



23 September 2008

New support for principals of 'specific purpose schools'

Students in 40 of the state's specific purpose schools will be even better supported under changes to principals' duties announced by Education Minister Verity Firth today.

Under the changes, principals of students in these schools will be relieved of teaching duties to enable them to concentrate full-time on their students' learning and welfare.

'Schools for Specific Purposes' educate students with disabilities, students who are hospital bound or in juvenile justice facilities, and students with identified behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties.

"Principals in these schools work extremely hard to support their students," Ms Firth said.

"They have a unique responsibility to care for some of our most vulnerable children and the challenges they face.

"They need time to speak with parents and external agencies about each student's learning needs.

"They also need to be available to respond to critical situations without notice.

"These demands are often more immediate and complex in Schools for Specific Purposes.

"The Primary Principals Association and Teachers Federation have raised the need for these principals to be able to concentrate full-time on their important duties.

"I have heard these concerns and asked the Education Department to remove these principals' teaching loads so they can fulfil their important roles."

There are 114 Schools for Specific Purposes in NSW – 40 of these schools currently have teaching principals and will benefit from this initiative.

President of the NSW Primary Principals' Association, Mr Geoff Scott, has welcomed the announcement.

"We requested this extra support for principals in these vital, high need and high demand schools and are delighted that the new Minister has responded so quickly," Mr Scott said.

"Releasing these principals from daily teaching will allow them to work directly with students and their teachers to intensify the support that they need.

"The aim is always to assist the students to safely take their place again in mainstream schools in a manner that contributes to their own successful learning."

The change will take effect from Term One, 2009. An additional teaching position will be provided to each affected school to enable the change, at an annual cost of \$3.6 million.

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Schools that will benefit from the change

Barwon Learning Centre
Caldera School
Canterbury Vale School
Casuarina School
Coffs Harbour Learning Centre
Highlands School
Karningul School
Mian School
Naremburn School
North Gosford Learning Centre
Parry School
Penrith Valley Learning Centre
The Beach School
The Bidgee School
Verona School
Wakefield School
Woodberry Learning Centre
Palm Avenue School
Budawang School
Bullimbal School
G S Kidd Memorial School
Gadara School
Gralee School
Holman Place School
Newcastle School
Five Islands School
Tangara School
Wangee Park School
Royal Far West School
Arndell School
Centennial Park School
Kandeer School
Kotara School
Woniora Road School
Sydney Children's Hospital School
George Anderson Walpole School
Induna School
John Richardson School
Lincoln School
Shepherds Park School