is hampered by tight controls and lack of access granted to school-level ICT staff (eg ICT workers not being allowed to 'lift the hood to check out what's wrong with the engine')
- Errors and miscommunication when Central Office purchases expensive equipment for schools ICT needs
- Frustration with a Professional Development system that is written for teachers, not technology specialists.

1.5 MANAGER OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A number of issues identified under the 'Shared Issues' section specifically relate to MCS across the sector. A school's MCS keeps the entire system running — this is achieved by the civil servant responsible being across multiple roles and professional areas simultaneously.

- Two to three day wait on assistance requests sent to Central Office (74 [33.7%] of MCS staff raised a lack of support from Central Office)
- Expectation to also fulfil role as an ICT support officer or resource manager
- Multiple roles amalgamated into one senior manager position (but not paid accordingly)
- A workplace of constant interruptions, creating difficulty in finishing allocated tasks on time
- Little training around procurement, change management and contract management provided
- Assistance required managing staff (for example, Education Assistants)
- 38 (17%) of MCS staff raised problems with the One-Line Budget
- Multiple sources of tasks to be completed out of hours (eg RAMS, liaising with contractors, completing monthly reporting). Sixty-nine (31%) of MCS staff raised problems with RAMS

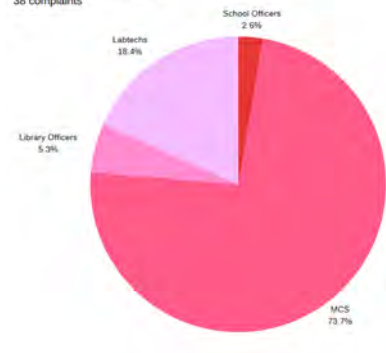
LACK OF SUPPORT FROM CENTRAL
74 complaints



RAMS DISSATISFACTION
69 complaints



ONE LINE BUDGET
38 complaints





Section 2

Issues in Detail

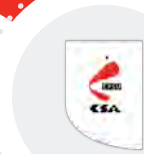
In December 2017, restructures in the Department of Education led to the loss of 188 roles. These roles provided services highly important to the functions of school support services, including:

- 10 Managers with overarching roles for Independent Public Schools, finance, governance and review and regional development.
- 8 Principal Consultants assisting in the same professional areas as listed above, but also including workforce planning (additionally a Principal Workforce Planning Adviser was lost) and state-wide delivery and planning.
- 14 Administrative Assistants, assisting in fields such as employee support, the Institute of Professional Learning, Standards and Integrity, state-wide services.
- 5 Participation and Attendance staff (included 2 Participation Officers and 3 Attendance Officers)
- 5 Recruitment Officers (including the Recruitment Project Coordinator, Senior Project Officer – Workforce Strategic Initiatives and a School Staffing Consultant position)
- 2 Coordinators and a Program Support Officer for the Institute of Professional Learning
- 1 Senior Auditor

This report aims to deliver an accurate and unfiltered account of issues raised by hundreds of staff during the 2018 school year pertaining to the preceding job losses. But it is also worth mentioning that the restructures had a high impact on the cultural competency and Aboriginal education strategy and forward planning of the Department, due to the loss of some 24 specialist Aboriginal education roles, including:

- Aboriginal Liaison Officer Busselton SHS
- Aboriginal Liaison Officer Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School
- Aboriginal Liaison Officer (no specific location)
- Aboriginal Liaison Officer Southwest
- Consultant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
- Coordinator Aboriginal Education
- Principal Advisor Aboriginal Education
- Regional Consultant Aboriginal Education
- Fourteen Regional Consulting Managers for Aboriginal Education
- Regional Consulting Manager Aboriginal Education (Kimberley)

Western Australia currently has the second lowest Aboriginal education attendance rates of all states and territories, second only to the Northern Territory. In three years, WA has seen little improvement in attendance according to federal Close the Gap statistics. The Union is concerned that the loss of Aboriginal Education leaders will have a further negative effect on educational outcomes.



2.1 ONE LINE BUDGET

The One Line Budget reforms effectively removed direct controls of a school's budget from the Department and into the hands of a sole, single operator, being the Principal. While overarching policies, branding operational guidelines remain in place, effectively the head of the school is in charge.

This model is a lot closer to a franchising model of business, albeit one whereby the operator has a high level of experience with the provision of teaching services and not management. This model allows the Department to distance itself from the provision of payment and conditions of workers.

Previously, schools were assisted by the gateway system – this created far less work for MCS staff as salaries were handled by Central Office. Funding would be divided into categories (eg ICT, utilities, curriculum) and the school could exercise individual choice in those areas.

Staff reported that many schools have continued their existing resourcing levels for school support staff, however there has been additional and more complex work now being undertaken by these staff. Previous initiatives to address unacceptable workload, such as discretionary days to record Working With Children checks, have been eroded over time.

The language around the One Line Budget is mostly aimed at increasing independence and providing flexibility. It can, however, be viewed as 'fissuring' of the Department's services. CPSU/CSA Delegates were struck by noting how 'each school was doing its own thing.'

Resources were limited. These concerns were highlighted by Dr Scott Fitzgerald and Professor Iain Rainnie in the 2011 'Putting the Public First?' report:

"Experience has shown that financial inducements for schools to move towards self-management rapidly disappear as schools have to find more of their resources from out sources, including school fees, reinforcing existing inequality within and between schools." (p5)

Independent Public Schools (IPS) is currently generating criticism and disquiet from DoE staff around how many responsibilities have been handed to the Principal. This is potentially a direct result of excellent teachers being rewarded for their skills by removing their ability to teach and instead granting management responsibilities. Crucial qualities of a good manager are often quite different from the qualities of an effective teacher. For example, skills such as financial and business management have limited opportunities to be gained during normal teaching roles.

In addition, State and Federal programs benefitting school budgets tended to prioritise resourcing teachers rather than the entire school. For example, under the National STEM Strategy, quality teaching is identified as the key to lifting student engagement and performance in STEM education (p.8). This is realised through financial incentives and inclusion of teaching pedagogy components in STEM-related degrees linked to school/university partnerships.

From the federal government, the focus has been on assisting Principals as STEM leaders via \$2.6 million of funding. This is in addition to \$64 million committed to promoting early childhood and school-level STEM programs through the National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA) 'Embracing the Digital Age' strategy.

