

SSTA submission to:

Careers Pathway for Teachers Panel - 25 October 2018

Teachers Are Scotland's Future

Scotland is facing a deepening crisis in retaining and recruiting teachers and headteachers in its schools. The Scottish Government needs to acknowledge that teachers' working conditions and remuneration have failed to keep pace with the rapidly changing education environment. Schools and teachers need to adapt to meet the demands of a modern education system.

As a consequence teaching is increasingly perceived as an unattractive profession with an impossible workload demand, restricted career path and an uncompetitive salary scale. Addressing the structure of schools and its workforce are essential elements in the Scottish Government challenge to 'close the attainment gap'.

The Government has embarked on a programme of reform in education that has been mainly based upon structural change and has not started from the point of the pupil in the classroom. The most important focus must be on the teacher and pupil relationship in the classroom. It is therefore essential that all career teacher pathway discussions must be seen as supporting teaching and learning and not seen as a vehicle to deliver the government's structural change.

The biggest challenge to teachers in schools is the culture of ever-increasing workloads and meeting an ever-expanding range of pupil needs. The outcomes of the panel must ensure that the proposals are going to be achievable within a teacher's normal working week and acknowledge the importance of a range of other education support staff. These proposals must assist in retaining and recruiting teachers for schools in Scotland and learn from decisions and actions of the recent past.

The Teacher Career Structure

The removal of the Chartered Teacher scale (originally intended to keep good teachers in classroom) has created a 'glass ceiling' that new teachers reach relatively quickly. There is little opportunity for advancement which is creating a problem in keeping and motivating these teachers in the profession.

The numbers of posts of responsibility have reduced over a number of years. This has closed down the opportunities to gain experience, responsibility, career advancement and incentives to remain in teaching.

The normal promotional ladder expects classroom teachers to become principal teacher managing a number of departments without any subject management experience. Once promoted to principal teacher managing a number of departments the next move is to the post of deputy headteacher.

The only other way to get promotion is through the pastoral and pupil support route but unfortunately this has limited posts of responsibility and an increasingly unmanageable workload.

The difficulties in recruiting new headteachers reflects the unmanageability of the post and the reluctance from experienced depute headteachers who have identified the scale of the problem.

- **A need for a career structure that gives opportunities to gain experience and responsibility that recognises the commitment of the teacher**

The Pupil in the Classroom

The pupil in the classroom relies upon a network of people within the school to enable them to engage in the classroom. Besides the class teacher there is the guidance teacher, pupil support teacher, and a whole range of education support staff to support the pupil in the class.

Due to education cuts over a number of years the staff in these areas have been severely reduced and has put additional and avoidable pressure on the classroom teacher.

The Teacher in the Classroom

The subject teacher in a secondary school focuses on establishing the relationship with the pupils. Whilst planning, preparing, delivering and assessing the lesson the teacher also assesses the pupil progress and identifies strengths and weaknesses. The teacher uses their professional judgement and builds on this knowledge in future lessons. Teachers need to focus on teaching and learning and other administrative tasks should be predesignated.

The subject is the vehicle within which this interaction takes place. However, each teacher in the school is developing materials and strategies for their individual classes. It is essential to keep experienced teachers in the classroom (on the front line) and who can encourage and support less experienced teachers.

- **Recognise and reward teachers to focus on teaching and learning**
- **Recognise the importance of time to develop strategies and materials for use in the classroom**
- **Recognise and reward experienced teachers for using their expertise inside and outside the school**

The Supply Teacher

Supply Teachers are an important and essential part of the education service. Schools are unable to function without an experienced and professional group of teachers. The supply teacher shortage has been as a direct result of the lack of understanding and respect of the importance of supply teachers.

The burden of new qualifications, excessive internal assessment, the lack of available applicants to fill vacancies and the lack of supply teachers have resulted in the majority of teachers working in conditions of severe long term stress with a significantly poorer work life balance.

The supply teacher should be a valued member of the school community and must have an entitlement to proper contracts of employment with salaries that reflects the importance of the role, and access to continued professional development.

- **Recognise and reward the expertise of the supply teacher as an integral part of the education system**
- **Create a national register of qualified supply teachers to ensure a career path and access to continued professional development**

The Secondary Subject Specialist

The Principal Teacher of subject was a great strength of the Scottish Secondary Education system but local authority decisions to change management structures in schools have seen the Principal Teacher of subject an endangered species. Most schools do not have a teacher in the school responsible for keeping abreast of subject developments. The current Principal Teacher posts are seen as management positions with little time for leading a subject.

It is unreasonable to expect all subject teachers at the same level, to accept responsibility and carry out this function independently. To develop the subject expertise, encourage leadership and rationalise workload there is a need to see a return to the subject specialist in secondary schools.

