ISC RESEARCH

Recruitment and CPD in international schools

The 2021 Report

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INTRODUCTION

How is teacher recruitment and continued professional development evolving in the light of COVID-19, the emerging trends in teaching and learning, and other factors impacting the international schools market[1]?

ISC Research has conducted research into current recruitment and CPD practice within international schools to explore shifts within the market and factors influencing change.

This report views current CPD needs through the lens of associations, training providers and international schools. It explores the impact of online and blended methodologies for accessing professional development solutions and includes advice on how to optimise professional learning including new access routes.

The report also focuses on staff recruitment, evaluating shifts in the current recruitment practice and needs of international schools. It provides analysis of the experiences of specialist recruitment providers, and investigates the challenges facing international schools as a result of emerging recruitment trends.

The report includes quantitative and qualitative results, conclusions from the research, and recommendations from experts in their fields.

In addition, ISC Research worked with Dr Siobhan Mellor, Educational Psychologist and Director of Real Group Ltd, in the contribution of the teacher development recommendations for this report.

[1] ISC Research considers a school as an international school for market research purposes if the school delivers a curriculum to any combination of pre-school, primary or secondary students, wholly or partly in English outside an English-speaking country, or, if a school in a country where English is one of the official languages, offers an English-medium curriculum other than the country's national curriculum and the school is international in its orientation.

SUMMARY

COVID-19 has emphasised major challenges already evident within the international schools market for teacher and leader recruitment. It has also proved an accelerator for shifts within CPD for international school staff.

Shifts are occurring, led by good and innovative practice of a few international schools and school groups. This includes recruiting from a wider and more diverse talent pool, creating new recruitment pathways, and developing professional learning content and access that addresses school improvement and encourages staff retention.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- International schools need to move away from a dependency on qualified teachers and leaders originating from a few selective nationalities only, due to recruitment limitations and in order to respond to the need for diversity, equity, inclusion and justice within a sector that promotes its international dimension.

- Additional routes to sourcing and developing the international educator talent pool is now an urgent market-wide need and requires positive contribution by all international schools.

- Ethical recruitment practice is an immediate necessity throughout the international schools market.

- Many international schools value lifelong learning for their staff, and all schools should do so.

- International schools can benefit from following a data-led approach to identifying professional learning gaps, and selecting and evaluating CPD rigorously.

- International schools now have increased options for accessing quality CPD. Some providers are offering online platforms and solutions to enable professionals to effectively engage with content and peers. These can offer particular value for international schools where access to face-to-face professional learning is limited due to cost or distance.

- International schools could explore research-informed evidence highlighting the benefits of online teacher professional development (oTPD) before automatically reverting to traditional CPD pathways.

- Good practice in recruitment and CPD needs to be shared, and more initiatives drawn from best practice within and beyond the sector.

THE SURVEY: RESEARCH PROCESS AND PARTICIPANTS

In September 2021, ISC Research conducted targeted qualitative research with a range of specialist international school recruitment companies and providers of continuing professional development (CPD). Quantitative research was also conducted with recruitment companies.

An open survey, accessible to all educators and school leaders exploring CPD preferences was conducted via social media (using LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook).

Qualitative research was also gathered from a range of stakeholders including international schools, school groups and associations.

ISC Research partnered with Dr Siobhan Mellor, Chartered Education Psychologist from Real Group to provide recommendations about accessing and optimising online CPD.

THE RESULTS

The results are presented in the following sections:

SECTION 1: Recruitment market trends

SECTION 2: Market shifts in recruitment – the view of recruitment providers

SECTION 3: Recruitment advice for international schools

SECTION 4: CPD market trends

SECTION 5: Market shifts in CPD – the view of international schools

SECTION 6: CPD preferences of educators

SECTION 7: Market shifts in CPD – the view of CPD providers

SECTION 8: Optimising CPD – advice for international schools

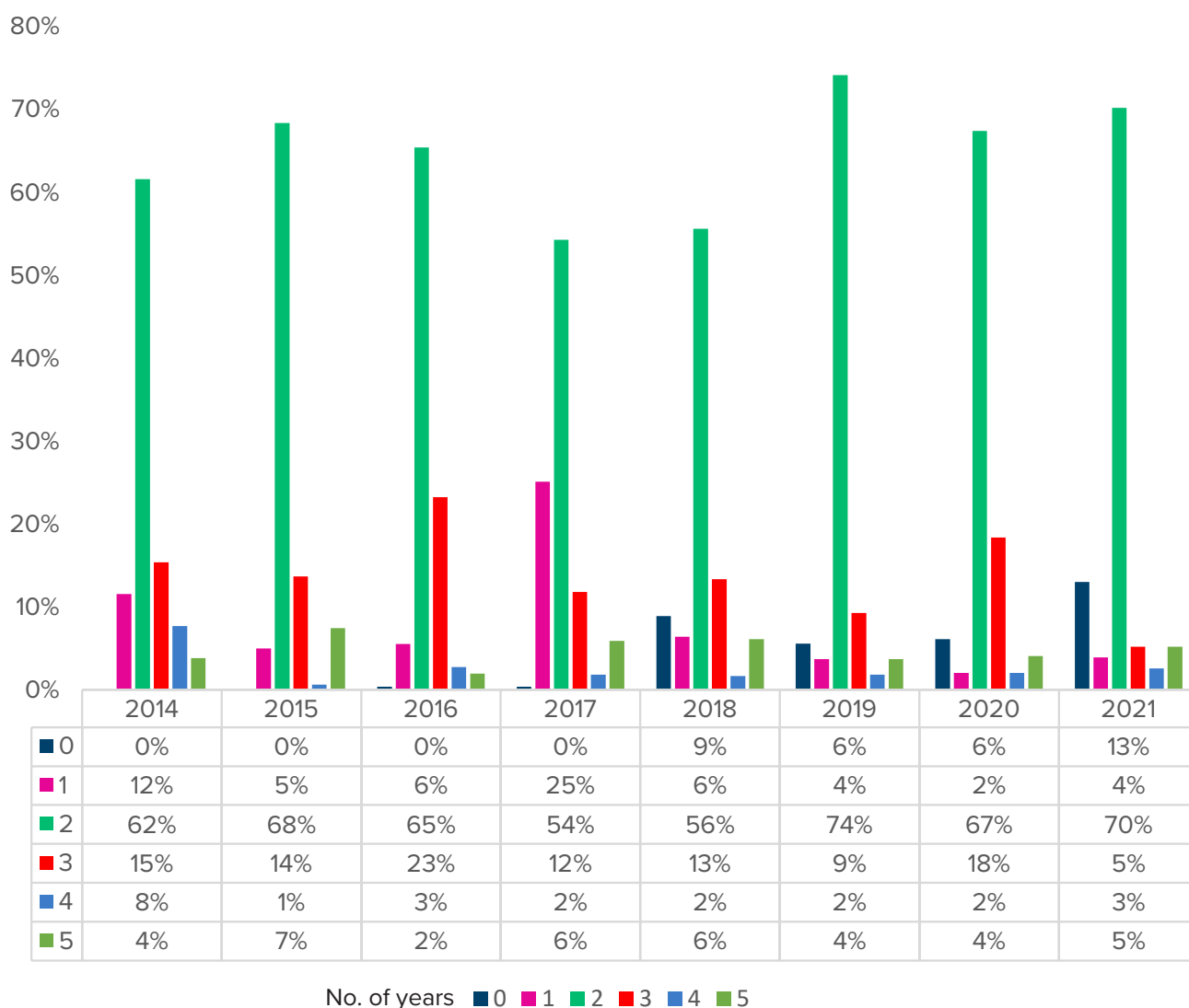# SECTION 1:

RECRUITMENT MARKET TRENDS

SECTION 1: RECRUITMENT MARKET TRENDS

ISC RESEARCH DATA, BASED UPON FIELD RESEARCH[2] FROM THE PAST SEVEN YEARS[3] SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING TRENDS:

International schools want experienced teachers. They typically require a minimum of two years' experience once a teacher has qualified before hiring.

Minimum years of post qualification employment for new overseas teachers

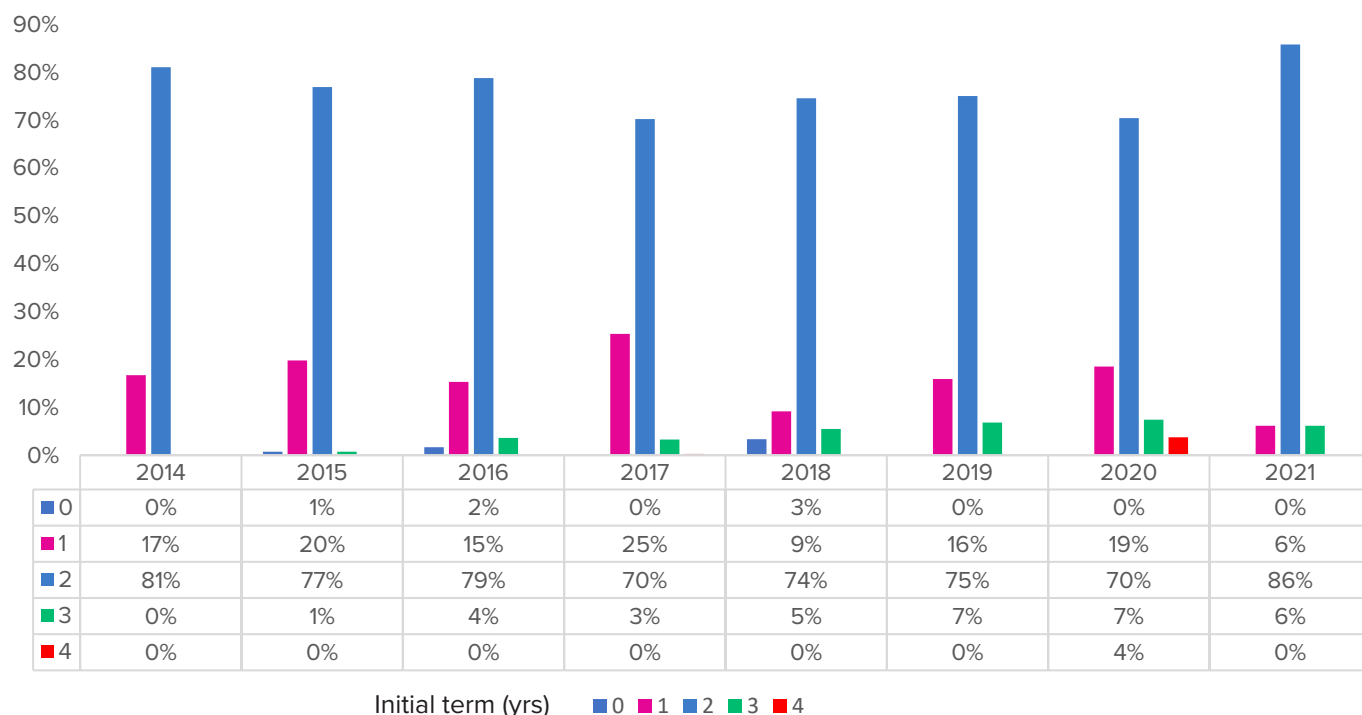| No. of years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
0	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	6%	6%	13%
1	12%	5%	6%	25%	6%	4%	2%	4%
2	62%	68%	65%	54%	56%	74%	67%	70%
3	15%	14%	23%	12%	13%	9%	18%	5%
4	8%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
5	4%	7%	2%	6%	6%	4%	4%	5%