While specialist programs to lift STEM engagement rates are highly important, it is just as important to ensure that support staff, particularly Lab Techs, are resourced to assist in the effort.



2.2 EXPERIMENTS & WHIMS WITH STAFF PROFILING

One of the key purported strengths of the independent public schools' system was greater powers for principals to determine the staffing profile of the school. This feature was designed to give principals the right to profile as they see fit, "for the community's needs". As this report notes, principals on the whole have shown a poor grasp of agreements and industrial rights.

This has meant the risk for errors made during staff profiling has been great. The CPSU/CSA have found multiple IPS schools where there are no School Officers or Library Officers.

Groups such as LIFT (Library Information Focused Training) have drawn issues with instances where library officers have been made redundant by being 'profiled out.' In some schools, School Support Staff have been classified at Level 1 or Level 3, where the roles involved would ordinarily be classified at Level 3 or Level 5.

The union has become aware of some schools whereby the one-line budget resourcing, which would ordinarily be allocated to a minimum number of School Officer FTE, has been spent on other roles. For example, at Dianella Secondary College the Principal created a Head of School and then created a Media Officer position. This has left a school of over 530 students with just 5.4 FTE of School Officers.

Following the decision to allocate funds to a Head of School and Media Officer, the majority of SO's have been classified as Level 1, despite taking on the roles and duties of SO's classified as L2 in other IPS schools. Some of the Dianella Secondary College SO's affected by the low classification have a proven record of service delivery and have been working in the role for over 15 years.

A lack of a mandated minimum SO FTE per student cohort allows Principals to make errors in staff profiling, under-resourcing necessary occupational groupings in order to pursue their own strategy. No auditing or regulatory support role promised by the Department is seen to intervene on matters like this.

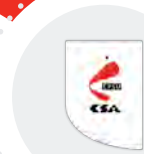
No Central Office staff member raises any issue with this unsustainable situation and it is left for SO's to either leave the school for a workplace which will properly resource and compensate them, or to face eventual burnout.

"You have anxiety at night thinking about all the tasks that still need to be done. What ends up happening is that you end up doing around five hours unpaid work per week. I'll head in during the weekend to keep my head above water. Other school officers will come in early and leave late to keep on top of things."

-School Officer (Level 1), March 2019.

The issue has a simple solution — the Department needs to do more to support Principals by giving a proper assessment of their preliminary profile. If this were to occur, it would quickly lead to the development of some important key features, such as base allocation of an occupational grouping and other useful directions to assist principals.

The Department must step in to ensure that the principal's ability to determine the staff profile does not erode important roles that have developed over a long period of time to ensure schools run efficiently in a sustainable manner. In addition, issues with principal staff profiling matters have been exacerbated by role incursions — more details on this matter are available later in the report.



2.3 LACK OF AWARENESS OF INDUSTRIAL OBLIGATIONS

The Union also has a Right of Entry problem – many schools had Principals who were not aware of the Western Australian unions' representation's rights and powers under the *Industrial Relations Act 1979*.

This barred CPSU/CSA delegates conducting conversations for this report from being able to enter the workplace and conduct a walk-through. While most instances were resolved by the Union being able to educate management, ideally Principals especially would be better trained by the Department in industrial workplace rights and management of staff.

Lack of awareness around staff representation sadly also extended to Occupational Safety and Health provisions. This has been a contributing factor to the issues raised with Duty of Care in the school environment.

As a result of resourcing pressures, it is increasingly difficult for school support staff to receive approvals to attend five days of paid health and safety training from a WorkSafe approved training provider.

Conversely, when the Principal was educated and aware of their rights and obligations under state industrial relations law, they afforded CPSU/CSA delegates with a level of respect that made the union's representative role much easier. This then created an example to other staff whereby information could be shared with a focus on creating a better workplace. Ultimately, the One Line Budget and IPS has created a system whereby DoE has far less control or surveillance of school sites, allowing an operating model much closer to franchises, whereby risk is outsourced to a sole operator. Peak unions have noted that in Australia today, franchise models "appear to be synonymous with wage theft for major brands in Australia" (p7, Queensland Council of Unions).

A clear example of the sort of 'convenient ignorance' wage theft occurring under IPS is the 2016/2017 lack of payment of on-call allowance to support staff by the Department. School support staff can be responsible for out-of-hours calls, enquiries and emergencies relating to the school, some occurring also during school holidays.

They have been on-call to attend to urgent matters such as enquiries from contractors working at the school, in particular calls from cleaners, gardeners, EA's and this includes taking and responding to calls from non-teaching staff when they are unwell and unable to attend work, including the coordination and scheduling of relief for any absences. This work is compensated by the on-call allowance under Clause 18 of their Agreement.

However, under IPS, this important employment condition was ignored in many schools across WA, leading to the CPSU/CSA organising over one hundred members to push successfully for back pay of over one million dollars to members.

The on-call allowance issues initiated a document circulated by the Department of Education 'on call allowance for relief coordination (D16/0162371)' which delivered specific instructions to Principals and Deputy Principals around the allowance. It stated these out of hours payments must be authorized by an officer's line manager.

This instruction makes it clear the Principal must ask school support staff to undertake relief coordination – if the staff member is unable to assist there are alternative arrangements principals can use. In addition, instructions were released in an ED-E-MAIL on 9 June 2015 which explicitly stated to Principals that Managers of Corporate Services "cannot be required to undertake relief coordination outside their normal hours of duty." School support officers also cannot be on call while they are on leave.



