

Education jobs axed

THE NSW Department of Education and Communities will slash its head office workforce, getting rid of more than 200 staff as part of a shake-up.

Curriculum support, teaching and learning, and professional development appear to be the hardest hit areas.

The NSW Teachers Federation said only one person is left responsible for supporting English teaching from kindergarten to year 6, with a second position remaining for high school English support.

Maurie Mulheron, the president of the federation, accused the department of continuing to "act in secrecy" by refusing to reveal the details or rationale behind the cuts.

"The federation is deeply concerned for the levels of support that will now be denied our schools, our principals and staff, and our students. These cuts are only the first of many that can be

expected under 'Local Schools, Local Decisions'," he said.

The department is implementing reforms intended to push decision-making back to schools. Under the "Local Schools, Local Decisions" reforms, principals will be able to choose at least 50 per cent of new staff and control 70 per cent of their budget. The reforms are being vigorously opposed by the union.

The changes come as NSW teachers prepare for the introduction of a new national curriculum.

"The department appears to have just given up on teaching and learning at the same time as the most significant changes to curriculum in a generation," Mr Mulheron said.

A spokesman for the Department of Education said it was "a realignment" that "reduces the central bureaucracy".

**Andrew Stevenson
and Kim Arlington**