[2] ISC Research data and intelligence is collected directly from senior leaders at international schools. Data and intelligence gathering is conducted year-round by field-based research consultants supported by desk researchers. In addition, trusted local sources, market experts and government bodies inform ISC Research market intelligence.

[3] Data represents a sample of the international school market during each of these years.

Most international schools (between 70-80%) offer a two year initial contract to teaching staff. This contract requirement has remained relatively stable for most schools for several years.

Teacher contracts in international schools
Length of initial contract

Initial term (yrs)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
■ 0	0%	1%	2%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
■ 1	17%	20%	15%	25%	9%	16%	19%	6%
■ 2	81%	77%	79%	70%	74%	75%	70%	86%
■ 3	0%	1%	4%	3%	5%	7%	7%	6%
■ 4	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%

Initial term (yrs) ■ 0 ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4

Many international schools (60-75%) rely on a recruitment agency for all or part of their recruitment process.

International schools that work with a recruitment agency
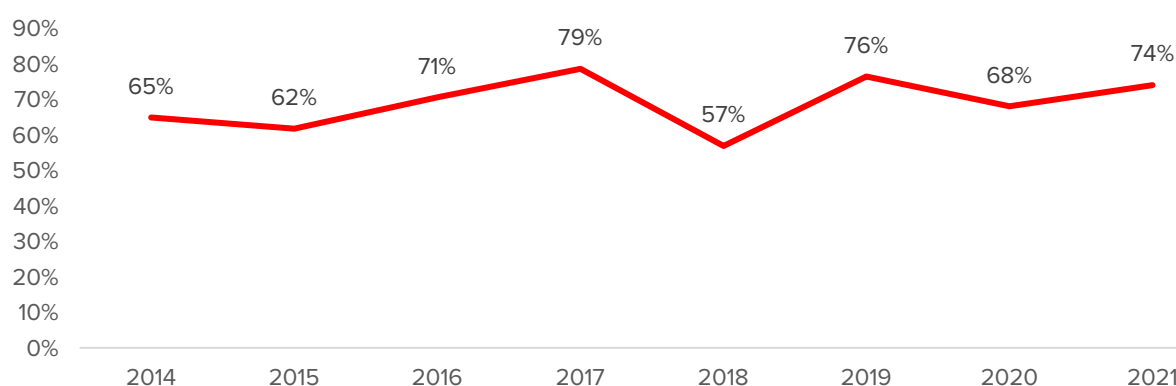
⁴ ISC Research (September 2021). International Schools Annual Market Report 2021 https://iscresearch.com/reports/international-schools-annual-market-report-2021/

Staff nationalities at international schools vary by region. This is tracked and analysed every year by ISC Research and published in the International Schools Market Annual Report[4]. The proportion of local staff has been increasing in many international schools for several years in order to bring local cultural knowledge and understanding, language, and diversity to the staff mix. It is increasingly recognised that local staff bring valuable qualities to an international school. The challenge for many international schools is correcting parental preconceptions, many of whom select an international school based purely on teacher nationality rather than a more informed view of the teaching skills, experience and knowledge they bring to the staff mix. The infographic below shows ISC Research data from July 2021. A teacher who is a citizen of their employer's host country is classified as 'local' in the analysis i.e. a Malaysian teacher at a school in Malaysia is classified as 'local' for this analysis, whereas a Malaysian teacher at a school in Thailand would be counted in the 'all others' category.

The current data on teacher nationalities suggests that the proportion of local teachers is very high in Southern Asia. This is due to the fact that most international schools currently in India and Pakistan charge low tuition fees and struggle to afford to pay the high salaries that foreign teachers demand. Conversely, the proportion of local teachers in Western Asia is very low.

International schools staff nationalities

	Africa	Latin America	Europe	South-Eastern Asia	Eastern Asia	Southern Asia	Western Asia
Local	48.7%	76.6%	25.6%	24.0%	30.4%	91.8%	14.1%
UK	13.6%	3.4%	28.1%	27.1%	16.5%	1.5%	31.6%
Australian / New Zealander	1.9%	0.5%	2.8%	8.1%	7.0%	0.5%	2.9%
All others*	8.6%	3.8%	7.4%	13.5%	8.3%	1.0%	29.7%
North American	23.4%	14.4%	19.7%	20.3%	31.9%	4.4%	14.0%
Other European	3.8%	1.3%	16.4%	7.0%	6.0%	0.9%	7.7%

* The 'All others' staff nationality refers to any nationality that is not 'British', 'North American', 'Other European', 'Australian/ New Zealander, or 'Local'. The specific combination of nationalities that make up 'All others' is not specified on ISC Research's databases.

BASED UPON ITS FIELD RESEARCH, ISC RESEARCH HAS IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING NEW SHIFTS IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL RECRUITMENT:

NEW RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES:

• More international schools are beginning their recruitment process earlier in the school year to attract and secure top talent from within the international school sector. In line with this, international schools are requiring earlier notice periods in order to release jobs as early as possible. Resignation notice is now typically required between November and January for academic years commencing in August or September. Some schools are requiring registration of intention as early as October. Some schools are offering an incentive payment for early resignation notice.

• More international schools are offering incentives for contract extensions. However, incentives require careful planning and communication with staff, otherwise they may not always be received positively. Some schools in China, for example, have increased their flight allowances for teachers committing to an extension, however country entry and exit remains limited and airline prices have increased so much that this is not perceived by some as a valued incentive.

• There is a current trend of international schools to hire international school teachers already located in country due to the continuing impact of COVID-19 on entry and exit of expatriates, as well as the benefits of country-specific teaching experience, and cost savings related to relocation. For example, some international schools in China value the experience that expatriate teachers who are already working in China have already developed regarding communication with Chinese families and regarding Chinese bureaucracy.

• Some international schools are recruiting for a physical campus, but hiring some staff with the intention of them working remotely. Saudi Arabia is one country where this is occurring, as laws in the kingdom make this type of hire desirable.

• Some schools have strict vaccination requirements with a significant number requiring full vaccination for all staff.

• Some roles are being eliminated as a contract ends due to the current decrease of students in some schools.

NEW RECRUITMENT CHANNELS:

• Online recruitment is now the new normal for all but the most senior of appointments. Virtual job fairs and online interviews are now common practice for most international schools. However, this limits the chance to observe a shortlisted candidate teaching a class of students; a practice many good international schools prefer. As a result, selection requires a greater reliance on trust, word of mouth, and references.

- International schools are recruiting more local teaching staff. There are a variety of reasons for this including government legislation in some countries, school-specific challenges related to the hiring of expatriates, the language skills of local staff particularly within bilingual schools, budget constraints limiting more costly expatriate staff, and/or a proactive effort by the school to introduce a more cultural balance to teaching staff.

- The relaxation of strict legislation in some countries, notably in the UAE and Qatar, is making it somewhat easier for international schools in these locations to recruit more teachers to the region although, compared to other locations, such legislation may still be extremely restrictive.

- International schools are seeking alternative recruitment options where they can save on costs, for example, using free platforms.

- International schools are increasingly looking beyond traditional source countries for expatriate teachers, although many schools remain heavily influenced by the demands of their parent community.

- Some international schools are training teachers and developing teaching assistants through such programmes as the UK's Straight to Teaching followed by Assessment Only route to qualified teacher status. The British School Muscat is one school that has been implementing such a programme[5] for several years.

- Some countries are implementing programmes to convert skilled workers into international teachers through pilot schemes, for example, Singapore's Professional Conversion Programme (PCP). This was developed with the aim of creating a greater level of diversity.

NEW RECRUITMENT NEEDS:

- International schools are placing a greater focus on the specific skills of new hires, in particular, the skills of using technology to support learning and the skills associated with delivering blended learning.

- International schools are seeking more leaders with business management, crisis management and data management skills.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND WELLBEING IN RECRUITMENT:

- More companies, including recruitment companies, are receiving critical attention for advertising for native English speakers, or shortlisting candidates with this as a criteria. A growing number of good international schools are taking a more global view of recruitment, recognising that hiring teachers based on nationality or native language is not acceptable.