2.4 DUTY OF CARE

A number of serious concerns around medication use were raised in conversations:

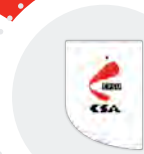
- The only school support staff role JDF which includes a limited Duty of Care is the Level 2 Library Officer. Despite this, the Union became aware many other school support staff were expected, and at times directed, to take on the duty.
- Level 2 Library Officers are only meant to provide Duty of Care for a 'small group' – there is no definition of what constitutes 'small' and the Union learnt that some LO's are being left to care for entire classrooms.
- Level 2 Library Officers require direct clarification on whether Duty of Care for a small group includes recess and lunch duties.
- Schedule 8 medication was being stored in blank packaging or packaging that did not communicate to students the dangerous medications stored within.
- Schedule 8 medications were being stored in locations in the school that a child could foreseeably reach if not supervised. Some schools did not have appropriate storage facilities for the medication.
- Parents were sending Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 medication to school with foods that were of high appeal to children, for instance, pills hidden within marshmallows. School support staff were entrusted with the responsibility to ensure no other child could access the medications.
- Declining standards around protocols for medication. The Department was not stepping in to reinforce a higher standard.
- Staff were encouraged to undertake first aid training. These staff then became obligated to be the primary care-giver for the school.
- CPSU/CSA delegates identified a trend whereby members of the union were less likely to have accepted Duty of Care responsibilities. This is likely due to a greater awareness of legal risk and professional liability involved, or a greater awareness of what is reasonably expected under one's own JDF.
- Health professionals (typically nurses or dental health professionals) were not given access to RM Integris, meaning the provision of health services in schools typically generated a high level of workload for school support staff. This also created a 'middle-man' for access of student records, which could be construed as a source of risk.

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984* there are 'general duty of care' provisions which applies to everyone within the workplace. In Western Australia, everyone holds a general responsibility for safety and health. This means employees must take reasonable care of their own safety and health, and that of others at work. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to this responsibility in the report as the 'general duty of care.' Further instructions and specifications around instructed responsibilities with Duty of Care are defined by the Department's policies and job description forms.

DUTY OF CARE FOR STUDENTS POLICY STATEMENT

Duty of Care, especially concerning medication responsibilities, is currently a major source of concern for school support staff at the current time. Staff informed the union that the following medications were being brought to schools, which created a source of professional stress for support staff:

- Insulin : Risk of hypoglycaemia for diabetic students
- Adrenaline
- Ethosuximide (Zarontin) : Risks of overdose, depression, allergic reaction
- Methylphenidate (Ritalin) : Alterations in brain function can occur for users who do not have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, in addition nootropics are now being abused for their use as cognitive enhancers
- Phenobarbital (anti-epileptic medication) : If overdose occurs, the result can be fatal
- Salbutamol (Ventolin)



In the interests of determining how the operational reality around medications had become stressed, the CPSU/CSA engaged in a review of existing policies, starting with the pre-existing Duty of Care For Students from 2 August 2012.

At the time of writing, this policy will be replaced by a new policy currently under consultation. These directions are lawful orders under the purposes of section 80(a) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)*. Under Item 3.4 of this policy: *“Non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers do not have the same special duty relationship with students as do teaching staff, and unless requested and agree to do so, are not responsible for personally caring for students.”*

In this policy, non-teaching staff are explicitly defined:

“Education assistants, registrars, school officers, farm supervisors and assistants, librarians and library assistants, laboratory assistants, Aboriginal & Islander Education Officers, home economics assistants, youth support officers, social trainers, exam supervisors.”

The CPSU/CSA notes many of these job titles are now out-of-date and require clarification. However, under the Policy, 1(C) states: *“When non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers agree to perform tasks that require them personally to care for Students (in the absence of a member of the teaching staff), they will also owe a duty to take such measures as are reasonable in all the circumstances to protect students from risks of harm that reasonably ought to be foreseen.”*

Guideline: Where students are afflicted by particular medical conditions, for example, haemophilia, asthma, a heart condition, brittle bones or epilepsy, special care must be taken to protect such students if their condition is known or ought to be known and exposes them to a special risk of injury. (page 4)

The duty can be discharged from Teaching Staff onto Non-teaching Staff: When non-teaching staff, external providers and volunteers agree to personally care [emphasis added by the CPSU/CSA] for students (without a member of the teaching staff also being present), teaching staff must provide them with clear instructions as to the level of care required. (page 6)

Under 3.4, non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers must take reasonable care to avoid doing or not doing things that could reasonably be contemplated as causing injury to others (including students). Non-teaching staff do not have the same special duty relationship with students as do teaching staff, and **unless requested and agree to do so**, are not responsible for personally caring for students. [emphasis added]

Unhelpfully, a supplementary Guideline in the policy states that JDFs may have some members of the non-teaching staff required to personally care for students as part of their normal duties. (p7)

Non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers have a right to refuse a request to personally care for students and to have their decision respected by members of the teaching staff. The policy is clear that Duty of Care continues to exist if students are waiting to be picked up by parents (unless the parent is repeatedly and significantly late in picking up their child, this matter can be referred to the Department for Child Protection). Sports coaching also brings Duty of Care unless the activity is not an authorised school activity.

The risks are understandably high, as per subsection (d) of the Employees section (p16): *“It is legally possible for the State, if its liability in negligence is established, to bring a claim for contribution or indemnity against an employee if a student was injured as a result of that employee acting outside the scope of his/her employment. Such action would occur only where there had been a deliberate act by the employee in total disregard of all instruction.”*



STUDENT HEALTH CARE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICY – PROCEDURES

This policy is explicit in assigning responsibility to Principals. Principals have the responsibility of providing parents with the Student Health Care Parent Information Brochure and the Student Health Care Summary to complete.

(3.2.3) Principals will advise staff of their rights and responsibilities in regard to student health care.

(3.4) In the event of a medical emergency, principals will organise medical attention for the student.

(3.5) Principals must require parents to detail the relevant information on the student's medical needs and provide the medication. Principals have a responsibility to maintain a record of medication administered and store the medication appropriately [emphasis added].

Typically, these responsibilities are delegated by the principal to staff.

GUIDELINES FOR FIRST AID IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

These guidelines apply to all employees. Principals and line managers are responsible for the provision of first aid in the workplace, conducting a risk assessment, developing a first aid plan and ensuring a suitable number of staff are trained. (p4)

Other responsibilities include:

- Each school must have a documented risk assessment
- The risk assessment should document the appointment of a “suitably trained person to be in charge of first aid, exclusive of anaphylaxis management” (p4)

In addition: *“procedures that include roles and responsibilities for responding to a medical emergency are understood by employees;”*

“employees are made aware of their duty of care and legislative responsibilities at induction and subsequently at regular intervals;”

First Aid Plans should be developed and reviewed in consultation [emphasis added] with employees, OSH representatives and/or the safety and health committee. (p5) A First Aid Plan should detail the availability of the person in charge of first aid and other staff suitably trained. First Aid Officers are **appointed voluntarily & trained**. [emphasis added]

Their responsibilities include management of anaphylaxis. The only medication that can be given to a student should be:

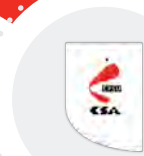
- Medication that has been provided by parents to facilitate the long-term or short-term use of medication – as provided for in the Health Care plan, Administration of Medication authorisation for or parent/guardian letter;
- Administration of an adrenaline auto-injector in an emergency following an anaphylactic reaction;
- Administration of Salbutamol in an emergency following acute asthma (p6)

It is worth mentioning that although Salbutamol is explicitly mentioned in the policy, there is no such discussion of handling diabetes-related care, including the handling of insulin.

