



Addressing workload challenges

In March 2023, the NSW Government committed to conducting a line-by-line audit of administrative and bureaucratic tasks that teachers are required to do, to deliver a reduction of 5 hours of administrative work per week.

Introduction

As parent, community and government expectations of schools have grown over time, so too have the workload challenges of teachers. Teachers have consistently reported that their workload is increasing and that more needs to be done to keep pace with schools' contemporary roles and responsibilities. School leaders have highlighted a wide range of barriers that makes it difficult to reduce workload in schools. Lasting improvements to student outcomes may not be secured unless meaningful action is made to address these challenges.

In March 2023, the NSW Government committed to a reduction of at least five hours of teachers' administrative work per week. The reduction will be achieved by a line-by-line audit of all administrative tasks that teachers are required to do.

The audit captured these tasks through a policy and procedure review and the mapping of operational tasks within schools. The aim is to identify how policies and operational requirements influence workload for teachers in NSW public schools.

Methodology

The audit of administrative tasks consisted of a policy and procedure review and the mapping of operational tasks within schools.

Policy and procedure review

The department reviewed and consolidated its policies to significantly reduce the number of policy documents. The new policy documents were tested prior to being rolled out to schools. As part of this process, the department consulted with several key education partners, including unions and associations.

Mapping operational tasks

As part of the School Administration Improvement Program, approximately 100 schools participated in workshops to map the key operational tasks for schools and identify who does the tasks, why, and what supports are available. In addition, around 100 education support staff reviewed the mapped tasks to provide clarity and identify immediate improvement opportunities.

Findings

The administrative audit makes four key findings:

- Operational tasks are a significant aspect of workload.** There are nine core functions of school operations, with over 300 tasks stemming from these.
- Policy is the main driver of operational tasks.** There are 361 policy documents for 201 policies, many of which are difficult for schools to access, use and implement. Significant work has been undertaken to address this through the policy and procedure review.
- School context is critical.** While there are consistent tasks and drivers causing higher workload, school context – particularly the size, type, location, and needs of students and the community – can drive additional workload volume and complexity.
- Some 100 tasks have been identified as causing high or very high workload.** Of these tasks, around 30 were found to cause very high workload and were predominately from three core functions: student learning and development, student management, and legal and governance. It is estimated that around 60% of these tasks directly impact teachers.



9 functions	A function is a grouping of processes based on a collective function
49 processes	A process is a set of tasks that collectively produce an outcome.
346 tasks	A task is a set of activities that do something that contributes to a process.