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[5] Vacher, K. (2019). *It's time to grow your own* International School Leader Magazine Issue 8 June 2019 https://www.flipsnack.com/islmagazine/isl-2019-issues.html

• A few international schools are addressing diversity, equity, inclusion and justice as a strategy within their recruitment practice prompted by calls from such organisations as CIS, ECIS and the Association for International Educators and Leaders of Color (AIELOC). UWCSEA Singapore has a Recruiting for Diversity working group. International School of Dakar and IGB International School Malaysia are also recognised for good practice in this area.

• International schools that have built a reputation for staff wellbeing, particularly throughout COVID-19, are increasingly in demand by candidates.

EXTERNAL FACTORS IMPACTING RECRUITMENT:

• Some international schools in East Asia and South East Asia have noticed a decrease in teachers with a UK nationality applying for jobs as they opt for destinations closer to home.

• The impact of Britain's departure from the European Union (EU) is resulting in a decline in the proportion of teachers from the UK being hired by international schools in Europe due to visa challenges.

• The current market, particularly in some countries, is candidate-led. Skilled and experienced teachers know they are in demand and, in some locations, can ask for very favourable packages. Conversely, the opposite is emerging in some countries due to migration away from China and other countries with strict travel requirements.

• International schools with a good reputation and located in destinations attractive to expatriates continue to attract high numbers of candidates.

The international school teacher profile

PRIOR TEACHING EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES
Minimum 2 years	Lifelong learner
	Innovative
	Adaptable and flexible

| LANGUAGE	HIGHLY DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES
English speaker, including non-native	Technology proficient to support learning
	High EQ: alert to wellbeing, SEN, diversity and inclusion

SECTION 2: MARKET SHIFTS IN RECRUITMENT – THE VIEW OF RECRUITMENT PROVIDERS

In September 2021, ISC Research conducted quantitative and qualitative research with a range of recruitment companies specialising within the international schools market to understand trends from the views of the providers. 12 companies participated in the research. Some chose to remain anonymous.

SHIFTS IN THE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Providers were asked to what extent their company has experience a change in the recruitment strategies of international schools in the 12 months September 2020 to September 2021.

To what extent has your company experienced a change in the following recruitment strategies of international schools during the past 12 months?
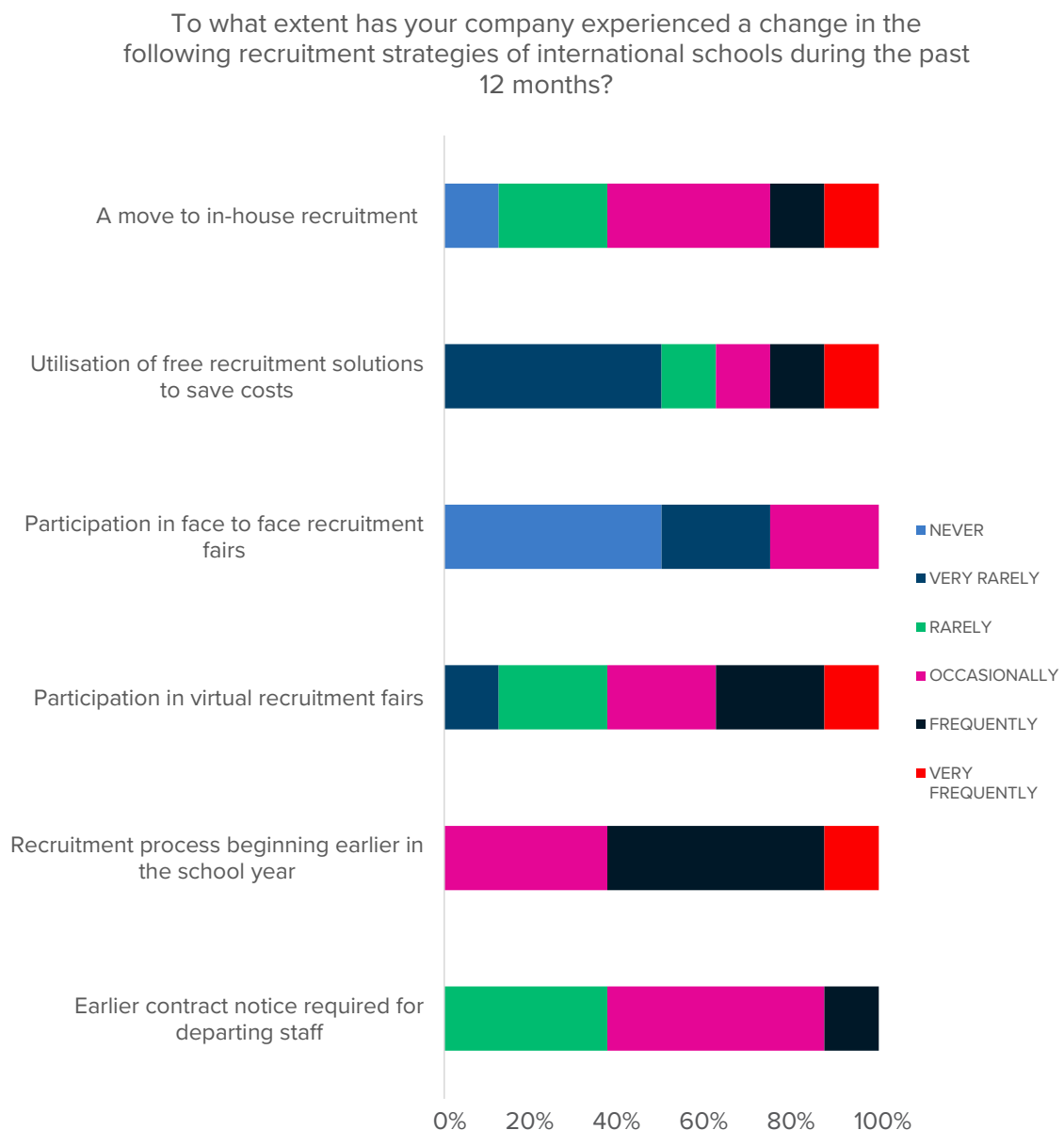
"Technology has gained an increasingly important role and we expect online recruitment fairs to be especially popular and their online format extended so that schools and candidates can comfortably meet regardless of location or time zone. There are deeper discussions about success factors, competencies, and holistic evaluation," said Sharon Lawler-Sudell of International Schools Services (ISS).

"Schools are upskilling in-house staff to meet ongoing recruitment demands," said Zen Khan of Education 1st Recruitment.

TEACHING SKILLS IN DEMAND

In the ISC Research Teaching and Learning Report[6] released in April 2021, 66% of international schools said they plan to develop the skills of their current teaching staff in the use of education technology to support teaching and learning over the next two years, and 35% plan to develop cultural understanding of their staff to support teaching and learning. The new research asked recruitment providers if there is evidence of this and other skills related to supporting 21st century learners in the hiring process.

What teaching skills that support 21st century learners have international schools been proactively seeking within potential teaching candidates in the past 2 years?
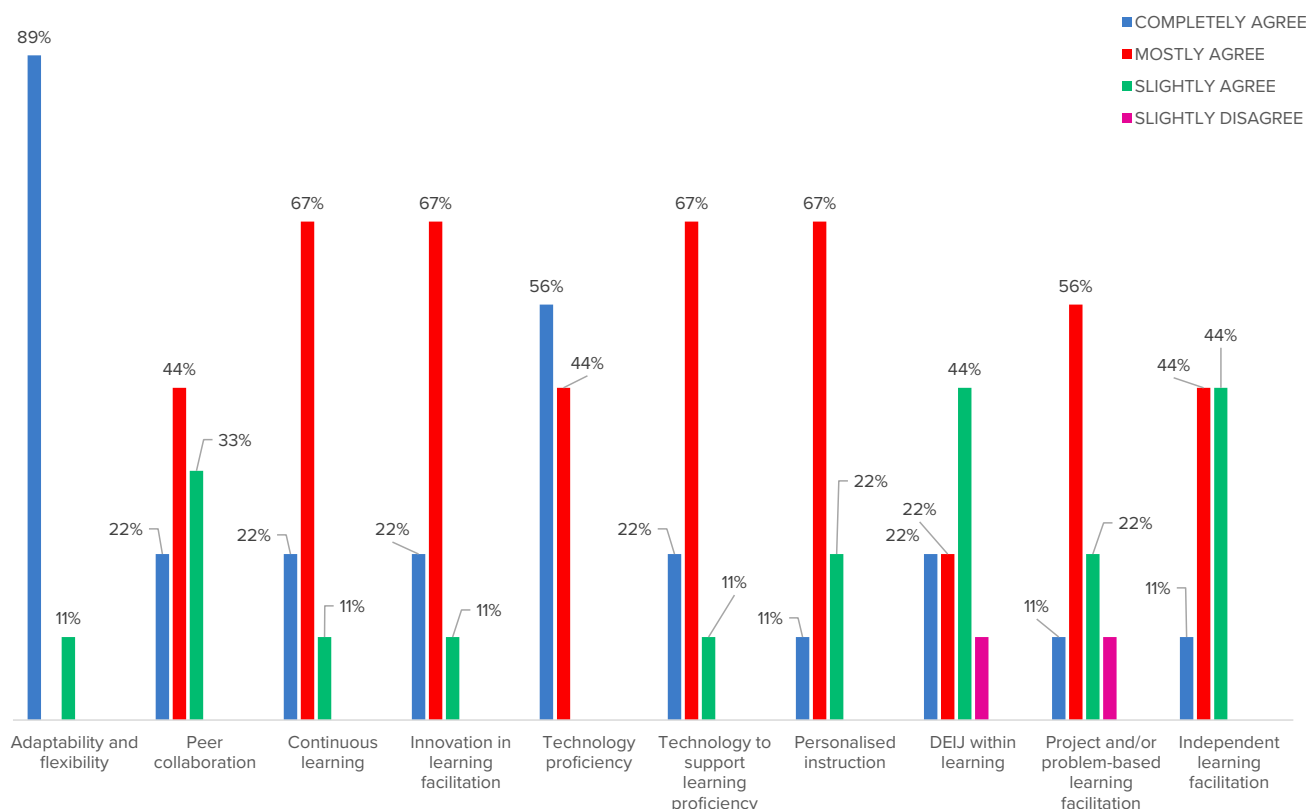
[6] ISC Research (April 2021). Teaching and Learning in International Schools https://iscresearch.com/reports/teaching-learning-international-schools/