Restricted drugs mentioned include:

- Schedule 4 Drugs – (seizure management)
- Schedule 8 Drugs – (ADHD management)

Serious injuries, such as instances of health care concerns with students are also to be reported on the Online Incident Notification System.



FORM 2 – GENERIC HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT & EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

This form allows the parent to detail information required around an emergency response plan for the child. This can be completed by a medical practitioner.

It also allows the details of a nominated required training provider for staff to deal with daily management and emergency management of the child's health care needs. The training nominated can be delivered by the parent, however it can be filled out by a medical practitioner.

One recurring trend noted was the instance of parents assuring staff that administration of medication was 'easy' — when they had often experienced cumulative years of administering the medication and knew their child's needs with a high level of detail. Parents were not accurate guides of the complexity of medication administration.

FORM 3 – ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

The parent must tell the school if a staff member requires training to administer the child's medication. The parent must also describe the training the staff member would require.

The School Office can then give the details for the Training Service Provider and the dates that training was provided. Currently, the West Australian public sector is focusing on reduction of silo-based approaches.

The DoE could consider linking with health authorities, such as the Therapeutic Goods Administration or the Department of Health, to provide a list of training required for a list of medications expected to see use in school environments.

Upon conducting Right of Entry visits across schools, CPSU/CSA organisers were concerned to see Schedule 8 medications stored in a variety of locations, typically a locked cupboard. The lack of uniform safe storage and administration practices is of concern given the strict regulatory directions around storage.

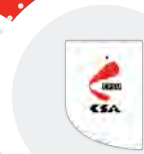
The Department of Health's Medicines and Poisons Regulation Branch has published clear guidelines on the use of large or small safe with clear specifications for the storage of Schedule 8 medications.

These guidelines must be followed by any 'healthcare facility, business or organisation that stores Schedule 8 medicines in readiness for supply or use'. If less than 500 doses are stored, a small safe is required which matches the following specifications:

- meets resistance grading I of AS 3809:1998 Safes and strongrooms or
- meets the specifications in Schedule 3 of the Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016
- cabinet and door made from solid steel plate at least 10mm thick or a steel skin with concrete fill at least 50mm thick
- 6 lever key lock, four-wheel combination lock or digital equivalent
- continuous welding of all joints
- securely bolted to a concrete or brick wall
- Further specifications detailed in the Department of Health policy.

FORM 11 - PARENT/GUARDIAN LETTER – ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Student Health Care Summary and Management/Emergency Response Plan is required for long term use of medication. The name of the Administrator must be listed and the medication must be provided by parents/carers. An additional Health Care Plan ensures staff are required to record and keep current a 'Record of Health Care Support/Administration of Medication.'



Despite a great number of various DoE policies and procedures provided in electronic format to schools, many school support staff felt insecure, unconfident and fearful of the Duty of Care provisions placed on them, from a medication administration or first aid responsibility. The issue is not new and has been handled by Teacher's Unions. The United Kingdom National Union of Teachers has prepared specialist advice for members regarding the responsibility of dispensing medication in the school environment.

They advise:

"Teachers who do volunteer to administer medicines should not agree to do so without first receiving appropriate information and training. The NUT will fully support any members who do not wish to administer medicines or who feel that they are being unfairly pressured to do so."

This position is similar to the position adopted by the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia (SSTUWA). The SSTUWA has issued directives to members that teachers should only consider 'reasonable' requests for assistance with the administration of medication: *"A reasonable request for the administration of medication is one which can be met by the school and staff resources and is one which a teacher could reasonably comply within a busy classroom situation... Requests which require any special skills above those of an ordinary person with no medical training will not be considered as reasonable."* In addition, the SSTUWA has endorsed a policy that all schools should have a full-time community nurse on site. The CPSU/CSA would welcome greater support for members in navigating administration of medication.

The CPSU/CSA is now considering formulating new advice to members based on the findings of this report. Examples such as the NUT statement are helpful as they are far more specific than existing documents. While CSA delegates visited schools they encountered a wide range of solutions to medication storage. Despite the policy stating medication should be in the original container and correctly labelled with names, schools had medication brought in a zip lock bag with the name written on in marker pen. Another example involved a plastic container with numerous medications all stored haphazardly together, with no sign of being stored behind lock and key.

The delivery of medication is something that has 'crept up' on school support staff – insufficient thought and planning has been given to the risks, surveillance and refresher training involved and required. If school support staff are to feel more empowered to care for children, better training and reform will be required.

2.5 INFO & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

There were concerns that schools were not operating with a clear set ratio of ICT assets per dedicated staff worker (for instance, 200 PCs per 1 ICT staff member). The nature of the electronic classroom in 2018 meant there were an increasing number of high-tech devices being used to teach children, but very few dedicated staff to fix machines or run proper maintenance and update schedules. The band aid solution to this issue by schools has been to entrust library officers with the responsibility, as cataloguing assets is vaguely similar to their substantive role of being responsible for the library's assets.

"...the Committee finds that the Department is significantly hampered in its efforts by tight budgetary constraints. This has significantly limited the rollout of Standard Operating Environment 4, together with the adequate provision of ICT support in schools, and the effective provision of ICT professional development." -Executive Summary, The role of ICT in Western Australian Education Report, September 2012

While there are ongoing issues with the lack of training to manage ICT resources, adding ICT resources to the responsibilities of the Library Officer/s also creates workload spikes during school stocktakes.

Ideally, the Department of Education would set aside the resources and amend the corporate structure of schools to include dedicated asset and resource managers. Unfortunately, this separate role's duties are currently added to support staff workload.



