Teachers' Priorities for Change in Australian Schools to Support Staff Well-being

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Abstract

This study explored Australian school teachers' priorities for change within schools in order to support staff psychological well-being. We began by holding a focus group and, in corroborating with the existing literature on stressors reported by school teachers, identified seven key areas for change in schools that teachers thought would most support their well-being at work. An online survey was then conducted with teachers from across Australia ($N=$ 960), who ranked each of these suggestions in order of importance. Results found that the most important needs for change according to teachers were smaller class sizes and improved measures for student behaviour management. These results offer insight into areas for organisational change that teachers think are most important for their own well-being. We discuss the findings in relation to psychological research as well as current issues within the Australian education sector.

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Teaching is recognised internationally as a high stress occupation and levels of teacher stress are linked to reduced staff performance (Yong & Yue, 2007). In the Australian education sector, concerning trends have been identified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) including student results consistently falling over the past decade, and more countries outperforming Australian students in key subjects (Tovey & Patty, 2013). Recent governments have attempted to address this through measures such as national standardised testing and curricula (Donnelly, 2011), but the OECD has found that the most important influence on student learning that is open to policy influence are teacher-related factors (OECD, 2005). Teacher stress can have serious implications for the healthy functioning of the individual, the school, and the quality of education provided to students (Yong & Yue, 2007). Hence, it is vital for educational researchers to explore ways to improve teacher mental well-being, and a potentially useful source of information are teachers' own perceived priorities for change.

Australia has seen a consistent rise in the incidence of teacher stress, including workers' compensation cases (ABCNews, 2010a; Hiatt, 2010). There is a significant body of psychological research exploring sources of stress for school teachers internationally, including managing student discipline, workload, dealing with colleagues and demanding parents, poor working conditions, and lack of support from management (e.g. Timms, Graham, & Cottrell, 2007; Yong & Yue, 2007). For teachers working in Australia, some of the reasons for current increasing job stress include rapid curriculum change, extra tension caused by notional literacy and numeracy testing, and deteriorating student behaviour – including physical attacks on teachers (Hiatt, 2010).

Making schools a more attractive and supportive place to work for staff will likely impact student learning outcomes. This is addressed in a review by the Department of Education Queensland, which found that difficulties in attracting and retaining quality staff was impacting the state's ability to meet its educational objectives for students (Masters, 2010). Other research has also found that higher job resources helps teachers to be more immersed in their teaching and this has positive flow-on effects for student performance (Bakker, 2005).

While there is a large body of international and Australian research aimed at identifying work-related stressors for teachers, there is a dearth of published research exploring what types of interventions teachers themselves think will help improve their well-being as related to work. This is a significant gap in the literature. With current nationwide reviews of the Australia's entire education system, it is timely to explore the opinions of teachers regarding what changes they feel are most needed to support their well-being at work. It is likely that teachers' priorities for change in their schools may vary depending on demographic characteristics. For example, research from England indicated that turnover is concentrated in young teachers and older teachers approaching retirement; young teachers often cite low salary and personal circumstances as reasons for leaving, while older leavers cite workload (Smithers & Robinson, 2005). For a better understanding of the mental health needs of the different demographic cohorts within the teaching workforce, it will be useful to compare teachers' perceived priorities for change in schools based on such characteristics as their gender, time spent working at their school, and the state or territory of their employment.

Preliminary Focus Group

In order to address these gaps in the literature, we conducted a preliminary focus group, with the aim of identifying key changes within Australian schools that teachers feel

are most urgently required in order to support their well-being. These qualitative data, interpreted within the existing literature on stressors reported by Australian teachers, were then used to guide the second part of the study, a quantitative large-scale survey in which teachers ranked in order of importance the different areas for change identified in the focus group.

The focus group was conducted in Adelaide, South Australia. We used a purposive sampling method to select four teachers to participate in the focus group. The sample included two males and two females, with work experience levels of two, four, 11, and 28 years. All participants had worked in primary and secondary schools, as well as schools in both rural and metro environments (except for one participant who had only worked in rural schools). While this is too small to provide a representative sample of Australian teachers, the focus group allowed us to obtain perspectives from individuals with a variety of teaching experiences and ranging from early to relatively late in their teaching careers. The focus group followed a semi-structured format and lasted for 90 minutes. The discussion was audio recorded and later transcribed and compared with the existing literature on work stress experienced by Australian teachers. The focus group identified a list of seven areas for change as being most important for improving teacher well-being: class sizes; funding for school resources; managing student behaviour; salaries; school–level management; training/professional development; and workload. We will briefly summarise the focus group's comments and describe findings from the existing literature regarding these seven areas and why they are relevant for investigation as a means of promoting teacher mental well-being.

