

**PRINCIPAL'S SABBATICAL
REPORT**

TERM 3 2008

*Why Are Some Beginning Teachers Not
Securing Teaching Positions?*

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A. PURPOSE

Why Are Some Beginning Teachers Not Securing Teaching Positions?

BACKGROUND: As Chairperson of our local Principals Cluster I am often privy to conversations relating to teacher employment. The feeling amongst my colleagues at the moment, is that there is a “desperate shortage of teachers”, and yet on further questioning, principals do state that they are receiving many applications for teaching positions. Applications received often number in excess of 20, from a range of teachers, mostly beginning teachers including locally and internationally trained teachers. However after employment processes have transpired, including interviews, principals and appointments committees are not confident in appointing any of the interviewed applicants. I have also recently heard about, and experienced myself, receiving applications from Beginning Teacher graduates from 2006, who have previously applied to our school, and who have yet to secure any long term employment.

B. BACKGROUND

My focus for study emanates from my concerns relating to *why* exactly these applicants are deemed unsuitable and why some principals are advertising two or three times in an attempt to secure a suitable employee.

I am aware that there is a national organisation mandated to conduct research similar to my proposal, however none of the schools in our cluster have been contacted by them after repeated advertising.

FINDINGS: I am interested in providing quality relevant feedback, including implications of that feedback, to my colleagues and the School of Education, University of Auckland. I believe that my findings will provide relevant information relating to individual school employment issues, as well as adding to the information pool relating to current primary sector priorities.

ACTION PLAN: I plan to visit ten schools in our cluster covering a range of deciles and areas, and to then visit five schools in two other school clusters in Auckland to secure comparative data. I will compile my findings in a report and will be available to give presentations as necessary.

C. EXPECTED BENEFITS

My report should provide actual factual employment information, on what is currently a primary sector priority, directly relevant to Auckland principals, and particularly those of us who work within the Central Auckland / Auckland isthmus. The Ministry of Education has identified expected roll growth in these areas, and along with CRT and 1-15 junior staffing, more teachers will be needed in all schools in our area. It should also provide factual feedback that is both recent and relevant to the School of Education at the University of Auckland.

It is my hope that I can identify specific factors that are preventing principals from appointing suitable applicants i.e. perhaps I'll be able to document what precisely 'suitable' looks like! After all, none of my colleagues is bemoaning the fact that they are not receiving quantity applicants, it's the quality that's in doubt.

D. METHODOLOGY

This study will take place over five weeks:

Week 1	Initial professional reading / Questionnaire preparation
Weeks 2-4	Visiting schools
Weeks 4-5	Analysing and collating data. Writing report.

E. QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey focuses on four terms of employment: Term 3 2007 – Term 2 2008.

Beginning Teacher Survey - 2007 / 2008

1. How many teaching positions, both LTR and permanent, have you advertised in the past 12 months.
2. How many of these positions did you fill after the first advertisement?
3. How many B.T's did you interview?
4. How many successful appointees were B.T.?
5. How many times did you advertise vacant positions?
6. Concerning B.T.'s, have any B.T.'s applied to your school on more than one occasion?
7. How many?
8. Did you interview any of these people?
9. Why did you not employ them?
10. What advice could you give them?

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Eden / Albert Cluster

Question	Schools								Tot	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		
1	How many teaching positions, both LTR and permanent, have you advertised in the past 12 months?	2	3	2	7+ management	3	12	4	2	35
2	How many of these positions did you fill after the first advertisement?	2	1	2	All	0	9	3	2	26
3	How many B.T.'s did you interview?	4	5	2	10	4	9	6	2	42
4	How many successful appointees were B.T.?	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	1	17
5	How many times did you advertise vacant positions?	1	1 st two 3 times 3 rd one 1 time Hard to get last year Terms 2 & 3. Team Leader 2 x teacher 1 x Full time	1	N/A	2 2 2	2	2	1	20
6	Concerning B.T.'s, have any B.T.'s applied to your school on more than one occasion?	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	71%
7	How many?	N/A	N/A	5	1 applied 5 times	2	N/A	2	Several	13
8	Did you interview any of these people?	N/A	N/A	No	Never. Been there on practicum	1	N/A	Yes (1)	Yes (2)	4

9	Why did you not employ them?	N/A	N/A	Employed others	See above	Wasn't right for our school. English not good enough?	N/A	Could not answer questions	Needed someone with better English Not able to answer questions well enough
10	What advice could you give them?	N/A	N/A	Make sure they have ICT skills. In a way practicum biggest seller. Realising importance of practicum	Told them to stop applying	She's got a job – it would be the English. Needs to be more fluent: she's quite hard to understand in an interview	N/A	Be prepared	Should be able to talk about numeracy & literacy programmes