LO's require more proactive workflows and assistance to efficiently manage time and assets. Another option could be to increase LO hours to full time in primary schools and resource them appropriately in secondary schools — if they have been directed to take on this responsibility.

One potential option to resolve this issue is to trial ICT staff and Asset Managers across multiple schools in a close geographical district. This would allow a dedicated and trained staff member to implement asset management systems across multiple sites, harmonising processes and being an extra resource for schools, particularly Primary Schools, when required.

These roles could potentially be funded by multiple IPS sites pooling their residual funding collectively to employ a new staff member. The need for ongoing and real technical support has been raised by the previous Director General of the DoE, Sharyn O'Neill, in a submission to the Education and Health Standing Committee on 16 December 2011. One factor to eLearning that was described as 'critical' (p4) was:

*'Developing Capacity to Deliver eLearning
"I before E" – Infrastructure before eLearning*

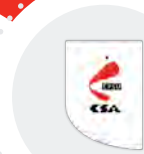
Technical Support - to maintain a quality of service for every school location. Whilst many ICT services can be provided and maintained centrally, many school or location-specific technologies and services also require a level of onsite support.' When dedicated ICT staff are hired by schools, they find themselves with support staff at the bottom of the hierarchy. ICT staff told CPSU/CSA delegates that they find themselves regularly verbally abused by teachers, often work through their lunch breaks and could not realistically use their TOIL entitlements.

As mentioned earlier, ICT staff also mentioned they were typically expected to be 'on call' at any time, including weekends. In addition, the Department of Education is currently heavily reliant on external contractors. CPSU/CSA delegates became aware that the Department's current contract with ICT expertise supplier Kinetic IT has experienced a Blanket Order Variation of \$81 million – taking the contract value from \$176,637,030 to \$258,181,818. As of July 2018, there were 197 separate Kinetic IT labour hire positions working within the Department of Education.

This represents an enormous amount of ICT work and development being conducted by an external organisation – with a considerable loss of potential of internal development and capacity by DoE.

Currently, the Department's ICT needs are dominated by labour hire practices. In July 2018, there were ten separate operators working on the Department's ICT systems and the following ICT labour hire positions were on the books:

EXTERNAL CONTRACTOR	NUMBER OF POSITIONS	ICT ROLE
Kinetic IT	197	Support Officer
Trilogy Resources	22	Java & Web Productions
Solutions IT	20	Network Integration
Ignia Pty Ltd	14	Sharepoint & Student Records
TFX	14	Network Integration
Permeance Technology	11	E-Schooling ICT
Winthrop	8	Network Integration
Tang Computers	5	Network Integration
Market Creations	5	Network Integration
NEC	3	WebSIS Developers



Current ICT support staff expressed frustration about not being entrusted by the Department to access systems to diagnose and treat IT problems at their schools. For example, intermittent internet access issues plagued one school for months before an ICT staffer was able to get administrative access and discover the number of licenses for web connection were far too low for the student population of the school. ICT staff expressed a desire that the Department implements a system whereby experienced ICT staff are entrusted with greater levels of access to diagnose and solve problems. The Department was criticised as running down school technology offerings in favour of maintaining a risk-averse approach to technology.

Conversations with all occupational groupings raised issues of greater Department reliance on automated/self-service/customer direct technologies which replaces local face-to-face support. This amplifies existing inadequacies with school-based ICT support.

2.6 MANAGING CORPORATE SERVICES

“Predominantly women, school registrars and business managers have been poorly paid and have been provided with inadequate access to training and career path options. Although there may be limited community recognition of their connection to the processes of teaching and learning, the further devolvement of managerial and administrative responsibilities, together with increased community ‘impression management’ will increase their already heavy workloads.” - Fitzgerald & Rainnie, 2011.

This seven-year-old prediction has proven stunningly accurate. MCS staff are now expected to be the site managers for building, construction and works at their respective school. This is a role (contractor liaison, auditing and quality inspection) that they are inadequately trained or prepared for.

MCS staff told Union Delegates that they were often expected to don a hard-hat and go to inspect works where they had no idea what they should be checking for. Even worse, this work often had to be conducted out-of-work hours, such as on the weekend or during evenings. Originally, a contract support officer was supposed to be provided to an IPS school to fulfil this function. This promise has gone undelivered, and it is school support staff who are expected to make up the shortfall.

Under the IPS scheme, for school works under \$10,000 (AUD), the MCS is able to source their own contractor for works on the school. Any works exceeding \$10,000 is subject to a range of other processes and steps. While this increases the flexibility of the school to organise works quickly, it does leave the Department open to a level of potential corruption and waste of taxpayer funds. For instance, throughout 2009/2010, the Western Australian public sector lost approximately \$316,000 via a scheme whereby public servants received incentives for purchasing ink cartridges at inflated prices from a Victorian distributor (CCC 2011).

The Corruption and Crime Commission’s resulting report recommended any civil servant who had discretionary authority to spend public funds should receive regular refresher training on purchasing, procurement and ethics. Union delegates highlighted a clear need for greater procurement training and the rules around gifts within the public service in order to reduce risk for the Department. Under the IPS scheme, for school works under \$10,000 (AUD), the MCS is able to source their own contractor for works on the school.

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Under the new Direct2Market Initiative, schools can manage lower risk works and maintenance to procure works up to \$20,000 from the local community. The higher amount of funds understandably increases risk of improper expenditure and/or corrupt contracts.

It is critical that MCS staff feel informed and supported to take on this higher responsibility. In addition, risks are presented by the MCS being responsible for managing works and maintenance sites in a busy school environment — greater OH&S training and support should be provided to allow the MCS to manage works. MCS staff informed CSA Delegates that typically Principals cannot answer detailed budgetary questions from the respective School Boards.

For this reason, a great deal of work for MCS involves preparing briefs and responses for the Board on the status of the School's One Line budget. They are effectively the Board Secretary but also the Treasurer.

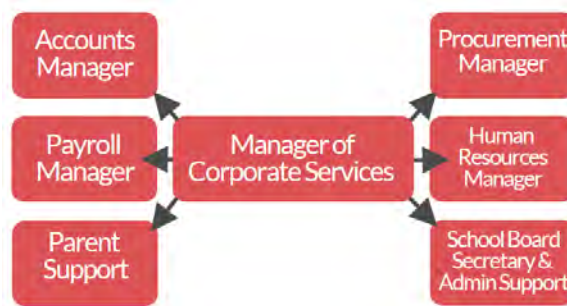


Diagram 1: One FTE, many positions.