Class Sizes

The focus group discussed the need for smaller class sizes in order for teachers to feel more effective in their role. Teachers expressed that with smaller classes they could gain a

greater sense of mastery, such as through increased opportunities to tailor their lesson plans, pay individualised attention to each student and check student learning during lessons. Focus group participants acknowledged that smaller class sizes also had positive flow-on effects such as reduced workload (e.g., less marking and teacher-parent contact), as well as a greater ability to manage student behaviour.

Disputes between state education departments and teacher unions often centre on demands for smaller class sizes (e.g. ABCNews, 2009). Research has found that in smaller classes, teachers can provide more focused and effective teaching strategies with individual students and that student behaviour problems are easier to contain (Wilson, 2006), and hence teachers experience less stress related to behaviour management. However, critics of the push for smaller class sizes say that there is little to no correlation between class size and student performance, except for certain student groups such as those with special needs (e.g. Chilcott, 2012). It has also been suggested that a reduction in class sizes could lower the quality of teaching, because in the absence of extra financial investment governments would be forced to lower teacher salaries to fund the hiring of more teachers (Creighton, 2013).

Funding for School Resources

The focus group identified lack of funding for class resources as a significant problem that can drain teacher motivation and satisfaction from their work. Two participants said that they regularly pay for resources from their own salary in order to feel better about the teaching activities they are offering students, but that this leads to a sense of resentment towards the school for not providing such resources.

This concern is consistent with reports that deficits in funding for school resources contribute to teacher stress around inability to provide adequate educational opportunities for students and reduction of teacher aide hours with associated increases in class disruption (Chilcott, 2011). A large scale survey of Australian schools found that over 80% of schools

needed to engage in fundraising of some sort, with 61% of principals rating fundraising and voluntary contributions as "very important" to the school budget (AEU, 2010).

Managing Student Behaviour

The focus group raised concerns around poor school-level support in managing difficult student behaviour, contributing to a reduced sense of efficacy and lowered mood for the remainder of the school day that often carries over when the teacher returns home. Examples included being unable to remove problematic students from the classroom because no other staff are available to supervise the student/s, and teacher complaints about students not being taken seriously by management. .

Previous research has established that difficulties in managing student behaviour is a significant stressor for teachers. For example, teachers leave the profession at the highest rate within their first five years of teaching, with the most frequently cited reason being working with children who have "complex behaviour" (McMillen, 2013). In QLD in 2012, state schools handed out approximately 20,000 student suspensions for physical misconduct and made almost 100 incident reports involving violence or threats of violence (Chilcott & Vogler, 2013). Teachers report fear related to students with severe behaviour disorders threatening other students and staff not having training in how to manage such behaviour (McMillen, 2013). Some states have seen recent legislative changes to attempt to manage this, such as giving rights to principals to keep students in detention on weekends or assign community service, although teacher unions have criticised the utility of such measures for improving staff safety (Chilcott & Vogler). Unions have suggested the potential need for additional security features to be installed in schools, such as security cameras or protective glass for administration staff (Chilcott & Vogler).

Salaries

The focus group voiced concerns around teacher salaries, which were perceived as low relative to the amount of education, responsibility and workload required for the job and that this impacted their motivation. In recent years there has been frequent industrial action taken by teachers across all Australian states as teacher unions negotiate for higher salaries for staff (e.g. ABCNews, 2010b). Research has found that dissatisfaction with pay negatively impacts teachers' perceptions of their own performance (Farid, 2011). Low teacher salaries in Australia have also been criticised as a contributor to lower teacher quality, as higher-performing school graduates feel less incentivised to pursue a career in education (Ingvarson, 2016). Starting salaries for teachers in Australia is relatively high compared to teachers in other countries, and is also comparable to starting salaries of Australian new graduates in other career fields of equivalent education (Jamieson, 2013; McGaw, 2016). However, Australian teacher salary progression is unfavourable compared to other professions (the top of the pay scale is only 1.4 times the starting salary) and is typically based on years of service rather than performance (McGaw). Australian teachers reach the maximum salary step within a decade, compared to other nations which might take up to 45 years, and this pay ceiling can dissuade teachers to stay in the profession (Ricci, 2015).