THE GREATEST PRIORITIES RIGHT NOW FOR MOST INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THEIR TEACHER CANDIDATE SELECTION CRITERIA ARE:

- EVIDENCE OF ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

- TECHNOLOGY PROFICIENCY INCLUDING SKILLS TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- INNOVATION IN LEARNING FACILITATION

- EVIDENCE OF THEIR CONTINUOUS LEARNING
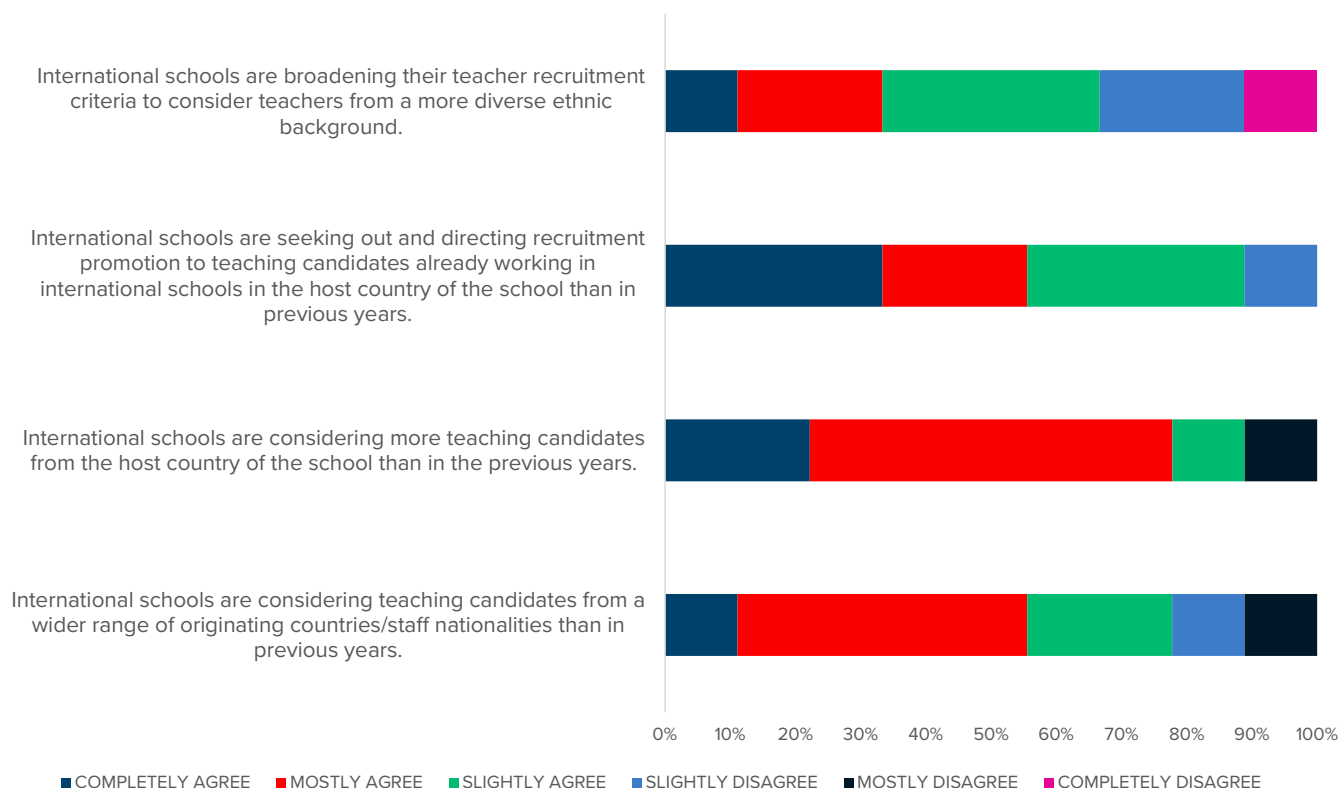
SHIFTS IN TEACHER SELECTION

44% of the recruitment companies researched said that they have seen new teaching roles emerging within international schools during the past two years. Specific roles that are emerging include roles related to supporting wellbeing, computer programming, and, noticeably in the Middle East, SEN specialists.

33% of the recruitment companies said they had experienced international schools seeking more teaching assistants. *"Particularly in the Middle East where they have been working hard on increasing their ability to provide inclusive learning across all independent schools,"* said Victoria Baxter of Soccialy.

The research highlights that over the past twelve months, an increasing number of international schools have been considering more teaching candidates from the host country of the school than in previous years, an increasing number of international schools have been directing their recruitment promotion to teaching candidates already working in international schools in the host country of the school, and an increasing number of international schools have been considering teaching candidates from a wider range of originating countries and nationalities.

A few recruitment providers are seeing some international schools broadening their teacher recruitment criteria to consider teachers from a more diverse ethnic background, but only 33% of respondents completely or mostly agreed with this statement. Pauline O'Brien of International School Services (ISS) said one of the greatest challenges is: *"Encouraging and coaching school boards to address their governance policies to ensure a diverse pool of talented candidates are considered."*

Current teacher recruitment trends in international schools

International schools are broadening their teacher recruitment criteria to consider teachers from a more diverse ethnic background.

International schools are seeking out and directing recruitment promotion to teaching candidates already working in international schools in the host country of the school than in previous years.

International schools are considering more teaching candidates from the host country of the school than in the previous years.

International schools are considering teaching candidates from a wider range of originating countries/staff nationalities than in previous years.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ COMPLETELY AGREE ■ MOSTLY AGREE ■ SLIGHTLY AGREE ■ SLIGHTLY DISAGREE ■ MOSTLY DISAGREE ■ COMPLETELY DISAGREE

One respondent who chose to remain anonymous said that international schools are: *"More demanding about teachers having internationally recognised teaching credentials."* Victoria Baxter of Soccialy said: *"European schools are looking for staff that already have the right to work in the EU - a contrast from the Middle East who are looking for staff straight from the UK."*

LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN DEMAND

43% of respondents that support international school leadership recruitment said new leadership roles have been emerging within international schools over the past two years. Those cited are leadership roles responsible for safeguarding, wellbeing and special educational needs.

Skills most in demand to lead the development of 21st century learners are evidence of continuous leadership learning, adaptability and flexibility of leadership, technology proficiency, data management and tracking, and leadership and empowerment skills. 71% of the respondents completely or mostly agreed that skills to lead schoolwide DEIJ (diversity, equity, inclusion and justice) strategies are now sought after.

In your company's experience, have international schools been proactively seeking leadership candidates with the following skills that support 21st century schools in the past 2 years?

Please rate each of the following:
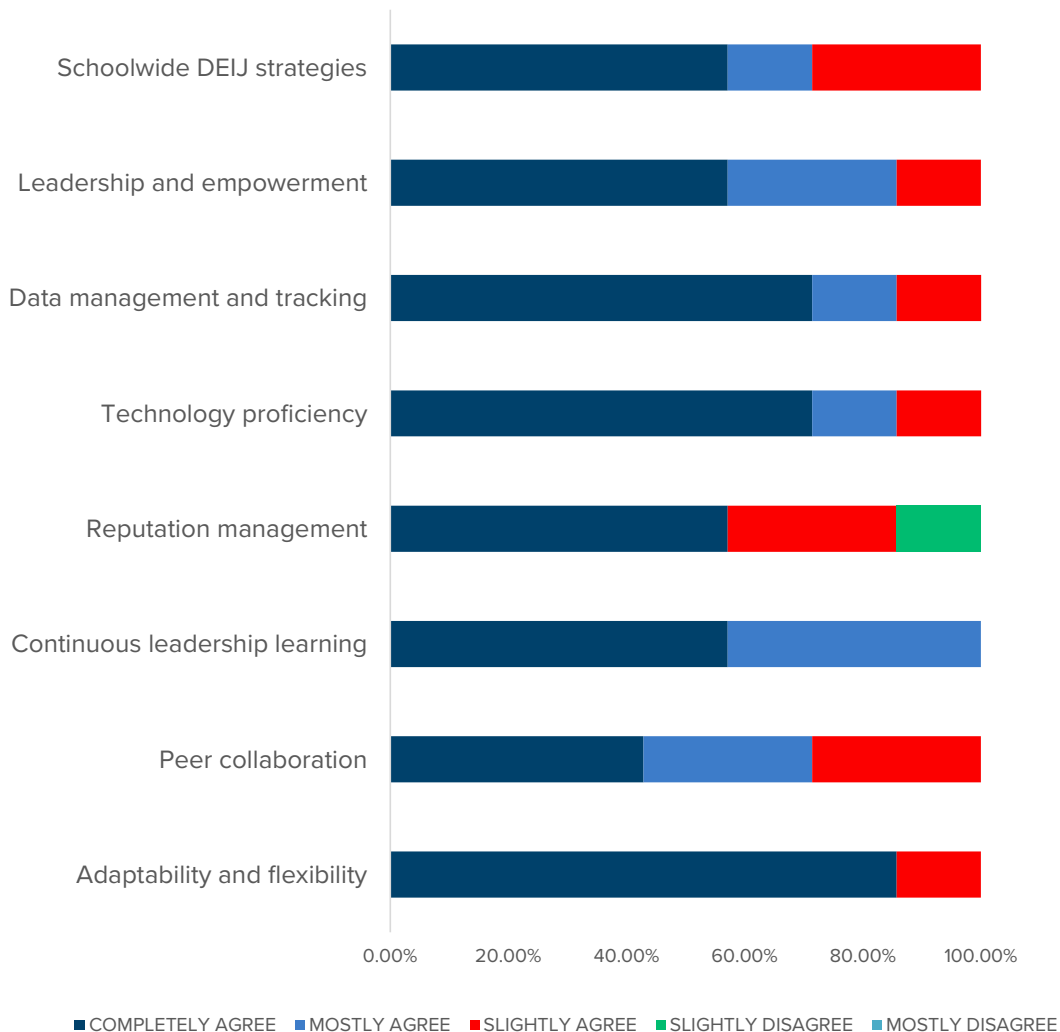
SHIFTS IN LEADERSHIP SELECTION

During the past twelve months, recruitment companies have seen more international schools seeking out and directing recruitment promotion to leadership candidates already working in international schools in the host country of the school. However, according to the respondents, very few international schools are considering leadership candidates from a wider range of nationalities than in previous years, nor are they broadening their leadership recruitment criteria to consider leaders from a more diverse background.