- **Recognise and reward lead teachers of subjects in secondary schools**
- **Recognise the importance of time to develop strategies and materials for use in the classroom**
- **Recognise the need for opportunities for collaboration with other subject specialist in and across schools**
- **Recognise and reward lead teachers of subjects for sharing expertise within school and across schools**

The Guidance and Pupil Support Teacher

Guidance and pupil support teachers are vital in enabling pupils to access the curriculum and reach their full potential. Their workload has become unmanageable following years of cuts in specialist teachers and education support staff. Increasing pupil caseloads and supporting more pupils with complex and demanding needs have added to the problem. The 'job-sizing toolkit' that was devised in a different age doesn't recognise the responsibilities of these overworked and undervalued highly skilled teachers.

- **Recognise and reward the importance of guidance and pupil support teachers.**
- **Recognise the expertise of these teachers and create a professional career structure that values their expertise in the education service**
- **Recognise and reward guidance and pupil support teachers for sharing expertise within school and across schools**
- **Offer opportunities with time and pay for aspiring teachers to develop their understanding of, and expertise in, support roles**
- **Please see appendix for the SSTA Members Survey**

The Management Structure

There has been a conscious move in many local authorities to move away from principal teacher of subjects to a faculty structures in schools. The appointment of a senior principal teacher to manage a number of subjects appears to be sensible way forward and gives the teacher a more management responsibility. This experience enables the post holder to progress to a more senior position in the school.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the teacher in addition to managing a number of departments is given a range of 'whole school' responsibilities. The impact of these additional responsibilities moves the teacher further away from the departments they were appointed to manage without the support of the former principal teacher of subjects.

The change in structure has created a 'major' and a 'too large' step from being a subject teacher to being a principal teacher managing a number of subjects. This step is viewed by most teachers as a 'step too far'. There are very few opportunities for teachers to gain experience to enable them to move into middle leadership positions. The main focus of the principal teacher who manages a number of subject areas should be supporting teaching and learning in those areas.

As for teachers who undertake a range of 'whole school responsibilities,' these should be accommodated within a more senior position in the school and seen as a 'stepping stone' to gain knowledge and experience before aspiring to become a deputy headteacher.

Senior positions in schools need to be focused on leading teaching and learning. It is essential that the support systems provided by the local authority are there to remove tasks that do not require the skills and expertise of leaders of teaching and learning.

Many functions that dissuade teachers from aspiring to be Deputy and Headteachers could be managed more successfully if local authorities provided support staff in (and outside) the school to reduce the burden. The system needs to develop teachers to move into senior positions that focus on teaching and learning and are manageable. All teachers need a sensible work life balance.

- **Introduce a number of realistic management posts that offer opportunities to gain experience and encourage teachers to seek further responsibility.**
- **Recognise the importance of management posts being achievable and provided with sufficient non-teaching time to undertake those responsibilities**
- **Recognise and reward the principal teacher who manages a number of subject areas and focus their work on supporting teaching and learning in those areas.**
- **Recognise and reward posts that manage a number of 'whole school' responsibilities**
- **Recognise and reward the extent of the increasing responsibilities expected of Deputy Headteachers and Headteachers.**
- **Create supporting teacher posts to assist the range of responsibilities expected of senior members of teaching staff.**

APPENDIX – SSTA Pastoral Pupil Support Survey

SSTA conducted a survey of Pastoral and Pupil Support Teachers in Secondary Schools in December 2017 and received 78 Responses. The summary of the findings showed that:

- a wide range of practice across schools
- a lack of understanding of the different roles and responsibilities,
- insufficient time allocated for duties,
- ever increasing additional responsibilities and caseloads; and
- lack of training before and whilst teachers in the posts

Main findings

Size of secondary school 4% had 251-500 pupils, 22% had 501-750 pupils, 27% had 751-1000 pupils, 23% had 1001- 1250 pupils, 18% had 1251-1500 pupils and 3% had more than 1500 pupils

Respondents 75% pastoral support/guidance, 16% Pupil support, and 9% both pastoral and pupil Support

No of Pastoral/Guidance teachers in a school 18% had 3 teachers, 24% had 4 teachers, and 18% had 5 teachers

No of Pupil Support teachers in the school 14% had 1 teacher, 6% had 2 teachers, 12% had 3 teachers, 22% had 4 teachers, 16% had 5 teachers and 16% had 6 teachers

Position on Principal Teacher scale 3% not a PT, 7% on PT1, 16% on PT2, 32% on PT3 and 33% on PT4

Caseloads 6% have up to 50 pupils, 6% between 51-100, 4% between 101-150, 38% between 151-200, 24% between 201-250, 12% between 250-300, and 9% more than 300 pupils.

Teaching Commitment in addition to responsibility 1% no class teaching, 4% less than 5 hours, 22% between 5 and 10 hours, 35% between 11 and 15 hours, 32% between 15-20 hours, and 6% more than 20 hours class teaching

Cover for absent colleagues 18% no cover and 82% less than 5 hours cover

Additional average hours a week outside of school day to complete work 3% less than 5 hours, 31% 5 to 10 hours, 33% 11 to 15 hours, 24% 16 to 20 hours and 10% more than 20 hours per week