School –Level Management

The focus group identified the importance of school management teams for staff morale and personal motivation around their work. Concerns were raised around common problematic practices within school management, including a lack of positive feedback to teaching staff, difficulty in having direct access to speak with management, and a perceived priority on performance outcomes over staff well-being.

A report from the Grattan Institute stated that teachers think school management does not recognise, reward or appropriately evaluate effective and innovative teaching (Jensen, 2010). Further, a study with Tasmanian teachers found that staff feel stronger pressure in

recent years to conform to the values or ideas of principals due to fear of being marginalised

if any dissent is expressed, and a sense that school administration place their allegiance with

the education department rather than their own school and staff (Easthope & Easthope, 2007).

Teachers have expressed a desire for administration to offer more care and support to staff,

and to be more active in communicating staff feedback around issues such as rapid

curriculum change to education departments (Easthope & Easthope). Teachers have also

expressed dissatisfaction with school management creating unreasonable levels of work

demands without providing the necessary resources required for staff to effectively complete

their tasks, which may erode an individual's sense of mastery, increase tension within the

workplace and increase exhaustion (Timms et al., 2007).

Training/Professional Development

Focus group participants raised issues around training that they thought required

change, including a lack of relevant training opportunities to choose from and needing to go

to training on weekends or holidays because staff are unable to take time off from regular

classes. Research findings show that opportunities for professional development are

important for improving and sustaining levels of work engagement among staff (Bakker &

Bal, 2010). However, professional development for teachers in Australia has been described

as inconsistent and "largely neglected" in Australian schools, particularly for new teachers

adjusting to their role (Ferguson-Patrick, 2011). It has been criticised as too prescriptive and

not trusting teachers to identify their own professional training needs (Comber, Kamler,

Hood, Moreau, & Painter, 2004), which is problematic given the strong correlations between

teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Workload

The focus group discussion commented on the unreasonably high workload required

as a teacher, and expressed that it can often leave them feeling exhausted, stressed and time-

pressured. The participants pointed out that their school days are often so tightly scheduled that they may not have time to eat lunch, and they regularly engage in unpaid work-related activity outside of work hours (e.g., lesson preparation and marking).

The literature indicates that Australian teachers report their workload to be increasing every year, which will likely lead to increasing burnout and health problems within the teaching workforce (AEU, 2010; Dorman, 2003). Over one third of Australian teachers spend over 50 hours per week on all school-related activities, and 19% spend over 55 hours per week (AEU, 2010). A report by the Queensland Independent Education Union (QUIEU, 2005) concluded that teachers are experiencing increased content of jobs, less time for rest breaks, deadline tightening, and the concept of working until the job is done (e.g., completing mandatory paperwork that is not factored into the hours of the school day). A study by Timms et al. (2007) found that teachers report workload to be the major source of dissatisfaction in their work environment and the authors concluded that current workloads are unsustainable.

The Main Study

This paper's overall aim is to identify the priorities that Australian teachers place on the areas most in need of change within schools, and how these priorities might differ based on teacher demographic characteristics. For our main study, we conducted a cross-sectional online survey study with a national sample of Australian school teachers. We asked participants to rank in order of importance each of the seven changes identified from the preliminary focus group study. The survey also measured participants' gender, number of years spent teaching at their current school, and the Australian state or territory of their employment, as these factors may inform how changes can be tailored to address key concerns among different cohorts.

Method

Participants

The online survey was accessed 1136 times and completed 960 times. The sample included 237 males (25%) and 707 (75%) females, with mean age 46.0 years ($SD = 11.0$). Our sample appears representative of the national teaching workforce, as a previous representative national survey ($N = 2335$) of teachers in Australia found a mean age of 43.1, with 30% of respondents being male and 70% female (MCEETYA, 2004). The mean length of employment at participants' current school was 7.0 years ($SD = 6.45$). The participants were based in 5 different states within Australia: 594 from Western Australia (WA); 131 from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT); 119 from New South Wales (NSW); 79 from South Australia (SA); and 29 from Tasmania (Tas). Table 1 presents a summary of participant demographics according to state.