85% of recruitment companies that were surveyed for the research said there have been no changes in qualifications required by international schools when selecting new leaders. However, COVID-19 has raised the value of crisis leadership skills during leadership selection.

REMUNERATION OF TEACHERS AND LEADERS

According to the research respondents, salary offers for teachers and leaders have been lower during the past twelve months than in previous years.

> 50% said salaries had deteriorated overall for teachers, although teacher salaries have been higher for particular qualifications or in some countries.

China has experienced its own unique scenario. Diane Jacoutot of Edvectus said: *"There's been a huge bidding war for teachers already in China. Even marginal teachers have been able to command high salaries. But with tax changes looming and dependent visas stopped, I'm not sure how long this can continue."* Another respondent, who wished to remain anonymous, agreed: *"In China, teachers with children are struggling to get visas for them and having to withdraw."*

Benefits packages for teachers have, for the most part, been trimmed down too. Respondents mentioned a general reduction in allowances for accommodation, and for medical cover for dependents. Travel benefits have also been cut. So too have education and accommodation for teachers with dependent children, partly due to visa restrictions in East Asia, and due to financial challenges in the Middle East. One respondent said there is a: *"Greater demand for single no dependents"* candidates. However results suggest a decline in benefits is not always the case. Some international schools, particularly in Asia and the Middle East, have put more emphasis on their benefits packages within their recruitment promotion.

> As for leader remuneration, 29% of respondents said leadership salaries and benefits have deteriorated during the past twelve months. However, another 29% of respondents said the benefits packages for leaders have improved.

Andrew Wigford of TIC Recruitment said he's seen: *"Not much change here; schools generally tightening belts, but worried they need to be competitive still."* Another respondent said: *"As with teaching roles, the benefits packages have been a big selling point in trying to coax staff from the UK to relocate."* And Diane Jacoutot of Edvectus said: *"Schools recruiting top candidates already in the country are (and need to be) willing to pay a premium for proven track records. This has caused much more flexibility to negotiate, but it means that other good candidates are overlooked simply because they have not yet got their foot in the door."*

THE DEMAND FOR SPECIALIST RECRUITMENT SUPPORT

Recruitment providers are experiencing a shift in demand for their services.

During the period from September 2020 to September 2021, specialist recruitment companies experienced a noticeable decline in services sought from premium fee international schools for both teacher and leadership recruitment, but a noticeable increase in services sought from mid-market fee international schools.

Zen Khan of Education 1st Recruitment said that there is now: *"More inhouse recruitment. More schools are recruiting candidates from within the region." And Roddy Hammond of Worldteachers Recruitment said there is: "A strong preference to advertise directly rather than engage with an agency."*

However, requests from international schools for some specialist services from recruitment companies are on the rise. These include pre-selection support for teacher candidates, conducting reference checks for shortlisted teacher candidates, and recruitment strategy support. Headhunting of leadership candidates has experienced some increased demand too.

"Many of our schools are looking at the overall strategy - in particular how to be more proactive in their approach, as they have seen the level of application decrease significantly when only using job boards," said Victoria Baxter of Soccialy. Diane Jacoutot of Edvectus said: *"Many international schools have sought teachers in-country already. This encourages teachers to move from low tier to mid-tier [international schools], and from mid-tier to premium. It's become more of a sellers' market for teachers. The losers are the lower tier schools who cannot raise salaries and also cannot get replacement teachers in due to border closures. They ended up hiring more locally trained teachers."*

And Zen Khan of Education 1st Recruitment added: *"The market is more competitive than before as teachers are moving within the country, school to school, seeking better opportunities and salaries/benefits, especially staff child school places."*

UNDERSTANDING THE TALENT POOL

International school recruitment agencies attract a wide range of candidates who are interested to work in international schools. The respondents were asked if they had experienced a shift in the type of candidates registering for jobs during the period September 2020 to September 2021.

Recruitment companies have experienced most increase in registrations from qualified teachers and leaders with international school experience requesting to move country.

Other registration growth has been seen in newly qualified teachers, in qualified teachers with no international school experience, and in experienced international school leaders requesting to remain in-country.

However, the talent pool is not a healthy one for the sector. All recruitment companies who were

surveyed said they have seen a decrease in the registrations of experienced school leaders with no international school experience, as did 44% of respondents regarding the registration of experienced teachers with no international school experience. One respondent said: *"Candidate registrations are down by 30% compared to the last non-Covid year, most significantly from teachers who are not yet abroad. A larger than normal number of high quality international teachers are looking to leave China in particular because of issues with dependent visas and border closures making travel home almost impossible. Many have not been home for over two years and have had enough. They are willing to give up the high salaries for freedom of movement. I'm particularly worried about recruitment to China. Even with the recent legal changes, the mismatch between supply and demand is vast. Teachers either don't want to go or cannot go because they have dependents, or are the wrong nationality. Tax changes mean packages are hit, and it's viewed as a risky location because you might get 'stuck' inside or outside the country. Many more teachers are leaving China than want to/are able to go."*

Another said: *"Quite a lot of our registered teachers [are] not wanting to move, or [are] wanting to move back home due to the pandemic."* This is a big concern for many international schools, particularly so in the knowledge that teacher salaries are declining.

Some schools or school groups are promoting structured CPD and accredited professional learning offerings as a recruitment incentive (section 5 (no s) of this report).

"

"Many teachers want to know the career progression and professional development available to them. They want to know the commitment that a school is making to them," said a respondent.

Another respondent said: *"One school is using CPD accredited by CMI (Chartered Management Institute) to develop a chartered leadership workforce. Some schools will fund or part fund things like this and is what is attracting good people to a school."*

When it comes to the leadership pool, Diane Jacoutot of Edvectus said: *"In the UAE, particularly Dubai, the strong inspection framework has meant most [international] schools strongly prefer candidates with experience in the country. In China, border closures/visa difficulties have meant that candidates within China are strongly preferred. But it's a leaky bucket in both regions."*

Along with its impact on mobility, COVID-19 has added an additional challenge with many international schools requiring confirmation of vaccinations. One respondent said: *"Those [candidates] who are anti-vax do not have many/any options."*

And whether this is directly attributable to COVID-19 or not, Andrew Wigford of TIC Recruitment said that the biggest issue over the past twelve months has been: *"Teachers who change their minds due to 'family reasons' - reneging on contracts is a big problem for many schools, even the top ones."*

RECRUITMENT MARKET TRENDS

SECTION 3: RECRUITMENT ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

Recruitment experts who were surveyed for this research shared advice to international schools about future international school recruitment:

- Have a varied approach and strategy. Don't just stick with what you know. Be open minded.

- People's behaviour has considerably shifted in the last year. Whilst social media use was on the rise pre-pandemic, COVID has sped this up significantly. Be proactive in putting adverts in front of all possible candidates.

- Cast a wider net than usual and be exceptionally proactive.

- Find candidates who are committed to a move and follow through, there is a lot of uncertainty and this causes much indecision and changing of minds.

- Ensure that you provide professional development opportunities as part of your benefits to ensure that you attract and retain staff.

- Accommodate those with children/families and ensure that the package on offer will enable them to live comfortably.

- Ensure that you follow safer recruitment procedures when recruiting.

- Start early, respond quickly to all applicants, get your information application pack ready, be consistent in the way you talk with candidates, don't take too long to process and arrange interviews.

- Prepare clearer and more professional application documentation – using competency, evidence-based information on achievements and accomplishments.

- Support the wellbeing of [newly hired] teachers as they go through the onboarding paperwork to get into the new country.

SECTION 4:

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MARKET TRENDS

SECTION 4: CPD MARKET TRENDS

Every year, ISC Research gathers some data on professional development within international schools. Detailed data is also collected on the globally and regionally recognised accreditation bodies that are supporting international schools to achieve required standards and this data is reported annually in the ISC Research International Schools Annual Market Report and Market-specific Reports.

The five accreditation bodies currently supporting most international schools (ISC Research data July 2021) are:

Accreditation body	International schools	Students
Cognia	733	550,600
CIS	532	428,700
MSACS	309	206,100
WASC	284	186,000
NEASC	265	228,800

BETWEEN JULY 2020 AND 2021, INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS WERE ASKED HOW IMPORTANT THE OFFER OF CPD IS FOR STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

38.5% OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS SAID 'VERY IMPORTANT'

37.5% SAID 'SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT'

24% SAID 'MINIMALLY IMPORTANT'

Schools were also asked about the most popular additional qualifications sought by staff. 48% of schools researched said a Master's degree or PhD were the most popular qualifications that staff worked towards.

THE ISC RESEARCH FIELD RESEARCH TEAM HAS IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING MARKET SHIFTS CURRENTLY OCCURRING IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CPD PRACTICE:

- Online CPD has increased dramatically for the international school sector prompted by the impact of COVID-19.

- Minimal face-to-face CPD has been occurring since March 2020, other than internal CPD delivered by staff within schools.

