COLLEGIATE TIME

As from August 2006, the pupil contact time for secondary teachers in Scotland has been limited to a maximum of 22.5 hours per week. Although the reduction in class contact time was only by 1 hour per week, the effects on Working Time Agreements (WTAs) are likely to be significant.

Currently most authorities have agreed that the "one third" personal and professional preparation time should be estimated for practical purposes as being 8 hours. As a result the time commonly called "collegiate time" for secondary teachers was previously 35 – (23.5 + 8) = 3.5 hours per week. Hence the annual time was 38 x 3.5 hours equating to 133 hours. The figure of 38 is used rather than 39 to allow that the 39 week teaching year includes 5 in-service days. As from 2003 therefore, the SSTA advised that School Negotiating Committees (SNCs) to work to this figure of 133 hours. The Association issued advice on the use of the 133 hours. The document suggested that the elements identified by the post McCrone agreement (additional preparation and correction time etc) should be discussed at SNCs and time be allocated to each element in individual School Working Time Agreements.

From August 2006, however, the weekly collegiate time figure is likely to be assessed by employers as being 35 – (22.5 + 7.5) = 5 hours giving an annual total of 190 hours, an increase of 57 hours. There can be little doubt that authorities will attempt to advise headteachers that the additional hours are used under the direction of the headteacher and authority. The Association's experience since 2003 very strongly indicates that such an arrangement would be to the significant disadvantage of SSTA members, teachers generally and the education service as a whole.

Members who wish information as to how a WTA should be constructed should see the advice note "The Format of a Working Time Agreement". More detailed advice (for reps in particular) is given on the advice note "Working Time Agreements". The more detailed version contains everything that any rep or negotiator needs to know including content and approval of a WTA and what to do if there is a failure to agree the WTA.

The advice notes are available on the Association website www.ssta.org.uk (follow the "Advice Notes" link).

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