



The Educational
Institute of Scotland

SCOTTISH BORDERS EIS ADVICE ON RESPONDING TO TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S SERVICES SEPTEMBER 2008

The Executive Committee of the Borders Branch of the EIS have been gathering the views of colleagues from across the Region. Our members have attended the meetings that have been held so far in the consultation process of SBC. We have invited comments and questions from all areas that will be affected by the sweeping changes proposed by the Project Board of TCS. There is a lot of information presented on the SBC website and it is not all easily accessible. What we feel is lacking is evidence that the proposals will deliver the claimed improvements in Children's Services along with the savings that are required in the budget. In this and other leaflets we try to spell out the consequences of the changes for classroom practitioners and the young people in their classrooms. The following points have been made to us by our members and by parents at the consultation meetings. You can make your own judgements from your own professional experience as to their validity.

Principal Teachers in the Primary Sector – the role of Leaders of Learning

- PTs in Primary Schools are just now starting to take on the roles of 'Leaders of Learning' in their own schools and do not on the whole wish to have to work across a large area and a number of schools.
- The time that PTs in Primary Schools have for their management duties is not enough but there are very few HTs who do not give their PTs additional non-contact time. It is not true to say that Primary PTs are not undertaking curriculum development at the moment.
- By encouraging early retirement, SBC will lose good practitioners from the service at a time when they still have lots to offer – these are the people that have already been selected because of their skills and experience.
- The packages being offered for early retirement will cost a lot to fund – money that could be better used.
- There are big questions about what happens to those PTs who do not or cannot go for early retirement and are not selected for the new posts – they may have to move schools causing disruption to schools and classes. There is no evidence that this process will improve schools.
- Those who are unsuccessful in remaining as PTs will feel de-motivated and undervalued by their managers and SBC.
- How can a PT effectively participate in curricular reform in up to 13 schools in the limited time suggested?
- The classes of the PTs will be just as disrupted as those of teaching HTs at the present. PTs will be required to attend meetings with the other PTs in the learning

Community and to cover the absence of the HT. PTs in Primaries will also have to liaise with their 'job-share' partner, planning work for their class.

- There will be a significant reduction in opportunities for promotion in Scottish Borders if the number of PTs is so drastically reduced – will the best teachers still apply to SBC for class teacher jobs if they know they will probably have to move out of the Region for promotion?
- With the increase of workload will PTs still be available for the mentoring of NQTs and the support of other staff within their own school? Who takes on their remit within the School Improvement Plan?
- If both HT and PT are out of school – who takes on the responsibility of the daily problems of discipline and health and safety?
- Where is the evidence that this new structure of management will work, how will it be monitored, what are the criteria for success?

The EIS believes that there should be a least one principal teacher in every primary school with a roll in excess of 100. The number of principal teachers in larger schools should be roll related. Principal teachers should have a reduction in class contact time commensurate with the pupil roll of the school.

The EIS recognises that the implementation of ACE will have implications for promoted post structures especially at the level of principal teacher. Any changes in promoted post structures should follow educational development within the context of this document rather than be utilised as a means of imposing change. In general the increasing demands on the management of the curriculum are most unlikely to be able to be carried out by reducing the number of principal teachers, whatever the details of their remits.

(From EIS policy documents)

Please consider these points when responding to the Consultation on TCS. You do not have to use the official response form. We have been assured that all responses will be taken into account and will be available to elected members before they vote on these proposals in November.

Kay Miller
Secretary
EIS
Scottish Borders