- During COVID-19, some schools provided open access to any professional development required by individual staff, particularly related to the use of technology and e-learning. Other schools removed any mandatory requirements for PD, with the intention of easing pressure on staff.

- Schools are increasingly focusing on structured collaborative professional development for staff and incorporating the use of best practice working groups.

- More international schools are using data to understand the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and some are using this to identify gaps in teacher knowledge and capabilities to inform schoolwide CPD strategies.

- With a greater level of competition for skilled staff throughout the sector, remuneration increases for achieving some certifications, such as Master's degrees, are increasing.

- Face-to-face CPD delivered within the school is increasing in preference to staff travelling to other locations. However, more international schools are currently seeking out online provision as their main choice of external CPD and plan to continue this or a hybrid version of CPD, for the near future. A few headteachers have said that they are returning to face-to-face CPD wherever possible.

- Some school groups are now delivering central CPD support, and for some, university accredited CPD for staff within their group.

- Some international schools that are not members of school groups have been collaborating to access CPD and so spread costs. One example of this is a group of American international schools in Spain that have joined together for CPD with external providers.

• Some CPD platforms have demonstrated dramatic development within 18 months. Improved technology is allowing for incorporated breakout rooms, chat and networking facilities, whiteboards, voice directed screens, directional microphones, immediate recordings, asynchronous collaboration, and more.

• The emergence of more CPD apps and portals for access to resources, engagement and data tracking.

• CPD supporting EAL is expected to increase in demand in the near future for several reasons. Some international schools, particularly in Malaysia and Singapore, have opened new programmes targeting students with lower proficiency in English. These programmes are for English enhancement, to prepare students to enrol for either the next semester or the next academic year. Separately, in both Europe and the Middle East, many international schools are focusing their admissions marketing on the local population therefore requiring additional EAL provision within the Early Years. And, notably in Spain, a growing body of international, non-English speaking, non-Spanish speaking students are entering the international school sector. This has meant an adaptation to existing EAL programmes for some schools, that were formerly focused on supporting Spanish speaking students only.

RECENT SHIFTS IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CPD

TEACHERS

Shift 1:

Teachers are social creatures!
Now more than ever, they need:

- Collaboration

- Exchange of best practice with peers

- Face-to-face interactions (at least some)

Shift 2:

Increased use of technology

To deliver and optimise CPD: Virtual learning environments make CPD increasingly accessible when teachers need it, via various devices, and often offer flexibility to select relevant content and keep track of progress.

To monitor engagement: More international schools are using online platforms and apps providing user metrics to track engagement and assess the effectiveness of the CPD programme.

Shift 3:

Acknowledgement that teachers want to learn too

Many international schools value accredited CPD, sometimes provided by universities over an extended period to improve teacher skills and encourage lifelong learning habits.

SECTION 5:

MARKET SHIFTS IN CPD – THE VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

SECTION 5: MARKET SHIFTS IN CPD – THE VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

In September, ISC Research conducted qualitative research with 4 international schools and school groups to understand CPD challenges and opportunities from the views of the schools.

1. FAIRVIEW INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, MALAYSIA

Vincent Chian is Principal, and John Harvey is Global ATL Skills Continuum Coordinator of Fairview International School, Malaysia.

Vincent Chian is Principal, and John Harvey is Global ATL Skills Continuum Coordinator of Fairview International School, Malaysia.

"There is an industry-wide problem with its approach to CPD. For many schools, it's sporadic, unstrategic and unsustainable as a result of being over reliant on external sources of training. Rather than schools taking it on strategically, staff tend to be allowed to go in different directions and so, with hyper differentiation, hyper individualisation, and limited or no control, you end up with a chaotic mess with little regard for quality programmes, structured professional learning schedules, or identification of gaps in learning.

To truly grow as a school, you need CPD to be coherent, and that is what we aim to do. First we begin by talent mapping the entire teacher population using data drawn from multiple perspectives. Teacher observations, parent feedback and regular student surveys using the 7Cs model by Tripod Education give us a map of which pedagogies we are strong at as a team and which we need to invest more time into. From that knowledge we then target our CPD effort strategically, intentionally and coherently.

We have a formal standardised structure for everyone and a differentiated structure to address individual needs. All new teachers who come into our school complete a fully-funded two-year work-based post graduate diploma in education (PGDE) that focuses on the IB programmes, so it's very specific to the talent development needs of our school. If you join us having already completed a PGDE, you can instead take a Master's of Education, all at our sister organisation, University College Fairview (UCF).

UCF is a teacher training focused, research-led teaching institution and one of just three universities in South East Asia accredited to offer the IB educators certificate. Studying for the PGDE means that everyone builds a thorough and common understanding of the specific pedagogical demands of the IB. They also learn IB specific skill sets like how to use the IB learner profile attributes, the ATL skills, and assessment processes.

To personalise the approach, we use two methods. We have weekly CPD sessions which address

areas that whole departments are challenged with, and we have a self-paced, online LMS model that provides learning opportunities for individual teacher needs.

By approaching the issue from a macroscopic, departmental and then individual manner, we build a very comprehensive approach. The system is also a synergistic system that relies on teachers sharing their experience and learning while relying on external providers only when there is a compete talent gap in specific areas. Teachers are constantly invited to share their learning experiences at the formal programmes and at CPDs, so that the attitude of learning is not to wait for the sage on the stage, but to share learning at every opportunity, no matter the level of mastery.

Individual growth is at the centre of the culture at our school and it fits directly with our recruitment strategy. We constantly share with our new applicants that, as a teacher or leader, if you're not ready to grow, this is not a place for you. It's hard work here but you will grow and be stronger for it.

We evaluate all new candidates on the same talent scale, no matter whether you're from Malaysia or elsewhere. Certain teachers, particularly local teachers, may need a little bit more help, particularly with language but, as an international school, everybody is treated equally in salary and opportunity.

We are one of five campuses in Malaysia and so have been using digital platforms to support our CPD programmes for a long time. We normally have intense CPD sessions at the start of each semester, based on our strategic plan, so that everyone's aligned in the same direction. This year, we are focusing on positive intelligence, inquiry, and differentiation and personalisation."

2. RAHA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, A MEMBER OF THE TAALEEM GROUP, UAE

Iain Colledge is Executive Principal of Raha International School and Director of Education at Taaleem.

"Although we are part of Taaleem, most of our CPD is individual to the school. We probably don't do enough coming together as a group, but this is for several reasons: geography, different curricula and, most importantly, every school in the group has its own autonomy, needs and budgets and so, even though it's a lovely idea to bring everyone together, within Taaleem the schools are given the autonomy to be themselves and to drive themselves forward, and that inevitably means that doing the same thing for everyone isn't always feasible.

As a stand-alone school we have a PD budget which we allocate to our three schools: Early Years, Primary and Secondary, plus some for SLT and admin. We have two different approaches to how that money is spent. One is statutory IB training for our new staff who may not have prior IB experience or training. The second part is pedagogical, philosophical or pastoral and, more often

than not, it's collective PD across a large group. This is a mixture of bringing in external CPD for staff workshops or sometimes sending our staff elsewhere to then cascade their training back. We prefer bringing in experts as we can include more people. It's expensive but, we think, it's worth it. COVID has created more CPD delivery online, but we don't think it's as effective; there's more engagement during face-to-face training. Bringing people in is, I think, still the best way forward, or a hybrid version that delivers some continued PD that builds upon the face-to-face training.

As a school and school group, we regularly run the NPQs (NPQML and NPQSL) for our staff. This is fully accredited, and funded equally between Taaleem, the school PD budget, and the individual. It's project-based towards school improvement, so not only is an individual achieving their NPQ but, at the same time, they are supporting school improvement which is a really good thing. Some of our leaders are trained as NPQ facilitators so that we can support each other, keeping training in-house when we can, and making it affordable.

We don't necessarily have a long plan for PD. We focus annually as we always have new teachers and we continually reassess different needs. There is ongoing debate around the need to focus on a more long-term strategy and we are working towards a three year vision, whilst being fully aware that each year brings its own challenges. One of our CPD priorities for the current and forthcoming years is around racial bias which we are doing in partnership with CIS. This is interesting and challenging and causes controversy because there are lots of different opinions. The other themes are a continuation of the IB, of PosEd (Positive Education), of responsive classrooms, and, as a group, getting people inspection trained. This is particularly valuable because of the UAE inspections; it's valuable to know what inspection looks like from the view of an inspector and helps us improve.

To support both our teaching and learning and CPD, our Head of Tech developed a lesson observation app for us using Microsoft Power BI and Power Apps. When we observe lessons, the app enables us to identify and record an area of strength and an area of improvement based on the expectations of the school. It gives us a collective picture of trends as well as linking directly to teachers' electronic portfolios. This data feeds through to a Power BI PD dashboard which shows general trends and helps us to identify gaps that need addressing through CPD.

For external CPD selection, we go directly to the source or, alternatively, to the likes of CIS who are very good. We won't ever select a course or trainer unless we have received a verbal recommendation. We then talk to them at length, in advance of the course, so they can tailor the CPD exactly for our needs and level. It's that tailoring and pre-work that's essential. If a course is not working, we will even tell the trainer half way through and a good trainer will listen and respond. It's our responsibility to let the trainer know during the training if it's too fast, too slow, too easy, too beyond our people, and good trainers will adapt.

We are currently developing our school as a training hub, accessible for surrounding schools as well as our staff, and partnering with two CPD providers to deliver a bigger package of training that's accessible to all teachers in Abu Dhabi and further afield."

3. INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Emily Porter is Chief Education and Innovation Officer at International Schools Partnership (ISP).

"Research shows that the single number one external factor that improves learning is the quality of teachers. So, we've made continuous professional learning, for all of our colleagues, a key part our strategy at ISP. It has become a bedrock of everything that we do.

