

Succession planning in Redbridge schools

2008 summary

The importance of effective succession planning strategies has been highlighted recently in order to support teachers' careers and grow our own future leaders. The significance of this has been related to an expected shortfall in applicants for Head Teacher positions in five years time, when a large number of serving Head Teachers and Deputy Heads are expected to retire. A survey of current practice in succession planning was conducted in 2008. Each school's Governing Body was asked to conduct an audit of present and future actions and to report the results. This summary is the product, reflecting information supplied by 38% of all schools.

Examples of current practice

- External leadership training for teachers including "Leading from the Middle", the CCRS and National Professional Qualification for Headship
- School's own middle leadership training programmes
- Governing Body training on succession planning
- Talent spotting for future leaders and follow up support
- Mentoring
- Careers advice
- Internal promotions
- Coaching
- Shadowing
- Offering leadership responsibilities to aspiring leaders
- Secondments
- Distributing leadership within the school
- Preparing for retirement
- Skill analysis of leadership competencies
- Reviewing of staffing structures

Examples of further support planned for the future

- Greater engagement with talent spotting in the context of performance management
- Support for reducing stress in senior leaders
- Developing the role of the School Business Manager/Bursar and greater distribution of leadership in finances

- Job sharing
- Creating partnerships with other schools
- Reviewing the Senior Leadership Team's work life balance
- Master's level CPD

Summary

Schools generally make good use of external leadership training programmes.

Some schools, more usually secondaries, have developed very effective in-house leadership training opportunities for their own staff.

Many schools had no planned succession planning activity due to a current stable staffing situation. Leadership training is essential for teachers and support staff as a means of raising standards and developing careers. This will result in better retention of talented staff and will aid the school's capacity for filling future vacancies with suitably skilled personnel.

Lack of funding for training was often cited as having a negative impact on the extent of support.

Recommendations

Improved leadership training would be achieved if schools did more of the following:

1. Schools need to set appropriate budgets to support CPD. This should be seen as an ongoing priority.
2. Schools need to see succession planning as a significant issue irrespective of their current circumstances.
3. Governing Bodies need to be better trained in the issues regarding succession planning *
4. Schools need to place a greater emphasis on effective teamwork for all their teams, teaching and non-teaching, and provide access to good quality training for all their team leaders *
5. Schools need to adopt a systematic approach to talent spotting, aligned to performance management *
6. Schools should give greater support to teachers to shadow colleagues in similar locations *
7. Schools should review the effectiveness of present distribution of leadership responsibilities
8. Schools should explore the potential benefits of the School Business Manager role
9. Governing Bodies need to take the issue of Head Teacher work life balance and workplace stress seriously and take proactive steps to address this appropriately *

Note * indicates areas where support in Redbridge is already offered

Bob Drew
Leadership Adviser
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