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Other Clusters

Question	Schools								Total	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H		
1	How many teaching positions, both LTR and permanent, have you advertised in the past 12 months?	5	5	3	1	2	5	12	2	35
2	How many of these positions did you fill after the first advertisement?	All	4	3	1	2	All	11	2	33
3	How many B.T.'s did you interview?	5	12	3	1	1 job x 3	75% B.T.'s	15	2 x 2	47
4	How many successful appointees were B.T.?	4	2	3	1	Yes	3	5 from 9	2	21
5	How many times did you advertise vacant positions?	1	2	N/A	1	N/A	1	1 or 2	N/A	7
6	Concerning B.T.'s, have any B.T.'s applied to your school on more than one occasion?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	75%
7	How many?	6	N/A	3	N/A	5	2	1 or 2	Several	18
8	Did you interview any of these people?	1	N/A	1	N/A	Yes - 2	1 and again the 2 nd time	1	No	6

9	Why did you not employ them?	End of year – last minute departure. Needed more experience and expertise. Already appointed BT for class next door. Person not appeared to be strong for Management	N/A	Didn't demonstrate passion for teaching. Seemed bland. Concern about relationships with others: kids and adults	N/A	No, but both got jobs before I could employ them	Did	Did not want a B.T. mid-year	Unimpressed. a. Subjective Relieved and not liked practice. b. Objective: Category of CV not good. Not enough depth.
10	What advice could you give them?	Not as such: didn't want second B.T.	N/A	Tidy herself up Look interested and be interested	N/A	B.T. was going overseas & couldn't do a full year	Presentation – sell themselves. More confident.. Good grasp of English language. Can't articulate clearly	See out year where they were	Need to have point of difference. Can be good cv/comments from Associates. Bring stuff to interview or include in CV e.g. show reading plan or inquiry unit essentially. Start relieving and impress.

G. QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSES (FINDINGS)

Question 1: How many teaching positions, both LTR and permanent, have you advertised in the past 12 months?

All schools had advertised positions:

- ∞ 9 schools advertised between 1-3 positions
- ∞ 4 schools advertised between 4-6 positions
- ∞ 3 schools advertised more than 6 positions

Question 2: How many of these positions did you fill after the first advertisement?

- ∞ 10 schools filled all advertised positions on first advertisement
- ∞ 6 schools advertised more than once

Question 3: How many B.T.'s did you interview?

- ∞ 89 Beginning Teachers interviewed

Question 4: How many successful appointees were B.T.?

- ∞ 38 successful appointments were beginning teachers
- ∞ 70 positions were advertised

Question 5: How many times did you advertise vacant positions?

- ∞ 10 positions were advertised once
- ∞ 6 positions were advertised more than once

Question 6: Concerning B.T.'s, have any B.T.'s applied to your school on more than one occasion?

- ∞ 11 schools received more than one application from the same B.T.

Question 7: How many?

- ∞ 31 B.T.'s applied to a school more than once.

Question 8: Did you interview any of these people?

- ∞ 8 schools interviewed a B.T. more than once for different jobs

Question 9: Why did you not employ them?

A range of answers including:

- Employed others
- Wasn't right for our school
- Could not answer questions
- Needed someone with better English
- Not able to answer questions well enough

Question 10: What advice could you give them?

A range of answers including:

- Make sure they have ICT skills
- Realising the importance of practicum
- Needs to be more fluent in English
- Be prepared
- Should be able to talk about numeracy & literacy programmes

H. CONCLUSIONS

Why Are Some Beginning Teachers Not Securing Teaching Positions?

From my research there are many and varied answers to this question. Schools are advertising position regularly; some advertising multiple positions. Beginning Teachers are applying for positions, being interviewed and often successful.

Interestingly 73% of schools surveyed reported that Beginning Teachers have applied to their school on more than one occasion..a total of 31 teachers making second applications..10 of these teachers were interviewed; two secured other jobs before a decision was made and eight were unsuccessful.

Reasons for non-appointment were varied, ranging from schools not wanting to employ a Beginning Teacher at that time, to lack of fluent English and interviewees being unprepared or not being able to answer questions well.

Principals were very forthcoming as to offering advice to unsuccessful candidates. For example: “applicants should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the New Zealand Curriculum” and “applicants need to be professionally dressed, or at least well dressed”.

In summary, while the employment market may be variable, and has certainly changed significantly before and after the course of my study, there is a strong indicator that interviewees need to be very well prepared for interviews. This includes personal presentation, curriculum knowledge and knowledge of the school.

I. REFERENCES / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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