OVERWORKED AND UNDER-APPRECIATED

Many MCS staff taking part in the survey felt they could not realistically leave their desk. If they did, there was the feeling they would be 'bombarded' by service requests from staff.

One recurring topic of increased workload for MCS staff was the use of the Recruitment Advertising Management System (RAMS). Frequently, jobs posted on RAMS would receive more than one hundred applicants. Many applicants did not meet the specified experience or selection criteria, but the MCS would still need to individually read and process each application under the current operating procedures. Staff shared that a better process was required with better filtering of applicants. In the last two years, many staff have been offered a fixed term contract rather than conventional employment.

This has considerably increased the workload for RAMS users, as an MCS must undertake multiple processes per member of staff. MCS staff shared with the union that often the only way to process recruitment processes was to choose to not take morning, afternoon or lunch breaks and take work home, engaging in unpaid labour to keep the school running.

In addition, monthly financial reporting that must be sent to Central Office creates a regular spike in workload each month. Typically, this also created a large demand for the assistance of Senior Finance Consultants at Central Office.



CENTRAL OFFICE RESOURCE CUTS - A CALL FOR HELP

Central Office performs an important role for supporting school support staff. Support staff are told that help is just a phone call away, but in reality it can take hours for a call to receive the assistance required.

On the other side of the line, payroll advisors and payroll officers at Central Office provide a constant service to school staff, especially MCS roles, in ensuring the financial responsibilities are met. This includes both monthly and fortnightly financial reporting. The CPSU/CSA has been pleased to see a culture of innovation and development within Central Office, however these innovations go alongside key challenges. Firstly, the number of government schools has grown from 771 to 809 over seven years, yet financial support staffing has not seen a similar increase in resourcing (Statistical Reports, DoE 2018). While technology has provided a central focus of educating, informing and building self-reliance amongst support staff, Central Office staff report that support staff are likely to require access to greater computer literacy training in order to maximise the educational and school resources being developed.

Often staff reported that the level of responsibilities, accountability of unpopular decision-making and simply too much work caused interpersonal conflict in the workplace. This included verbal outbursts or an exhausted and resigned mood. There were perceptions that some MCS prioritised operational outcomes over professional and collegial relationships, as that was their method of 'getting things done.' MCS staff reported to the Union that the nature of their role meant 'everyone will hate me now' anyway, due to the nature of the tough decisions and processes they were entrusted with. The risk of staff suffering low morale and perceived bullying was anecdotally higher for schools with a higher number of students.

MCS staff felt particularly isolated within their roles in schools - while teachers and education assistants had colleagues, the MCS was typically left to make tough decisions on their own. MCS staff shared that annual Western Australian conferences are a particularly well-loved experience as it sees a number of independent workers who conduct their work in a solitary manner be connected to a number of workers in the same role. These events allow staff to discuss and organise their roles collectively. The Department should consider other opportunities to allow MCS to meet, network, and share professional development and experience together.

Since District Offices changed to Regional Offices the funding for network meetings has diminished so many schools no longer enjoy access to professional development. The regular one to two day semester training provided by Finance Officers is sorely missed. This training kept MCS staff up to date with changes in finance and payroll as well as learn from more experienced MCS staff.

CPSU/CSA delegates encountered some MCS staff who are contemplating regressing from the role due to the highly stressful/demanding nature of the work. Others reported to delegates they are not able to train up staff to take on the MCS role for covering sick or long service leave because no current staff in the school were attracted to the role.

2.7 RUNNING ON GOOD WILL, RUNNING ON EXPLOITATION

While the unpaid labour which occurs due to job application processing can be subtle, a more blatant example of a culture of wage theft is more evident with school events. School events (such as performances, parent-teacher interviews, and school ceremonies and presentations) are often run at a time accessible to today's working parents, who often will finish their working day at 5pm. Unfortunately, given the budget constraints of DoE, most schools will require support staff to work, some of whom may have started at 7am-8am that morning. Staff are asked to sacrifice their labour in a manner that few other professions would tolerate or consider accepting. Delegates found that many non-permanent staff adopted an attitude that these requests were perfectly reasonable, likely due to a precarious employment situation meaning they were hesitant to 'rock the boat' to assert their working rights.



It is illegal to refuse to compensate workers for their labour. The Department has not offered overtime in recent memory yet Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) is currently dysfunctional. Due to the level of workload, it is not taken by support staff and is allowed to grow. This is not a problem unique to Department of Education. In the last financial year, the leave liability of the wider public sector reached \$2.84 billion as public servants struggled to find an opportunity to leave their post (The West). This issue is exacerbated by Principals lack of industrial knowledge. With greater training, many Principals would likely be alarmed at the risk of their workplace being run on wage theft and take appropriate actions to ensure staff are compensated fairly.

It is well documented that Australian workers are now providing more labour for free and strong rights to separate work and personal time are being eroded. In the November 2017 report "Excessive Hours, Unpaid Overtime and the Future of Work: An Update", the Centre for Future Work found that on average, full-time Australian workers reported performing six hours of unpaid overtime per week – including coming in early, leaving late, working at home or on weekends, and working through regular breaks and lunch hours. Ideally, the public sector should be an industry leader which enforces clear rules to prevent unpaid labour becoming the norm in Australia.

2.8 WORK INCURSIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ENCROACHMENT

Education Assistants perform a valuable role in the public education system. Their role includes the provision of assistance to teachers, direct supervision of students and assisting students requiring greater support in the classroom. These roles are highly important for the teacher to maintain progress in the curriculum and give every student the opportunity to develop. The one-on-one support of students with special needs has a strong basis in behavioural and developmental research.

In recent years, the professional scope of the Education Assistant has broadened, owing to Clause 58 in the Education Assistants' (Government) General Agreement 2016, as negotiated by the union United Voice:

58. MULTISKILLING

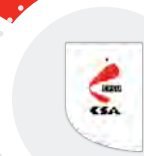
58.1 The parties are committed to allowing employees to be deployed in a way that will best address the needs of the worksite. Employees agree to carry out such duties as are within the limits of the Employee's skills, competencies and training. This could include the allocation of specific duties and/or temporary deployment to other positions in the worksite.