(Insert Table 1 here)

The majority of participants worked in government-owned schools (96.7%). Regarding job description, 75.7% classified themselves as Teachers, 20% as Coordinators/Executive Teachers, 2.9% as Deputy/Assistant Principals, and 1.4% as Other. Regarding employment condition, 86.8% were permanent, 11.7% were contract, and 1.3% were temporary relief teachers. Regarding work hours, 80.7% worked full-time, 15.7% worked at least half-time, and 2.7% worked less than half-time.

Measures

The survey asked participants to rank options from a list of seven changes that could be made in Australian schools, in order of importance for supporting teacher mental well-being. The survey question was developed by the authors and was worded: "Please rank the following options in order of which you believe would best assist in supporting teacher mental well-being". Participants needed to drag-and-drop items from the list in descending order from "1st (most important)" to "7th (least important)". The seven options they were

presented included: "improved measures for managing student behaviour", "reduced workload", "improved school–level management", "improved opportunities for professional development", "higher salaries", "smaller class sizes", and "increased funding for school resources". The survey also featured other measures including gender, the state/territory in which participants worked, and years spent working at their current school. Following data collection we categorised years of work at current school into three levels (<5 years, 5-15 years, and >15 years) for comparative purposes.

Procedure

We gained ethical clearance for this study through the relevant university procedures. We advertised the survey website with permission through several Australian teacher union newsletters and websites. Participants completed an online anonymous cross-sectional survey by visiting a website created by the authors. An information page was presented prior to the survey questions. Inclusion criteria were that participants were employed as a teacher or member of school leadership in an Australian school at the time of taking the survey. Another paper has previously analysed other variables measured in this survey, to explore teacher psychological injury (Garrick et al., 2014).

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Results

(Insert Figure 1 here)

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Figure 1 presents the percentages of participants who ranked each of the seven suggested changes as first or second most important. "Smaller class sizes" was selected as the most important change overall, with over half of the sample (51.9%) ranking this option as the first or second most important change. "Improved measures for managing student behaviour" was the second most frequently chosen option, ranked first or second by just under half of the sample (47.2%). "Improved school-level management" and "reduced workload" were ranked first or second by approximately 30% of the sample. "Increased

funding for school resources" and "higher salaries" were ranked first or second by 21.2% and 15.5% of the sample respectively. The lowest ranked option was "improved opportunities for professional development", with 5% of participants selecting it as the first or second most important change.

(Insert Table 2 here)

Table 2 includes percentages of the seven changes ranked first or second most important, according to participants' (a) gender, (b) years of teaching at current school, and (c) state or territory of their employment. We conducted chi-squared tests to identify if gender, years of teaching experience or state/territory were related to any of the seven proposed changes being ranked as first or second highest priority. We used listwise deletion to handle missing data, i.e. cases with one or more missing values were removed from analyses. There was a significant association between gender and prioritising change in workload, $\chi^2 (1) = 9.19$, $p < .01$, indicating that females were more likely than males to rank workload as first or second important priority for change. There was also a significant association between gender and prioritising change in salary $\chi^2 (1) = 4.70$, $p = 0.02$, indicating that males were more likely than females to rank "salary" first or second. We did not find any significant association between priority for change and years of teaching at one's current school.

There was a significant association between state/territory of employment and "workload" as an important priority for change, $\chi^2 (4) = 18.57$, $p < .01$, indicating that teachers from NSW were less likely than the other states/territories to rank workload as a first or second priority. There was also a significant association between state/territory of employment and "school-level management" as a change priority, $\chi^2 (4) = 10.84$, $p = 0.03$. Regarding school-level management, none of the states/territories demonstrated a significant difference individually (no standardised residuals $> \pm 1.96$), although SA and NSW appeared

to contribute the largest amount to the significant chi-squared test (standardised residuals -1.7 and 1.8 respectively). This suggests that teachers from SA were less likely to prioritise school-level management change, while teachers from NSW were more likely to prioritise school-level management change.

