

# ELL(2) 10-04 p.4)

## Background paper re: "Action Plan for Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Wales"

### (General Teaching Council for Wales, September 2003)

Whilst welcoming the Action Plan I would like to bring to the attention of the "Education and Lifelong Learning Committee" several points relating to 2 particular recommendations made within the document.

Section 4, points 4.1.85 – 4.1.89

Culminates in the recommendation,

"LEA's in partnership, consider developing a recruitment web site which allows schools to advertise posts for a minimal cost..."

The committee may not be aware that Eteach UK, in partnership with SHA, (Cymru), NAHT (Cymru), the major teaching Unions, including UCAC has developed such a site during the last 3 Years. I refer you to [www.eteach.com](http://www.eteach.com) / [www.athrawon.com](http://www.athrawon.com) (Swydd fan)

- 95% of the schools in Wales access these sites either individually or via their LEA. Further projects are being developed with the Catholic Education Service, Church in Wales, whilst Cydag and similar bodies are tremendously supportive including brokering preferential rates for their schools.
- 14 out of the 22 LEA's facilitate such an arrangement on behalf of their schools. Schools thereby access the desired recruitment website(s) at tens of pounds per year (often via Service level Agreement) for unlimited advertising as opposed to the many hundreds per advert via the "traditional" means. Such brokerages fulfil the desired "partnership" and "minimal cost" criteria suggested in the recommendation. Further we integrate our job functionality into each LEA website e.g. see [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk) and search teaching vacancies.
- Additional to the 14 LEA's above, 4 local Secondary Head teachers Association's buy in directly in the absence of their Authorities acting on their behalf. This provides a virtual total coverage of all teaching vacancies in Wales.
- At the time of writing, Thursday 24 June 2004, the Western Mail has 3 teaching vacancies in

Wales, Daily Post 6, while the websites [www.eteach.com](http://www.eteach.com) / [www.athrawon.com](http://www.athrawon.com) 126.

- Advertising on the above websites is bought on an annual licence basis. In short were it not productive in terms of both quality and quantity of applicants attracted the critical mass of almost universal usage by schools/ LEA's would not have been reached or sustained.
- Linked to this, dynamic weekly bulletins of teaching vacancies in Wales are produced and disseminated to all Initial Teacher Training Colleges in Wales (and beyond).

Section 4, points 4.11.152 – 159

Culminates in recommendation (B),

"Lea's work together to create and maintain regional lists of supply teachers currently available for work and to provide a service to support schools seeking supply teachers at short notice"

Again the committee may not be aware that Eteach UK , in partnership with 10 LEA's across Wales have done just this. Indeed all North Wales LEA's (with the exception of Wrexham) are involved, as are Ceredigion, Powys, Blaenau Gwent, RCT and Bridgend. This forms an enormous pool of supply teachers across a region. This pool is then available to all schools in that region via the Internet in the form of a web based database; is constantly updated online and far exceeds the modest recommendation above.

Indeed certain Welsh LEA's are in detailed discussions with myself re using this database for developing CPD needs. Flintshire Schools/LEA payroll ALL their supply teachers ( 3187.5 supply teacher days involving over 550 individuals for the month of May 2004 alone) via the database facilitated by Eteach. They were encouraged to do so by WAG's funding of a variety of projects aimed at "developing electronic government". A number of other Welsh LEA's are in discussion with me re extending their service to include this function...

Whilst broadly welcoming the recommendations made in the report and having had the opportunity to both support and offer an all Wales context to each. There is undoubtedly enormous potential for a strategic approach to build upon progress made, thereby further and quickly fulfil the "Action Plans" key recommendations in this respect.

All the progress detailed above has been achieved by my negotiating with various LEA's , Head teachers , Union representatives across Wales and the informal network that has been developed as a result.

Where from here?

If the issues raised in the Action plan are thought to be of a significant nature, the "ad hoc" process by

which they are being locally explored and addressed are somewhat inadequate.

I suggest that a lead needs to be taken e.g. a conference aimed at LEA's to share best practice and provide a context for their response. Wales has examples of the ultimate best practice in the UK with respect to the two recommendations in question, but unfortunately also examples of the worst.

The benefits?

Will be seen immediately, in terms of "Best Value", School Improvement and cost effective recruitment of permanent teaching staff and the deployment of temporary staff.

Rod Bowen  
Manager (Wales) Eteach UK Ltd  
07779 222629  
rdb@eteach.com