

SECTION 6

The Transfer of Teachers from One School to Another

Introduction

Without coherent and consistently applied policies on teacher transfer some schools would soon become over-staffed while others could continue to languish below their approved establishment. While some staffing imbalance may be reduced by teachers seeking voluntary transfer, this can have only a marginal effect. In some countries acceding to voluntary transfer, requests can actually exacerbate the situation. For example, the schools most frequently over-staffed are those in the capital city, for which requests for voluntary transfer are most prevalent, while schools in the rural areas, to which teachers are reluctant to move, are often well below their entitlement.

Compulsory transfer is not a popular concept with teachers, Headteachers and administrators. Nevertheless, it is an essential tool in teacher management if the best use of the available finance for teacher staffing is to be achieved and the shortage of trained teachers is to be overcome.

Checklist

- (1) Are regular checks made of each school's teaching establishment against 'teachers in post'?
- (2) Are there policies in place to handle the compulsory transfer of teachers in surplus?
- (3) Do existing policies allow for compulsory transfers to take precedence over requests for voluntary transfers?
- (4) Have these policies the support of the teacher unions and professional associations?
- (5) Do these rules take account of subject imbalance?
- (6) Do Headteachers and teachers understand these policies?
- (7) Are teachers fully aware of the rules for teacher transfer?

Policy Suggestions

Teachers who, either because of a new appointment to a school to correct subject imbalance or because of a reduced complement of staff, are 'surplus' to the school's entitlement should be identified for 'compulsory transfer'. It is essential that guidelines are agreed with the teacher unions and professional associations on how this should be done. For example, a policy where the teacher with the shortest length of continuous service in the department with extra teachers is the one to be declared 'surplus' could be generally acceptable. Some exceptions might be agreed as part of the policy. For example, a teacher who had been compulsorily transferred could be exempt from a further move for a period of three years.

A teacher requesting a voluntary transfer should be offered a list of appropriate vacant teaching posts and be allowed to choose from this list. Requests by teachers for a transfer on a voluntary basis either to be closer to home, for personal reasons, or to gain a different teaching experience should be acceded to where possible. However, it is essential that the transfer be granted only if the new school has a teaching vacancy and the teacher is appropriately qualified and suitably experienced for the post.

Procedures for Consideration

In the majority of situations it is advisable to arrange the transfer of teachers at the start of a new session or, if that is not possible, at the start of a new term. Transfer arrangements should be an integral part of the annual timetable for staffing schools, some guidance for which is given in Section 2 of this guide.

Having established, as far as possible the probable staffing establishment for the coming year and matching this against teachers in post the surplus or shortage of teachers in each school can be found. Where surpluses occur, requests for voluntary transfers can be invited. If this fails to solve the problem, the names of the teachers who are to be compulsorily transferred can be determined.

To ensure existing staff are given preference in the filling of vacant posts, the 'matching-in' of teachers for compulsory transfer should take place in advance of making appointments to vacant unpromoted posts in schools either by voluntary transfer or by new appointment.

The Regional/District Education Officer should be delegated the task of handling all transfers in the region or district, acting within the policy agreed for the country as a whole.

References:

Turning the Tables on Teacher Management

Chapter 12, page 53