Discussion

We conducted an online survey to measure Australian school teachers' priorities for changes that could be made in schools to support staff mental well-being. Our results showed that Australian teachers' priorities for change were relatively consistent across gender, years of experience, and state/territory. Overall, teachers perceive smaller class sizes as the most urgent change needed in schools, consistent with the frequent strike action taken by Australian teacher unions across the country pushing for fewer students in classrooms (Maslen, 2014). While not statistically significant, our results indicate that this need for change is most frequently endorsed by teachers from SA, WA and NSW (Table 2), which is in agreement with research reporting that these three states have the largest class sizes in Australia (AEU, 2010). A large class may increase teacher stress in a number of ways, such as making it more difficult to manage student behaviour and provide adequate attention to all students, and increased levels of assignment marking, parent interaction, and noise levels (French, 1993). This result highlights the importance for education departments to reduce class sizes through the hiring of more teachers as a first priority in supporting their teachers' mental well-being. A recent literature review has found that smaller class sizes are related to improved student learning outcomes (Zyngier, 2014); given Australia's current decline in student performance relative to other OECD nations, policy changes targeting smaller classes appear timely. Unfortunately, the current government has indicated that it intends to increase class sizes (Maslen, 2014), which is likely to increase teacher stress and negatively impact student learning outcomes.

Improved measures for managing student behaviour was the second most-frequently selected priority for change, with almost one half of participants choosing this option as first or second-highest priority. Previous research has found student behaviour difficulties to be an important factor in why some teachers choose to leave the profession (Barmby, 2006). Behaviour management demands in Australian schools have increased over recent years (Smith, 2014), which may be related to reductions in funding for teacher aides (Chilcott, 2011), as well as a trend towards "inclusive" education. Inclusion policies are resulting in more children with significant intellectual, physical and psychological difficulties being brought into mainstream classrooms, without providing necessary resources or professional development measures (McMillen, 2013; Timms et al., 2007). Our finding emphasises the need for school management to support staff in managing student behaviour, such as by building behaviour management skills through initial and continuing teacher education. Improvements might also be achieved through investing in more teacher aides, school counsellors, security equipment, and cooperatively developing policies, support systems and student placement strategies with staff.

The next two most highly ranked options were improved school-level management and reduced workload, which are likely related. Several factors have been identified as critical for effective school management, including placing reasonable demands on staff while providing sufficient resources for task completion, effective evaluation of staff performance and recognition of quality teaching (Timms et al., 2007). Our findings indicate that there is a need to provide further training and potentially assessment of school managers in Australia, given that a large proportion of our sample endorsed improved management as a high priority change. School management/leadership also play an important role in balancing teacher workload.

We found that almost one third of our sample identified reduced workload as their first or second priority for change. Australian teachers face increasing workloads due to factors including understaffing, expanding student-teacher ratios, increased documentation and more tasks (particularly administrative) being added to the teacher's workday (Comber et al., 2004; Timms et al., 2007). The high levels of non-paid work that teachers are required to complete outside of work hours is detrimental to staff mental health by reducing opportunities to detach from the mental stress of work even after the school day has officially ended (Sonnentag & Kruel, 2006; Timms et al., 2007). High workload is also related to decreased time available for teachers to interact with each other at work, in order to share ideas and support one another (Easthope & Easthope, 2007). Teachers also report feeling pressure to engage in co-curricular work that is unpaid and time-consuming, with schools not taking these into consideration when allocating extra responsibilities such as yard duty (AEU, 2010; Timms et al., 2007). Many teachers have expressed worry that if they do not "volunteer" for extra responsibilities, their opportunities for promotion would diminish (Timms et al., 2007). We also found that female teachers were more likely to identify workload as a high priority for change. While our data does not indicate the causal factors in this relationship, possible explanations include greater workloads being placed on female teachers or a tendency for female teachers to perceive workload as a more salient factor for well-being.

Approximately one-fifth of our sample ranked increased funding for school resources as the first or second priority for change, demonstrating that a large proportion of Australian teachers think that increased resource funding is vital in supporting their well-being at work. This is consistent with research that has found 61% of Australian school principals identified that fundraising and voluntary contributions are "very important" to their school budget (AEU, 2010). The issue of Australian school funding is complex and currently in a state of

political uncertainty. The Gonski report on school funding reform (commissioned in 2010 and released in 2012) criticised the current school funding model as lacking coherency and transparency, and involving duplication of funding in some areas (Gonski et al., 2011; News, 2013). The report recommendations included an increase of $5bn in federal funding to education and allocating additional resources to schools according to the number of disadvantaged students. These additional resources would have included hiring additional teacher aides, which would likely have benefited teacher well-being through greater support in student management. However, the current federal government has dismissed the recommendations made in the Gonski report and is proposing another review of school funding (Donnelly, 2013). This will delay or cancel implementation of suggested improvements to school funding identified in the Gonski report, along with the potential benefits for teacher well-being.

