



The Hon Adrian Piccoli MP

Minister for Education

MEDIA RELEASE

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STRENGTHENING SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

NSW Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli has announced plans to strengthen the teaching of Special Religious Education in NSW Government schools.

“All NSW Government schools are required to make time available for Special Religious Education, known in many schools as scripture. Currently the legislation only sets a maximum period of time for Special Religious Education during the school week,” Mr Piccoli said.

“At the recent Director-General Consultative Committee on Special Religious Education, the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools NSW, or ICCOREIS, made a strong case for Special Religious Education.

“The Committee resolved that the guidelines and policy for delivering Special Religious Education need to be strengthened.

“This will include a minimum time of 30 minutes of meaningful teaching time per week in primary schools, and a minimum of one period of meaningful teaching time per week in secondary schools for Special Religious Education.

“As school days have become busier, the provision of a “maximum” period of time has led to other activities encroaching on the delivery of Special Religious Education.

“This regularly disrupts the thousands of volunteers that deliver the classes.

“The same minimum of 30 minutes meaningful teaching time per week will also apply to ethics classes.

“Ethics classes will remain in Government schools because the Government believes that there ought to be an alternative provided for students who are not taking scripture classes.

“I have also committed to providing an annual *Celebration of Special Religious Education* to recognise the efforts of Special Religious Education teachers who have provided long years of service.

“These volunteers have contributed significantly to our Education system and provided a valuable service and they should be celebrated.

“This is an appropriate time to recognise the significant efforts made by Reverend the Honourable Fred Nile MLC in raising these issues regarding Special Religious Education.

“He has been a tireless supporter of Special Religious Education in our Government schools.”

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