58.2 The parties to this General Agreement will develop worksite multiskilling for employees and such development will include the following:

- (a) objective(s) and guidelines for the multi-skilled position;
- (b) boundaries of the position;
- (c) rosters of work;
- (d) lines of accountability; and
- (e) adjustment, if any, to normal work.

58.3 The multiskilling proposal should not compromise any duty of care or occupational health and safety standards or requirements.

Support staff have seen a worrying trend of education assistants being used to fulfil Library Officer and School Officer roles whilst employed as an Education Assistant. While it is understandable that any school manager would want to use any resources at their disposal to keep the school running in a budget-limited environment, the encroachment of clearly set roles by another professional group, without consultation or negotiation of the affected professional grouping (in this case, library officers and school officers) is totally unacceptable.



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The CPSU/CSA believes an Agreement cannot and should not include clauses which affect another profession to this scale. However, these conflicts are easily managed if Principals are better trained in upholding a agreed staff profile of a school and ensuring there are no radical changes to a school's staffing contingent.

In addition, the *School Education Act Employees' (Teachers and Administrators) General Agreement 2017* has made encroachments into School Officer workload by granting administration labour benefits to a range of teaching positions.

16. ADMINISTRATORS

16.3 Each Head of Department (HOD), Head of Learning Area (HOLA) or Program Coordinator is entitled to a minimum of 0.3 FTE per week for undertaking administrative duties.

16.4 Each secondary school will be resourced to provide 90 minutes per week clerical support per HOD, HOLA or Program Coordinator. This is to be distributed by the principal in consultation with the HOD, HOLA or Program Coordinator at the school.

School officers in secondary schools were of the view that while they had been given extra work, pending orders from various teaching positions, there was no evidence that extra resources had been provided to balance the increase in work. The One Line Budget had ensured that another professional had won the right to direct them to conduct administration work.

Direction to do work is perfectly natural and understandable under an established hierarchy in a school's corporate structure. The CPSU/CSA is, however, concerned and perturbed at this new habit of the Department of Education to grant role encroachment rights via staff agreements. The CPSU/CSA may consider some of these anomalies but would welcome a cooperative process with the Department to resolve these serious issues. Again, these matters are easily resolved if Principals are cognisant of an agreed staffing profile.

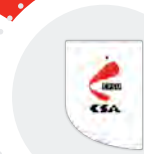
2.9 REINVIGORATING THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Over decades of workplace representation, the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) has developed to be a highly effective proactive method of managing workplace challenges in the West Australian public sector.

The procedure for establishing and running a JCC is detailed within Clause 46 of the School Support Officers Agreement and Clause 49 of the Public Service and Government Officers CSA General Agreement (2017).

In recent years, the JCC has evolved to include new powers to map and take action on unacceptable workload within Departments. This improves the quality of work of public servants, but it also allows Department senior executives to gain valuable data and information on growing areas of demand for their Department.

Larger departments typically have a greater agenda for the JCC process. In addition, subsections of professional roles employed create challenges in delineating issues that are unique to a professional grouping or are shared by the wider workforce.



A JCC will also struggle to be an effective tool if it is not attended by senior management, or managers who have real decision-making capacity. Delegates identified the following issues that required resolutions with the DoE JCC:

- Lack of decision-makers from management attending in good faith
- Action items falling from the agenda despite no agreed resolution or course of action set and agreed to
- Lack of willingness of senior management to find a solution to an issue, rather than accept certain problematic practice as 'business as usual'

2.10 THE IMPACTS OF RESTRUCTURING

In the last two years, DoE leadership has advanced an umbrella strategy, whereby multiple services and units merge. Outside of leadership circles, staff were unsure if a merger-happy strategy was an initial source of the strategy or just because there were severances, was not clear to staff at the front line.

The staff of the different units were originally resourced to a level where they could visit schools directly, to train and assist staff face to face. This allowed a level of close review and regulation to ensure systems and processes met the Department's standard. Their roles included auditing, improving and optimising. Typically, each school could expect this service once per year.

Staff in the Peel region recalled that they used to receive Professional Development days and have entire days where they were able to be educated and ask questions about a change in rules. These events were supplemented by Labour Relations. In early 2018 staff losses and rewrites of roles further locked in changes which was viewed by school staff negatively. Today this service has been replaced with a focus on online-only resources.

This is problematic as staff are finding that they:

- Lack a dedicated 'quiet time' to read the resources and become familiar with them.
- Lack the ability to ask a question and get an answer in a timely manner.
- Lack access to conversational learning, the Department has opted to focus on reading-based learning.
- Lack access to roll-over sessions occurring at the beginning of the year or the end of the year.
- Receive reduced training for principals
- Are seeing a Department run with more risk as not all staff are on the same page when it comes to knowing operational process and procedures.

SUPPORTING OFFICERS – DISTRICT OFFICES

Initially, assisting/support roles for schools were named District Office Finance Administration Officers (FAOs). Each FAO had about 40 schools each to assist. Part of their role was to visit each school that they looked after at least once per year.

FAOs ran Forum Days each semester where they would update support staff on any changes to finance, advise of issues that were being highlighted during school audits and deliver information which helped to carry out the role. District Support Officers also presented at the forums alongside Labour Relations representatives.

2013 saw a significant reduction in FAO numbers, which meant officers could no longer take phone calls. Initially, the impacts of change weren't obvious as remaining FAOs were highly experienced and could resolve raised issues quickly. However, as training and support to MCS staff has eroded, the waiting periods to receive support from a FAO has grown.



The DOSO (District Office Support Officer), also situated in the District Office, would give advice on staffing issues for non-teaching staff. They typically assisted complete paperwork and give a supervisory look over proper running of schools across Western Australia. The modern equivalent of the DOSO is the Human Resource Consultant (HRCs), located at Central Office.

Part of the restructures and changes around procedure involving the DOSO has seen support staff required to fill out electronic advice on the HRMIS system and submit them to Payroll. This advice includes Commencements, Variations to Work schedules and higher duties. With the changes introduced requiring staff to submit all staffing info onto RAMS it was the HRC's that formulated the 5-step information to help staff know what was required. HRC's are contactable by phone. This has meant MCS staff now must complete a larger proportion of HR paperwork in HRMIS (Superannuation, Citizenship, WWC and current Criminal Checks).

