



## **Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL Cymru) and ACM/AMiE response to the Welsh Assembly Government's proposals for additional INSET days: consultation on future requirements for additional INSET days**

**The Association of Teachers and Lecturers** represents over 160,000 education professionals across the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. It draws its membership from teachers and lecturers, leaders and support staff in maintained and independent schools, and Further Education Colleges. As well as campaigning vigorously to protect and enhance members' pay and conditions ATL also believes that the education profession has a key role in developing education strategy and policy. ATL Cymru represents over 6,500 education professionals in colleges and schools across the whole of Wales.

In September 2008 ATL launched the **Association of Managers in Education (AMiE)**, a joint venture with the Association for College Management (ACM). AMiE will bring together ATL's senior leadership team members in schools and colleges with ACM's leaders and managers in further and higher education. AMiE will represent over seven thousand leaders and managers across education in the UK. The two unions will be formally merged in January 2011.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation document. We have conducted a survey of our membership. They have expressed some dissatisfaction with the approach the Minister is taking on this issue. Most felt that the issue needed to be tackled more holistically and that pressure from a small group of parents should not compromise a more strategic approach. As they stand, we believe that the proposals to tie the two additional INSET days to disruption for inclement weather is confusing and unhelpful.

The additional INSET days should be used to aid the introduction of the SEF. Any move to curtail what little CPD and enhancement time there is for teachers is imprudent and could be misinterpreted as a sign of insufficient commitment from the WAG regarding the importance of SEF and its successful roll out to schools. The retention of these two INSET days is essential as funds for CPD funding from the GTCW has already been cut and teachers are receiving little training as

it is at present. CPD is planned and of value to furthering teachers professional role within the school and to improve pupil outcomes and well-being. A school's ability to plan this essential activity cannot be constrained by the vagaries of the weather. We believe a reduction in INSET days would cause much resentment across the profession in Wales.

Heads across Wales closed schools in inclement weather because there were serious concerns about health and safety. Heads who close schools do so as a last resort and schools are closed to take account of their duty of care for their staff and pupils alike. We urge the Minister to enter a dialogue with the teacher unions to come up with proposals to reduce the impact of school days lost. CPD cannot be the price that it paid. One member went so far as to state:

“I would far rather turn up at my local school if I can't get to my place of work – whichever phase of education it is, than miss out on essential CPD (which to be honest I am not going to be able to get anywhere else, especially with the cut to GTCW funding and school budgets being so dire that I can't send people on courses etc)”.

With support, in this digital age emergency planning could be in place so that appropriately matched lessons/activities/revision can be made available for those pupils and staff who can make it in to the school. Staff who could not make it to school could be using the time in lieu of PPA, which again, in this digital age should not be a problem. This puts an onus on Local Authorities to ensure that adequate Virtual Learning Environments and websites are in place for staff to access documents/resources from home should severe weather restrict their travel plans.

Teachers are professionals, and can be trusted to use their time wisely – what they cannot do however, is use time for appropriate CPD without it being a planned event.

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