Submission from International School of Aberdeen

Requirement for Head Teachers to hold the Standard for Headship before appointment

Dear Sirs

We wish to comment on the Scottish Government’s proposed amendment to introduce a requirement for prospective head teachers to hold the Standard for Headship before appointment.

It is notable that Scotland, and the North-East in particular, is experiencing a severe dearth not only of teachers but heads of school, too, in both state and independent establishments. We wish to suggest, therefore, that this factor be taken into consideration in any proposed amendment to the Education (Scotland) Bill.

As stated in the School’s previous written and oral submissions to the Education and Culture Committee in relation to Stage 1 of the proposed Bill, the International School of Aberdeen is a totally unique educational establishment in Scotland. ISA was primarily established to serve the needs of the North Sea Oil and Gas Industry in Aberdeen, who generally required an “international” education to facilitate their children’s transition either to their home country or move to another overseas assignment. The International School of Aberdeen is a charitable trust, governed by a jointly appointed and elected Board of Trustees.

The School’s educational programme demands experienced and appropriately qualified international educators to comprise its Administrative team. The Operational Administration of the School led by the Director comprises the Elementary School Principal, Middle School/High School Principal, and Finance Manager.

The day-to-day operations of the School are the responsibility of the School’s Director in all departments and aspects, including: a) Curriculum planning and scheduling;

b) General supervision of instruction at all levels of the Pre, Elementary, Middle and High Schools;

c) Staff utilisation to secure the most effective use of the existing staff within the spheres of their competence;

d) Evaluation of all school personnel;

e) Investigation and interview of applicants for teaching, clerical and maintenance positions, and making recommendations for the hiring of such personnel;
f) Developing the budget in association with the Board Finance Committee and Finance Manager within the Board’s Guidelines for Board approval;

g) Making and enforcing rules, as needed, for discipline in the School and at school-sponsored functions; and

h) Carrying out other duties as directed by the Board

The Board of Trustees will strive to procure, when a vacancy exists, the best professional leader available for the head administrative post of Director.

It is desirable that applicants for the position of Director have the following qualifications:

a) At least a Master's degree with 18 credit hours or more in graduate courses in school administration.

b) Certificate as a teacher with a minimum of five years’ experience.

c) Five years’ experience as a school Principal or Director, or comparable experience.

The Director will be selected by the Board from applications received in response to notice that the position is vacant. In order to ensure that applications are received from the maximum number of persons who are qualified and interested, notice of the vacancy will be widely advertised internationally and/or circulated among reputable placement agencies.

An evaluation is done annually by the Board assessing the Director’s performance. An informal mid-year oral evaluation of the Director’s performance to assess progress also occurs.

As you will see from the above, the criteria employed by the ISA Board of Trustees for the appointment of appropriately qualified and experienced candidates to Administrative positions within the School are implicit. If the ISA Board of Trustees were legally compelled to recruit successive Administrators who held the Scottish Standard for Headship before appointment, this would not only make it almost impossible to recruit suitable international candidates for the Director and Principal positions but would also seriously jeopardise the international ethos, vision and mission, and ultimately the viability of the School’s educational programme.

Yours faithfully

For and on behalf of

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ABERDEEN

DANIEL A HOVDE PhD