Response to Teacher Workforce Planning for Scotland’s schools

What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

Teacher recruitment: there are two issues to consider viz models of ITE and GTCS registration. Financial implications: whilst funded, the majority of the current ITE Programmes do result in a significant opportunity cost i.e. loss of income for the duration of the Programme. It is appreciated that ITE providers and the GTCS are looking at creative and flexible programmes but there is no guarantee this will address the shortfall. GTCS registration can be a barrier to teacher recruitment both in terms of time of processing applications and the requirements for registration.

Teacher retention: conditions of service, demands on the profession, workload, etc.

What are the factors that influence whether teaching is considered an attractive profession compared to other professions by those that might consider a career in teaching?

Terms and conditions are vital in this respect. A number of professions command a salary in excess of the SNJC and this can be a limiting factor for potential applicants. That said, the benefits/rewards of the profession in terms of working with children and young people, opportunities for career progression, etc could be promoted and celebrated to a greater extent.

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

The realisation of what the profession entails with many not making a fully informed decision.

What is the impact of teacher shortages in certain parts of Scotland or in specific disciplines?

There is the potential for a lack of equity with a restricted curriculum as a possible outcome. In some disciplines, schools work collaboratively with FE sector to deliver courses as part of the senior phase, but these colleagues may not be GTCS registered …

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

The issue of “readiness” is apposite in this context, coupled with on-going support which could be through a mentoring/coaching relationship. As a membership organisation, SCIS endeavour to provide a range of tailored leadership programmes and opportunities for colleagues to experience leadership at all levels. As in LAs, many SCIS member schools have the capacity to offer leadership opportunities in a range of contexts. Such experience carries a significant weighting when considering applying for a post.

Additional Issues for Consideration?

Retired teachers play a pivotal role in supply work within schools. Evidence from the sector suggests that the requirements of Professional Update and the payment of a full fee to the GTCS have combined to reduce the supply pool available. If greater flexibility could be exercised in this regard, this pool could potentially increase, and importantly, be sustained.

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