

**Devon Association of Governors  
DAG Conference 2008 “Tomorrow’s Schools”  
Exeter – 29 March 2008**

**WORKSHOP ON LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING  
Led by Phil Revell**

**Thinking Ahead: Choosing a New Leader for your School**

**Diamond Nine Exercise:**

This was a prioritising exercise whereby groups of six were given nine cards outlining things a GB might want to consider when choosing a new headteacher. If you do not already have a plan in place for recruiting a new leader, you are not functioning well as a GB and need to go back and address this.

The object of the exercise was to get the groups thinking. Are you, for example, starting from a position of weakness?

**What is the problem?**

- Demographic
- Not a big enough group of suitable teachers coming up to take headships.
- 40% of HTs will be leaving their posts in the next five years
- Many staff members have gone through the NPQH process but are not in Headships.
- In London Secondary Headship situation has improved over the last year.
- Governing Bodies need to change their approach to recruitment.
- Failing GBs will find it harder and harder to recruit.
- Primary Schools have specific problems – some advertise 5 times in TES – not receiving enough applications.
- TES is not the ONLY way to recruit.
- The timeline is also a problem
- GBs could consider a temporary or short contract HT or trying to persuade the outgoing HT to stay on – thereby giving the GB breathing space.
- Alternatively a current member of staff could stand in – NOT a stopgap, it allows time to choose more effectively.
- Don’t panic, but approach the problem with care.

## **Thinking outside the box**

- Try stepping away from the stereotype traditional image of an HT (ie not over 45, already a Deputy and male). A HT does not need 20 years experience – this rule doesn't apply in any other area, so why in teaching? Devon has a good record for appointing young HTs (NB: no such thing as a 'small school in London').
- What about sharing the job? Someone who would make a good head but not confident in his/her ability – ie a co-headship. Bring someone forward from existing staff. A delegate pointed out that pay and conditions do not allow/reflect for co-headships, executive headships etc. PR: Maybe by 2009 – NAHT are currently blocking this stepping stone. Legal implications do sometimes block innovative ideas and schools need to be very brave to go beyond that. Where schools have co-heads Ofsted will only name one of them in their reports and not both

## **Needle in Haystack**

- The practicalities of looking for a leader
- Try headhunting instead of expensive advertising. Yes, poaching!
- This practice was questioned by delegates who thought schools were obliged to advertise posts. PR agreed it presented difficulties but was not impossible to go about it this way.

## **TES**

- Consider who is responsible for responding the ads in the TES especially over the weekends – you could miss out on good candidates if you do not respond immediately.
- Think very carefully about what goes in the application pack.