

*Letter to Edinburgh Council regarding the Curriculum Leader-Secondary Gaelic Education position advertised 26/03/2018 from Comann nam Pàrant Dùn Èideann*

We wish to express both concern and disappointment with the job description for the Curriculum Leader–Secondary Gaelic Education position currently being advertised by Edinburgh Council.

Our concerns are as follows.

The position is a part time GME teaching post.

This position, which is not supported by further full time GME appointments, will do very little to increase the current poor GME teaching provision at JGHS. Given the number of pupils currently in GME at JGHS, and soon to be only one teacher, it cannot be overstated how urgently we require additional, full-time teachers, particularly in the run up to exams.

The position is a city-wide position encouraging and developing secondary GME.

This role, due to the teaching commitments already stated, can only be a part time role. While we welcome any addition to developing GME on a city-wide basis such a role would best be served by a full time position. This split role will be highly unsatisfactory for all concerned. If the post-holder is required to carry out city-wide duties as well as GME provision within JGHS, how will the management reporting lines work, and who will resolve time conflicts between the different roles?

The position carries a remit to deliver GLE in Edinburgh secondary schools.

We fully support the expansion of delivery of GLE in Edinburgh. However, putting the burden of this on a position already encumbered by GME teaching and development responsibilities on a part time basis is stretching the resources of one individual beyond what is sensible. Currently there is a crisis within GME and this needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Developing GLE should be dealt with separately and unlike for GME, a degree in Gaidhlig is not mandated for GLE.

The position carries a responsibility for the development and use of e-Sgoil.

Our understanding from the recent e-Sgoil presentation is that the development and delivery of e-Sgoil as an addition to GME teaching would in itself require a full time position to properly achieve this. The e-Sgoil team stressed on a number of occasions that use of e-Sgoil requires increased staffing, rather than reduced. It is essential that this is in place before any roll-out of e-Sgoil, to ensure it can be delivered successfully.

---

From the above it seems to us that the remit of this single full time position is to cover the work of what ought to be at least four full time positions each requiring different qualifications and skill-sets. By combining these into a single post, we risk achieving none of them successfully, and deterring suitable candidates from applying for the urgently-needed GME role.

We note our concern that neither the job description nor the advertisement mention the need for fluency in Gaelic and that it is not even clear where this position will be based or to whom the post would report.

In addition we wish to express our disappointment that the job description does not explicitly state that the remit of this position is to work closely with the Head teacher at JGHS to begin the process of enhancing the provision of secondary GME at JGHS, with a view to creating a fully functioning GME unit capable of delivering the immersion education that GME pupils are entitled to, in order that such a unit might form the basis for a dedicated GME high school.

The withdrawal of the recently appointed history teacher and the imminent departure on maternity leave of another GME teacher puts an increased pressure on ensuring that the correct strategic decision is made in regard to this post.

On a number of occasions we have expressed our aim of building up GME provision at James Gillespie's High School (JGHS) prior to a move to a new GME secondary site. The creation of a promoted post at JGHS presents a great opportunity to attract a motivated and experienced GME teacher to begin to build a solid GME unit, and to begin the process of delivering the immersion education to which the GME children are entitled.

From feedback we have received, we believe that a principal teaching post at JGHS, which includes a remit to develop courses and build a GME unit, would be attractive to a high quality teacher. The post as currently advertised represents a mixture of part-time teaching and Council officer role, and will not be as attractive to a teacher. It would be more appropriate to advertise Council officer development roles separately from teaching posts.

We ask that you withdraw this advertisement, and consider how this role fits into the overall strategic development of GME in Edinburgh, and how it will work with staff strategies that are to be put in place by the JGHS Head Teacher and GLP officers.

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd

Brian Thunder

Convenor, Comann nam Pàrant Dùn Èideann

---

*Letter to Edinburgh Council regarding the Curriculum Leader-Secondary Gaelic Education position advertised 26/03/2018 from Comhairle nam Pàrant Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce*

I am writing concerning the advertisement that went out for the Curriculum Leader post before Easter. As you know, we are committed to working with the Council to ensure a sustainable pathway for GME in Edinburgh. We have concerns that this role has not been considered as part of the overall strategic plan and would like to request that it is withdrawn and reconsidered.

At the GIG meeting on the 27th March we were informed that we could not have certainty of pathway for our children's secondary education until the Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) was finalised and Estates had prepared more options for consideration. Taking this into consideration we would request that any new position created that will shape the future of GME in Edinburgh draw on, complement, and genuinely help deliver an overall strategic plan.

Our view is that the role you have created is not being set up to succeed and cannot genuinely achieve the build-up of the JGHS GME unit, wider GME strategy, and effective e-Sgoil delivery. This remit is extremely wide and, we believe, unrealistic for one individual. The role is doing both the work of a Gaelic Development Officer and a Senior teacher. Edinburgh Council is seriously in need of both roles - but for two or more individuals. We would urge you to withdraw this advertisement, and instead consider as part of the Gaelic Language Plan the appointments that need to be made.

As you know, our parents are extremely concerned about Edinburgh Council's commitment to secondary GME in light of the recent informal consultation over moving secondary GME to Drummond High School. Cllr Perry and Cllr Dickie have committed to coming back to us within six months with a short and long term plan for the development of secondary GME. We fail to see how a role like this would fit into that plan as it falls far short of what we have been asking for in our response to the GLP and in requests to build up the unit at JGHS in preparation for a move; we are being asked to wait for your strategy, yet what we see are inadequate tactical actions.

There is an opportunity here to show that Edinburgh Council have listened to the Gaelic community, and are responding constructively to demonstrate a shared vision for the development of GME in our city, by advertising the right posts with the right focus.

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd,

Marianne O'Loughlin

GIG representative for Comhairle nam Pàrant Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce

---