

School's Convenor Report – Branch Committee – 6th January 2014

Membership

The mapping exercise of schools has been completed and will be an ongoing exercise as staff levels and schools' status fluctuate. Currently there are 1775 members in over 100 schools and academies including Nursery schools and Sure Start. There are 5 Shop Stewards and 51 members of the School Working Group. More detailed information regarding member figures is available.

School Visits

Lynda Hardie, Lori Ashbridge and Paul Gilroy visited Sir Charles Parsons on 18 December to discuss historical issues brought up at the last School Working Group Meeting. This was an opportunity for members to speak about their frustrations concerning these matters. Paul introduced Lori as the School's Organiser so that communication and support in the future would be more forthcoming. Membership forms were taken by some new members of staff.

Schedule of visits:

Walbottle Campus, 7 January at 3:30; Hadrian School, 22 January (time TBC)

Other schools have been contacted to schedule visits but no dates have yet been confirmed.

Website

The Schools page of the Unison website has been updated with contact information of the School's Organiser and courses relevant to support staff provided by Bridges to Learning. This will be updated as information regarding schools comes in.

Living Wage

The Laidlaw Schools Trust has agreed to keep the Living Wage for the employees TUPE'd over when Thomas Walling became an academy and stated they would recommend the Living Wage for the other schools in the Trust (Excelsior and Atkinson Road Primary). They also agreed to keep the childcare vouchers for staff.

Schools Forum

Since the announcement that all children will receive a free school meal from September 2014 there has been no further guidance from Central Government. The Forum has queries such as:

- Will funding be available for possible cafeteria expansions?
- What will be the staffing implications for school staff, catering and supervisory staff?

There is no detail on how this will be played out. Colleagues of the forum are looking at which schools they predict will have a significant rise in take-up.

Schools Network

Meeting was attended by reps from Newcastle, Gateshead, Redcar, Darlington, Durham, and Sunderland. There were similar concerns between authorities regarding lack of Stewards as well as loss of staff due to redundancy. Reps will be contacted by email for agenda topics and pressing issues. It was agreed to continue to meet on a termly basis and possibly change the venue.

All Saints College

HR has sent a letter out to all LA maintained middle and secondary schools as well as the PRU, Sir Charles Parsons and Trinity school asking for interest in 'bump' redundancy. This is to create more opportunities for All Saints staff to be redeployed after the closure of the school in July 2014. Staff have expressed an interest in continuing to work in a secondary school setting which is the reason primary schools weren't contacted. Replies from interested schools are expected in early January 2014.

This opportunity is for teaching and support staff only; kitchen, cleaning and facility management staff can access corporate 'bump' redundancy opportunities from January 2014.

Lori Ashbridge School's Convenor