



Why industrial action is taking place in our schools

The current Enterprise Agreements covering Catholic school staff have nominally expired, with their provisions remaining in place until a new Agreement is developed.

On 7 April 2014, Catholic school employers released for discussion a draft Enterprise Agreement covering the majority of staff working in Catholic systemic schools. It's a new, contemporary agreement which presents a range of ideas about how schools can better support 21st century teaching and learning.

Education in Australia is changing. Modern curricula, new technology and community expectations have changed schools forever and our industrial arrangements must reflect this. The proposed agreement rewards excellence in teaching, reduces distractions to the core work of learning and teaching and allows greater flexibility in the way we work. We believe that what has been proposed is equitable, sustainable and supports excellence in education for our children.

We have made it clear to the Union and staff that the proposal is just a *starting point for conversation* and will be subject to revision and change following staff feedback and union negotiation. Importantly, we have highlighted that our staff are in control as only they can vote to change their Agreement.

Despite this, the Union is encouraging industrial action which is likely to take place in some schools. We believe this action is intended to stop discussion about important changes that include:

- pay that is linked to professional standards that all Government's around Australia have mandated;
- how the school day is organised;
- supporting quality teaching;
- managing workloads by changing outdated work practices; and
- having all staff collaborate on what's works best for students instead of relying on a one-size-fits-all approach.

Catholic Employers are committed to good faith bargaining, and working through the issues in an open and fair way. While we acknowledge the Union's important role in acting on behalf of employees, we genuinely believe that opening up the conversation around change is ultimately in the best interest of teachers, students and the whole school community.

During this challenging time, our priority is to ensure that there is minimal inconvenience to parents and disruption to our students' learning and we will ensure that parents are informed as soon as possible about any changes to the school day.

In the meantime, a dedicated website has been created if you would like to learn more about the employers' proposal www.foundationsforexcellence.com.au

We welcome your questions and concerns.