We listen to our students, our teachers and our leaders about what they need. This has led us to leveraging in-person PD with flexible, virtual, and hybrid professional learning experiences. It has allowed us to resource both a central professional develop team and a digital learning approach so that we connect with teachers and leaders more regularly. We provide and support schools, as they learn with us and each other, via a central digital platform we call the Learning Hub. This is where our 7,000 colleagues across our 52 schools can connect, access and experience a range of professional development opportunities, build relationships and harness our collective experience and expertise.

Our global CPD is delivered by both internal and external experts, who are all focused entirely on professional learning and improvement. It's accessible 24/7 and includes courses, webinars, and extended, facilitated, and blended learning experiences that can be badged, and are soon to be accredited. Despite the curriculum or qualification our schools are using, the Learning Hub gives teachers and leaders a place to come together to get region-to-region, country-to-country and also school-to-school experience and best practice.

Every new Head at ISP joins our New Heads Leadership Programme which gives them a five month development programme that centres around their success. We deliver CPD on every aspect of the school, from learning to finance to marketing, across different leadership levels. It provides professional development and a place for all colleagues to come together with peers in order to improve their leadership learning and strengthen the organisational structure of their school and our group.

Every day we are learning more about our teachers, leaders and colleagues from the data we gather from the Learning Hub, and from the programmes we offer. It's helping us to understand that most of our teachers and leaders are looking for support and want to keep learning all the time; they're completely committed to their own growth and the culture of the continuous learner which we want for everyone within ISP, so we can better help our students."

4. NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION

Joanna Lay is Assistant Director of Nord Anglia University and Online Learning.

"We have changed the focus of much of our CPD offering to have a greater emphasis on virtual school teaching and personal/student wellbeing. We have also shortened many of our online courses to offer bitesize, point of need engagements rather than longer online courses.

We have focused on learning that helps staff teach online or in hybrid situations and that helps them acquire skills to work predominantly online. In addition, we have produced more best practice materials to show good practice across our schools for online teaching, online assessment and engagement with students and parents. Whilst schools are prioritising CPD, they need to make time for it within an already very busy schedule of work and to be careful not to overburden their teachers. We are very conscious of this when creating new content.

For us, online CPD will always be a priority as our schools are based all around the globe. It also allows us to take advantage of the scale of our school group and share costs for CPD as well as good practice between our schools. Travel to CPD events forms a much smaller part of our CPD offering.

With over 12,000 staff and 73 schools, we have a diverse range of learning needs, but our main priorities can be summed up by maintaining high standards for teaching and learning, improving student outcomes, virtual and hybrid schooling capability, the wellbeing of staff and students, and strong e-learning practice. We have a strong emphasis on personalisation within our online offering and we also advise our school leaders to focus on the programmes that support their school development plan. This puts learning into context of the school and gives it greater relevance to our staff.

The majority of our programmes are offered to all staff and we don't discriminate between local and expatriate staff. However, our central online offer is also supported by local adaptions to our programme so that it is relevant and impactful for each school. For example, each school has their own priorities and may select different programmes for their staff and groups of people within their staff cohort based on the skills they want them to develop."

SECTION 6: CPD PREFERENCES OF EDUCATORS

In September 2021, ISC Research conducted an open survey accessible to all educators and school leaders via LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. They were asked one question:

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED FORMAT FOR CPD COURSES?

7% said online

44% said face-to-face

39% said they preferred a hybrid approach

COMMON REASONS FOR CHOICE: FOR ONLINE CPD

- Greater interaction
- Convenient
- Economical
- Accessible
- Flexible
- Enables self-pacing

FOR HYBRID CPD:

- Balances cost and efficacy
- Blends deep and extended learning
- Best of both worlds
- Flexible
- Economical
- Enables self-pacing
- Networking potential

FOR FACE-TO-FACE CPD:

- Dynamic learning environment
- Active participation
- Peer networking
- Enriching conversations
- Meaningful interactions

MARKET SHIFTS IN CPD – THE VIEW OF CPD PROVIDERS

SECTION 7: MARKET SHIFTS IN CPD − THE VIEW OF CPD PROVIDERS

External providers were interviewed to identify common market shifts, challenges and opportunities in CPD that they are experiencing.

A SHIFT FROM FACE-TO-FACE TO ONLINE CPD:

- Before COVID-19: Online CPD ranged between 20% and 30%
- Current delivery: 95%-100% online
- The future: Hybrid and online likely to dominate. Face-to-face in targeted locations for some schools and/or providers

ADDRESSING CURRENT CPD CHALLENGES:

- Restrictions to school budgets
- Resistance to change in delivery
- Time zone differences for synchronous online training
- Technology skills of providers and learners
- Addressing the limitations of online CPD including rapport building, maintaining engagement during training, gaining a 'feel' for the school

BUILDING UPON THE BENEFITS OF ONLINE CPD:

- Cost effective in comparison to face-to-face CPD
- Individualised CPD provision more easily accessible
- Increased access to good and outstanding CPD that suits a variety of budgets
- Increased access to relevant networking events
- More flexibility of accessible and affordable approaches including blended solutions and self-study
- The opportunity to record and revisit
- Increased accessibility
- Increased potential for like-type collaboration
- Greater pick-and-mix potential
- More pro-bono or cost-supported CPD possible for schools in need - where technology is available

CPD THEMES IN MOST DEMAND:

- Wellbeing and mental health (increasingly a community-wide focus)
- Behaviour management
- DEIJ (or elements within this)
- Safeguarding
- Curriculum development including intent, vision and implementation
- Developing a blended approach to learning
- Leadership and management development, noticeably middle management training

It is interesting to see that tech skills are not referenced here. The ISC Research Teaching and Learning Report identified the priority by international schools for CPD around technology skills, and technology to support learning. This CPD is likely being delivered internally or by the technology specialists of the school's tech partners.

THREE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS SHARED THEIR MARKET VIEWS FOR THIS REPORT:

Council of International Schools (CIS)

COVID-19 shifted the focus of international school CPD significantly says Jane Larsson, Executive Director at the Council of International Schools (CIS): *"It's been a very difficult period for international education due to many factors outside of our control amidst the pandemic – the limits on mobility and the isolation this can bring, the associated risks to health and wellbeing, the ever-changing and conflicting regulatory controls across countries to mitigate those risks, and the sheer amount of time and focus required to manage these. All combined to divert our attention from traditional areas of CPD focus to those related to ensuring the continuity of education in new learning environments, how to do so in healthy and productive ways, how to minimise health risks when coming back together in a school, and importantly how to identify students who have not been engaged while learning virtually."*

Jane highlights the priorities for international schools as they return for another school year within a period when COVID-19 continues its impact: *"As educational institutions around the world welcome students and staff to school or university following a shutdown or at the start of a new term, one of our most important responsibilities is to check on their wellbeing and provide direct support when needed. This can be challenging when leading a diverse international community where social norms vary considerably. The priorities for CPD should be aligned accordingly.*

With most international schools currently facing budget and travel restrictions, Jane says it's a great time and chance to differentiate CPD investment: *"New virtual learning opportunities are popping up regularly, and many are open access. But it is important to discern quality learning experiences. It's important to tap into the experiences of staff, ensuring diverse perspectives are heard, to identify trusted sources of learning and help all staff identify and engage with these opportunities, many of them newly created."*

The Council of British International Schools (COBIS)

COBIS (the Council of British International Schools) transitioned from offering 80% face-to-face CPD with some blended courses for members prior to COVID-19, to 100% online CPD during the pandemic. Although there have been many benefits for international schools, schools also face some challenges. *"Online CPD has come a long way from simply a pre-recorded, one-sided session,"* says Fiona Rogers, Deputy CEO at COBIS. *"Many providers are doing a tremendous job of delivering interactive, effective professional learning that makes the best use of the technology available, whether that be breakout rooms, interactive tools, etc. But the personal connections of being in the same room with other delegates, chatting over coffee or lunch, are still difficult to replicate. This is one challenge. For international schools, there is also the challenge of time zones for synchronous online courses. It is wonderful to bring people together from a number of different countries, but can be a challenge to find timings that work for people in disparate time zones. Another challenge is to do with work/life balance. Teachers in our schools are clearly committed to their own professional development, and at times that means that they are choosing – or needing – to access training in their own time, outside of their normal working hours.*

The challenge for COBIS, which serves a diverse group of British international schools, often with unique demands, is that: *"the professional learning priorities of the schools and the individual staff members in those schools, vary widely,"* says Fiona. *"However, there is a huge range of professional learning available for free, whether this be COBIS webinars, networking sessions, or the opportunity to engage in research and professional development collaboration with other schools."*

The East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS)

At EARCOS (the East Asia Regional Council of Schools) where 70 webinars were offered for most staff departments during the 2020-2021 academic year, online solutions will play a more prominent presence into the future. *"Each school is on its own unique path. Some have taken hard hits to their budgets whereas most have, at the very least, needed to look very, very carefully at expenditures that they can control,"* says Edward Greene Executive Director of EARCOS. *"PD is an easy line item to reduce or zero out. Far easier, at least, than salaries and benefits. Still, taking away PD funding does not bode well for the future of any school. The proliferation of options has been a challenge for busy educators.*

The number one advantage has been the opportunity to learn from and with one another across the distances. There are many outstanding educational consultants and presenters who have been willing to speak and present to educators, often for fees that are far lower than those they would normally charge. CPD is certainly not the same online, but it has had a greater impact than we had anticipated at first. Online, we can offer the vast majority of our webinars at no cost to participants and, where a registration fee is charged, we have been able to offer a scholarship for those schools where funding for PD has all but disappeared."

CPD currently in most demand by EARCOS member schools is child safeguarding, DEIJ-related topics, advice on handling financial challenges, enrolment issues, strategies for teaching in a virtual

environment, teacher recruitment, the future of teaching and learning, communication strategies, social and emotional learning (and for leaders, community wellbeing), health and psychological wellness.

