

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group
29 January 2024 @ 2.30 pm
Via Teams
Minutes

In attendance:

Dalton Tattan, Assistant Secretary General (Chair)
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Assistant Secretary General
Lynn Ramsey Director, Teaching Council
Yvonne Keating, Chief Inspector
Séamus Keating, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance/ Teacher Allocations
Jill Fannin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE and Professional Development)
Sinéad Keenaghan, PO, Payroll
James Walsh, PO, Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions
Paul Alexander, PO, Statistics
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Special Education.
Caroline Galvin, PO, Pensions
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations
Noreen Finnegan, PO Teacher Education Policy (Teaching Council)
Róisín Collier, PO, Communications Section
Leona DeKhors, APO, Curriculum & Assessment Policy Unit

Also in attendance:

Tom Slevin, APO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
Deirdre Dalton, APO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
John Egan, HEO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)

Apologies:

Bernie McNally, Secretary General
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Evelyn O'Connor, PO, Curriculum & Assessment Policy Unit

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 December 2023 were agreed.

The Group discussed some general details about the new draft public sector agreement and the possibilities arising from it for developing teacher supply proposals.

2. Update on specific actions:

Actions to increase substitution by retired teachers

- Pensions Unit have published a circular regarding the extension of the pension abatement waiver for a further 2 years.
- It is intended to send out an information note on this extension to retired teachers via their pension pay slip.
- It is also intended to progress work on an informative online pension calculator for retired teachers who return to substitute.

Teacher allocations to schools 2024/25

It is hoped that details of the staffing arrangements for the 2024/25 school year to primary and post primary schools will be released this week. This will facilitate schools to begin recruitment for the 2024/25.

Upskilling programmes– Irish and other subjects

- Contract negotiations with the successful applicant for the Irish upskilling programme are on-going.
- Work is progressing on the evaluation panels for upskilling courses in French, computer science and politics and society.

Development of PME incentive

- Teacher Supply Section are working with IT Unit on developing some form of online application process for the beneficiaries of this scheme.
- It was agreed that the Department's Teacher Payroll and ESBS Teacher Payroll will need to be kept informed of any developments in this process.
- Further details of this incentive scheme will follow in the coming months.

Teacher supply data project (data dashboards) and Teaching Council register research

- The group welcomed the production of this data as it is hoped to deliver a consistent, sustainable and reliable source of data on teacher workforce issues.

- The continued production and analysis of this data will put the Department in a position to better understand the challenges and to help inform further actions.
- A workshop with relevant business areas in the Department is scheduled for February 20th to discuss further.

3. Teacher supply in special education settings

The meeting was informed that:

- Pressures in special education settings have remained stable since the Group's last meeting
- NABMSE intend to engage in a qualitative research piece with some special education schools regarding their difficulties in appointing teachers during the August/September period.
- Discussion between Special Education Unit and IPPN regarding the employment of NQTs in summer programmes in special education schools are progressing well.

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

Teaching Transforms – update

- A new promotional campaign for the CAO and PME deadlines has gone live.
- It is hoped to have quantitative data on this campaign for the next meeting.
- It is also hoped that there will be further engagement with the 'stars' of the current campaign later this year in similar promotional campaigns.

5. Draft Teacher Supply Action Plan (including potential actions to be considered for inclusion)

Droichead arrangements for NQTs trained outside Ireland

- The Teaching Council are considering the implications of the Proportionality Directive regarding the extension of the COVID Amendment Regulation (CAR) beyond the current deadline of February 2024 for two more years.

Review the incremental credit scheme to recognise post-primary teaching service

- The Department is continuing to discuss ways to progress the expansion of the incremental credit scheme to post-primary teachers.

Consideration of a further education (FE) pathway to primary ITE

- The Department has met with DFHERIS and the National Tertiary Office (NTO) to discuss the possibilities of FE pathway to primary ITE.
- The primary aim of these talks is to increase diversity in teaching.
- While talks were at a very high level it is believed some form of HEI partnership with an ETB would be the most viable option.

- The next action here is the organisation of a workshop with all the relevant stakeholders.

Further education teachers in post primary schools

- The Department is continuing to engage with DFHERIS to identify any available capacity to use further education teachers at post primary level, particularly, for practical subjects.

Review Teacher Sharing Scheme

- Teacher Supply recently discussed the possibility of a revised teacher sharing scheme with the relevant post-primary stakeholders.
- The Group agreed that any text on a revised teacher sharing would have to be agreed with the Management Bodies.

Technical support Instrument (TSI)

- Teacher Supply section informed the Group that the Department recently secured funding under the EU Technical Support Instrument (TSI) for work on a “Strategic Workforce Planning for Teachers”.
- The contractor appointed is UNESCO and it will largely be a consultative piece of work and is expected to start in early Q3 this year.
- The Group welcomed this development.

Rollover of Primary ITE places

- The Group was informed that while all established primary ITE programmes for 2023/24 were successfully filled there was a shortfall of applications on the additional places that were offered.
- ITE and Professional Development are in talks with ITE providers regarding the possibility of offering these places for next year.

Extension of teacher supply measures to 2024/25

- It was agreed that clarity on the continuation of measures for the 2024/25 school year, such as job sharing, career breaks and teaching hours extension, will need to be provided as soon as possible.

Review of actions, responsibilities and timelines

- The group agreed that further discussion was needed on whether the updated Teacher Supply Action Plan should be published.

6. Department response to the Ukrainian crisis

- Almost 18,000 Ukrainian pupils have been enrolled in schools across Ireland to date.
- The biggest issues arising from the number of Ukrainian students are the pressures on EAL and SET hours.
- It was noted that the number of arrivals from Ukraine is reducing.

7. AOB

- The Teaching Council informed the Group that their updated re-registration process for teachers whose registration may have lapsed will go live this Wednesday
- Statistics Unit and IT are in talks about a new on line facility that would deal with student enrollment forms.

8. Date of next meeting

7 March 2024

Teacher Supply Secretariat
February 2024