The two least-often prioritised changes were increased salary and improved professional development. We found that male teachers prioritised salary higher than female teachers, which suggests that continuing to pursue higher salaries for teachers will be important to try and improve the current underrepresentation of male teachers in Australian schools (Tovey, 2013). Only five percent of our sample ranked improved professional development as the first or second most important change needed in schools, although it is unclear whether this small number reflects relative satisfaction with current levels of training or if teachers feel it is less salient to their well-being. Previous studies have found that collaborative continuing professional development is linked to increased teacher self-esteem, motivation and confidence as well as student learning outcomes (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Cordingly, Bell, Rundell, & Evans, 2003). Hence, while efforts to continually develop and improve professional development opportunities for teachers will likely produce positive

outcomes for staff and students, our findings indicate that there are others areas in teaching of greater priority with regards to school-level and policy change.

Limitations and Future Research

Our preliminary focus group was small (*N*=4), although previous literature on focus group methodology has indicated that this is an acceptable size (Kitzinger, 1995). Not all Australian states/territories were represented in our sample and those that were measured had uneven numbers of participants. In addition, we were also unable to locate any material that provided comprehensive comparisons between the teaching conditions of different Australian states, thus limiting our ability to make comparisons of state-level policies relating to teachers' priorities for change. Owing to the method of advertisement used for the online survey, the majority of participants worked in government schools, and hence no meaningful comparisons can be drawn between the opinions of staff working in government and private schools. Finally, there is likely considerable overlap between the seven areas for change that participants were asked to rank. For example, larger class sizes likely increase issues related to student behaviour management, while school budget that is targeted at teaching resources may reduce the budget available for hiring more teachers to reduce class sizes.

Further qualitative research investigating specific areas where funding is currently allocated and how this might be shifted to address teachers' concerns may help to elucidate the most appropriate use of available resources. Additionally, future research should investigate relationships between the seven areas for change measured in this study and psychological measures of work-related stress and motivation. This would help to identify if differences in these aspects of a teacher's work environment produce actual differences according to validated measures of well-being.

Conclusion

Education outcomes in Australia have consistently fallen relative to other OECD countries but there has been a lack of attention paid to the potential strategy for improvement that is most open to policy change influence – teacher-related factors. This study identified areas of change that teachers themselves place the highest priority on when it comes to staff well-being, and found that smaller class sizes and improved measures for student behaviour management are considered to need the most urgent change. Furthermore, we found relative consistency in the priorities of teachers across gender, years of experience and location. Easthope and Easthope (2007) comment that over the last decade or so educational policy makers in Australia have tried to force the education system to serve the economy as its primary objective, which clashes with the ideology of teachers who are concerned with the support of their students. By considering the experiences and opinions of teachers when devising policies and objectives for change in Australian schools, education departments and school management teams may be able to minimise losses of investment in training due to stress-related staff turnover, sick leave and reduced productivity. Teacher stress and well-being are subjective experiences, and so there is of course no guarantee that psychological outcomes will improve for the entire teaching workforce if organisational changes at schools are made in line with teacher self-reported priorities. However, this study contributes to the literature investigating various factors that likely contribute to the overall mental well-being of the teacher population, and uniquely, from the perspective of teachers themselves around what types of interventions will be most helpful for them.