The South West Service Area Conferences were frequently mentioned by support staff as effective, face-to-face professional development which assisted staff meet reporting requirements in a supportive learning environment. There is a sense that support staff are being given a regime of 'tough love' to log on online and learn from webpages without direct human support. But this regime is increasingly unrealistic in a culture of high workload, multiple interruptions and the complexity of the subject matter to be taught. This is now contributing to a culture where MCS have less support to properly manage the school, increasing the risk of expensive errors occurring.



Section 3

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report risks an oppressively gloomy tone and an accusatory message. What the report does not discuss is the rewards involved with school support professions, which involve the long-term enrichment and life-changing benefits of education to the next generation of Western Australians. This report has been drafted to detail the current problem areas and not list the many reasons why hundreds of public servants decide to donate their time and good will to 'go a little bit extra' for their school and for the kids. On the whole, school support staff were overwhelmingly proud of their local schools, and took pleasure in pointing out the achievements of students and staff. The ultimate aim of this report is then to not level accusations, but to take early steps towards ensuring these public servants can continue to enjoy the benefits of keeping Western Australia's public education system running - albeit in a more sustainable and fair way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ADDRESS THE UNSUSTAINABLE WORKLOAD

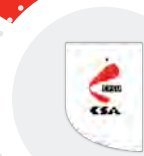
ACTIONS:

- A Workload Review Team must be established as per Clause 47.8 of the Public Service and Government Officers CSA General Agreement 2017.
- Educate School Support Staff in their industrial rights to build capacity for them to moderate a growing level of workload and roles that involve risk to children and to staff.
- All schools must adopt a 'If You Work It, Claim It' culture. TOIL must be available without resistance from school management. If TOIL is unable to be taken, the Department management must be informed that the school is not staffed adequately and take appropriate steps to remedy.
- Backfill must be resourced and made available.
- Quarantine a section of each school budget to establish one discretionary day for school support staff per month in order to catch up on pre-existing work and projects. In addition, the Department of Education (School Support Officers) CSA General Agreement 2017 should be amended to include a set number of professional development days per year, ideally held before the start of term.
- Establish a process for overtime for MCS to be compensated for human resources duties, specifically processing job applications for school roles when this work is done outside of normal working hours.
- Establish a minimum of one Library Officer FTE per library.
- The Department of Education should develop routes for ICT support staff to gain greater autonomy and access to systems in order to diagnose and solve issues faster.

2. REASSERT WORKING RIGHTS & OBLIGATIONS

ACTIONS:

- The Department must consider new, more comprehensive methods to ensure new staff are informed of their industrial representation and their working rights. Section 44 (2) of the Department of Education (School Support Officers) CSA General Agreement 2017 must be revisited in order to determine a long-term, sustainable and mutually agreeable method of discussing union membership as part of the formal induction.



- Schools must ensure they have a dedicated CPSU/CSA union noticeboard as per the CSA Agreement. These noticeboards must not be used for DoE, United Voice or SSTUWA materials.
- Principals require greater education and training in the fields of industrial relations and occupational health and safety. Greater education for principals should also focus on the JDFs of school support staff, and include a focus on managing a reasonable workload that can be completed during normal working hours.

3. INCREASE STUDENT SAFETY BY IMPROVING DUTY OF CARE

ACTIONS:

- The Department's Standards and Integrity Unit should be tasked with reviewing and reforming the multiple Duty of Care/First Aid Officer Department policies. This must be conducted in order to streamline and simplify the protocols for schools, and give staff greater awareness of their risk when accepting Duty of Care. This project should actively seek advice from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and the Australian Department of Health.
- In order to reduce the risk for school support staff, policies should reflect that they are not to carry any Duty of Care obligations (teaching staff ultimately have Duty of Care).
- Health staff working with schools must be trained in and given access to RM Integris in order to access and contribute to student records without creating an additional work burden for school support staff.

4. REBUILD CLEAR PROCESSES AND INTERNAL CAPABILITIES

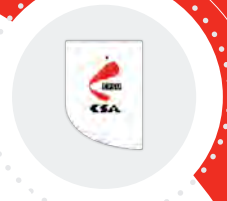
ACTIONS:

- The Director General, or a designated decision-maker representing the DG, must attend JCCs in order to action solutions to issues of concern.
- Central Office must take on greater responsibilities and a clearer, more active role in managing building works, procurement and contracting. If the Department is unable to perform this function, more resources and training must be allocated to MCS so they can perform these supervisory and project management roles with greater scrutiny.
- The Department of Education must reform ICT in order to develop internal ICT capacity and reduce the costly reliance on contractors.
- Consider implementation of a shared ICT staffer to assist multiple schools in a geographic area with ICT requirements. This should ideally be implemented in locations where support staff with no ICT training are currently taking on ICT functions.
- To counter an erosion of professional development, the Department should prioritise mandatory face-to-face professional development for school support staff wherever possible.

5. RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

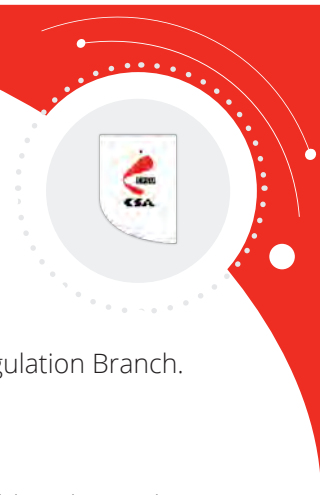
ACTIONS:

- Adequately compensate school support staff and retain dedicated staff via ensuring their pay levels rise as they progress through their career at DoE.
- The Department must immediately undertake a classification review of MCS roles following years of increasing responsibility, work value and development of a managerial skill set.
- In order to proactively address bullying and intimidation complaints, cultural change in the Department of Education is required to reinforce to staff that school is 'not just about the teachers.' The successful running of a world class education facility relies on a range of occupations which each bring their own skill set and professionalism to the workplace.
- The Department must provide greater scrutiny on the staff profile set for a school, especially with regards to School Support staff, FTE and duties undertaken.



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