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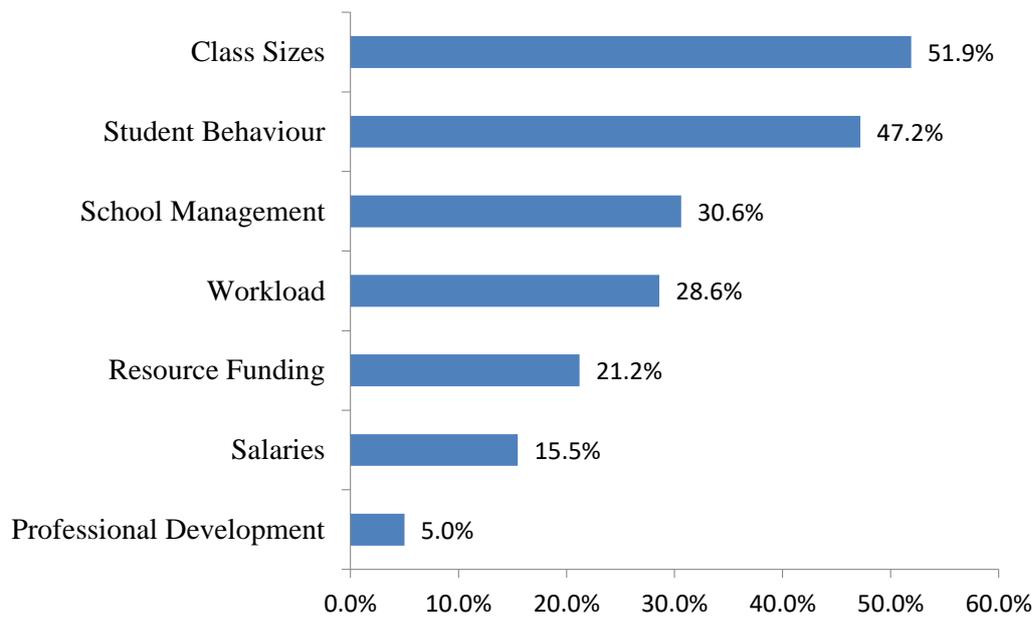
Figure 1. Priorities for change - percentage of teachers who ranked each item of change as first or second most important ($N = 939$)[a]

[a] Each option ranked between 1 (most important) to 7 (least important). Mean ranks: Class Sizes 2.8; Student Behaviour 3.0; School Management 4.0; Workload 4.1; Resource Funding 4.0; Salaries 5.0; Professional Development 5.2

Table 1

Sample Demographics According to State

State	Gender		Age (years)		Years at current school	
	Male	Female	M	SD	M	SD
Western Australia	25%	75%	45.95	0.44	7.39	0.26
Australian Capital Territory	24%	76%	43.12	0.96	4.69	0.47
New South Wales	19%	81%	47.50	1.06	6.56	2.23
South Australia	29%	71%	47.57	1.26	6.83	0.69
Tasmania	38%	62%	49.52	1.98	7.36	0.91

Table 2
Priorities for Change – Percentage of Teachers Who Ranked Each Option as First or Second According to Gender, Years of Teaching at Current School, and State

	Gender (*N*=923)		Years teaching at current school (*N*=939)			State/Territory (*N*=931)				
	Male	Female	<5yrs	5-15yrs	>15yrs	ACT	NSW	SA	Tas	WA
Class sizes	51.3%	52.0%	49.7%	55.5%	49.1%	42.0%	49.1%	59.0%	48.3%	53.9%
Mean Rank[a]	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.6	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.8
Student Behaviour	50.4%	45.7%	46.3%	48.4%	47.2%	46.6%	53.4%	46.2%	37.9%	46.6%
Mean Rank[a]	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.3	3.2	3.0
School Management	30.6%	30.2%	30.8%	30.8%	28.7%	34.4%	39.7%	19.2%	27.6%	29.1%
Mean Rank[a]	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.5	4.4	4.4	4.0
Workload	21.1%	31.5%	31.0%	26.4%	25.9%	29.8%	13.8%	21.8%	37.9%	31.9%
Mean Rank[a]	4.6	3.9	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.0	5.0	4.1	3.6	4.0
Resource Funding	20.3%	22.0%	19.7%	22.5%	23.1%	25.2%	20.7%	26.9%	24.1%	19.8%
Mean Rank[a]	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.6	4.1
Salaries	19.8%	13.9%	16.9%	13.5%	16.7%	18.3%	15.5%	21.8%	17.2%	14.0%
Mean Rank[a]	4.5	5.2	4.9	5.1	4.9	4.8	5.3	4.5	5.2	5.0
Professional Development	6.5%	4.6%	5.6%	3.0%	9.3%	3.8%	7.8%	5.1%	6.9%	4.7%
Mean Rank[a]	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.4	4.8	5.3	5.4	5.1

[a] Range: 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)