"Board training has drawn more participants than normal and will remain a key topic," says Edward. Looking to the future he says: *"New and increased focus has to be given to the topic of climate change and what schools must do to contribute to the reduction of its impact on the planet, and what students must learn as they prepare to lead the way into a future fraught with climate-related challenges. For leaders, I believe we need to offer them increased opportunities to gather together – virtually and in person – in small cohorts to support one another as well as to think and plan together to remain fresh and on the leading edge as we reimagine the experience of school."*

OPTIMISING CPD: ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

SECTION 8: OPTIMISING CPD: ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

Schools, associations and external providers were asked for their top advice for international schools in order to optimise CPD within the current climate:

KAREN ARDLEY OF KAREN ARDLEY ASSOCIATES

Karen Ardley of Karen Ardley Associates says to be strategic and structured with your CPD, and open to online solutions: *"It is important to carefully plan and select CPD offerings in a strategic way, even those offered as open courses to staff. Link all CPD into your performance management and performance reviews so that it is integral to the strategic growth of your school. Try best to evaluate your PD; what have you learnt, what are you going to do with it, and what is the impact student progress. Create a safe space within your PD group (in phases or subject groups) to revisit the learning, to be honest about challenges, and to be accountable.*

One of the things that most benefits professional learning is not to do it consecutively. Online CPD makes this very possible: a day or two of learning, followed by set tasks to put learning into practice, and then come back together to share, learn, revisit, and repeat. Online CPD gives all schools and their staff more flexibility of what, when and how they learn.

Getting a flavour of the school may be more challenging for facilitators when working online, but it is totally accessible through videos and scheduled live remote discussions with a group of teachers or students. The right technology is important too. We conduct a technical test with all schools prior to training to ensure they have the right tech and set-up to achieve the best outcome. Regardless of the way it is delivered, the success of CPD at any school is the sustainability of the skill development. We encourage schools to become self-sustaining; to build capacity and to train staff to become facilitators in order to carry the professional development forward themselves."

EDWARD GREENE OF EARCOS

Edward Greene of EARCOS says prioritise time and budget for professional development: *"The investment in PD for leaders and teachers is the key to moving your school forward to deliver what students need for the tomorrow. We must resist the temptation of throwing out the seeds we need for the future."*

IAIN COLLEDGE OF RAHA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Iain Colledge of Raha International School says early planning is valuable: *"Tell your trainer exactly what you need and the level you need it. Tailoring and tweaking of a course should start well before the course is delivered, but also throughout the course; staff will be the first to moan if their time is wasted so feel the mood of the room, tell the trainer if it's not going well or at the right speed or level. People should be buzzing if the training is good and that requires good selection, planning and communication."*

DAVID MAYTHAM OF TT EDUCATION

David Maytham of TT Education recommends incorporating CPD into a long term plan: *"Positive change and school improvement can only be achieved with a shared long-term vision giving a consistent approach to CPD to both maximise impact and reduce costs."*

STEPHEN CHAPMAN OF DRAGONFLY TRAINING

Stephen Chapman of Dragonfly Training recommends international schools evaluate exactly what their staff needs before selecting CPD: *"Top tier schools often want the latest cutting edge information on things like meta cognition and cognitive load theory, which only tend to make sense if you are not only well versed in pedagogy, but are also willing/able to make changes in your practice. This is actually surprisingly difficult, a lot of teachers find making major adjustments difficult after a few years, as they have become 'the teacher they are'. Some lower tier schools try to bolt on one aspect of teaching or pedagogy that they have heard of, but do not consider the systems, infrastructure and SLT support necessary to sustain it, so the intervention ends up being a tick box exercise rather than deeply embedded feature of the school. He suggests focusing CPD on raising basic standards for such schools: "Teachers in lower tier schools can sometimes lack the fundamentals of teaching and have had little or no grounding in the basics."*

ROB GRAHAM OF SCHROLE GROUP

Rob Graham of Schrole Group highlights the value of collaborative CPD: *"Try to get groups of people to work together on modules to help defray the cost and meet some of your school goals."*

GARY BROOM FROM BEST PRACTICE NETWORK

Gary Broom from Best Practice Network suggests building CPD into the school improvement plan, as a longer term investment for the school: "Make your school improvement priorities part of the CPD being undertaken so there is a practical and tangible output and benefit for your school as well as for the individuals undertaking the CPD programme. And look for accredited training providers with a proven track record of delivering effective CPD to international schools."

EMILY PORTER OF ISP

Emily Porter of ISP recommends identifying and addressing challenges to optimise access to CPD: *"Understand your school's current and future needs and readiness, and the factors impacting your teachers such as their time, resources and technology. Then remove the barriers, for example, by building PD into your meeting times. Don't try to do 20 things at once; it's one or two things each year that you want to improve on, and then evidencing that and setting targets that drive these priorities for professional learning. Set your plan for the year ahead and build structure so you have a team to continuously develop the learning."*

VINCENT CHIAN OF FAIRVIEW SCHOOL MALAYSIA

Vincent Chian of Fairview School Malaysia suggests maximising online solutions and sustainability: *"Face-to-face workshops are typically several consecutive days and very intensive. But equivalent online versions are typically spread over a number of weeks so you can run your teaching parallel with the training and, as a result, teachers take in, practice and absorb a lot more of the learning. Also if you are working with an external provider, ensure continuation of your CPD. Give them the option to train a trainer to develop talent, capacity and sustainability within your school."*

FIONA ROGERS OF COBIS

Fiona Rogers of COBIS recommends optimising the resources, solutions and peers accessible to the school: *"There are huge opportunities for sharing best practice and learning from other schools and colleagues within your network. The pandemic has made us more connected as a sector."*

STEPH REYNOLDS FROM OPTIMUS EDUCATION

Steph Reynolds from Optimus Education says ownership of the CPD strategy is beneficial: *"Assign a dedicated professional development advocate (preferably a senior leader) and phase champions to proactively drive your CPD forward and adopt a whole school approach wherever you can. Professional development is important at all levels within a school, including training for the governing body. Adopt a flexible approach with some core mandatory courses, as well as allowing staff empowerment to pursue their own professional development. Shop around for professional development partners; there are many affordable quality providers. At Optimus Education we allow all customers to trial taster units prior to them choosing us as their provider of choice. If the provider has a platform, ask for a demonstration and free trial of their courses prior to any commitment, so you can quality check and ensure the solution aligns with your school strategic plan."*

JANE LARSSON OF CIS

Jane Larsson of CIS suggests being open-minded to the many new solutions now available, whilst assuring essential standards can be achieved: *"It is important to discern quality learning experiences. It's important to tap into the experiences of staff, ensuring diverse perspectives are heard, to identify trusted sources of learning and help all staff identify and engage with these opportunities, many of them newly created."* Given the abundance of learning opportunities internationally, Jane suggests the value of a working group for CPD: *"Assemble a team of staff, with diverse representation, to identify trusted sources of learning in key areas. Consider higher education institutions with faculties of education near you. Do they offer degrees/training in international education? Contact higher education institutions conducting research in the field of international education. Factors to consider include the diversity of their faculty. A trusted source of information on educational credential evaluation internationally is TAICEP: The Association for International Credential Evaluation Professionals. They have produced a set of standards for the assessment of credential equivalencies across countries and to help verify the authenticity and validity of credentials."* Jane also offers advice to schools about the use of data analytics to track and inform school improvement: *"There is no shortage of frameworks, tools or organisations ready to help! Ensure that your choices take into account the context and diversity of your school community. Due to the pandemic, we saw clearly how inequalities in educational achievement can emerge when students and staff lack access to tools and resources or lack a supportive environment to foster their learning. Carefully consider the use of one-size-fits-all assessments and evaluative tools."*

CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

CPD RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are contributed by HCPC Registered Chartered Educational Psychologist and Director of Real Group Ltd, Dr Siobhan Mellor.

GOALS OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (TPD)

Models of teacher learning demonstrate that effective professional development that impacts on student achievement is a very complex process. Research has demonstrated that teacher development is:

- complex
- socially constructed - best achieved through engaging with colleagues
- distributed over time - an iterative process that evolves gradually
- most effective when situated within the context in which a teacher works

There has been a consensus in teacher professional development (TPD) literature that teacher effectiveness improves rapidly in the first few years of a teaching career (Podolsky et al., 2019) as measured by student test data (Ladd & Sorensen, 2017) and by ratings of school leaders (Kraft et al., 2020). It is therefore a global challenge that so many teachers leave the profession within five years of qualification, just as they have achieved the greatest gains in teacher effectiveness (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Teacher development is known to be a continuous process, despite some early research that showed teacher effectiveness plateaued after the initial years of professional practice. Podolsky et al. (2019) argue that *'teachers become better able to support student learning as they gain experience, and that gains from experience can continue well into the second and, often third decades of their career'* (p.300). For school leaders around the globe, the enduring challenge is how best to support the professional journey of every school's most precious resource - the staff.

Knowing that teacher quality has the greatest impact on students' learning puts this task at the centre of every senior leader's agenda for school improvement. The research is consistent here - in addition to time in the classroom and consequently teaching experience influencing a teacher's impact, there is consensus that high quality TPD can improve teacher effectiveness.

THE CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Experienced Headteachers may not be surprised that despite the intent of TPD, causal links are rarely established with improved teachers' practices (Liu, 2012) or increased pupil outcomes

(CUREE, 2008; King, 2014). The link between TPD and the holy grail of improved student outcomes is far more complex than simply increasing the training budget or number of staff days allocated to courses. Whilst it is widely accepted that *'effective professional development for teachers is a core part of securing effective teaching'* (DfE, 2016, p.3) there is less consensus on what is deemed effective PD and how TPD leads to changes in student outcomes. Across the globe, school leaders continue to invest in high-quality TPD, demonstrating a commitment to supporting staff development.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE CPD

These six features have been identified as 'critical requirements for effective TPD' by Cordingley et al. (2015):

1. Sustained collaboration with professional colleagues

2. Making use of specialist expertise and structured peer support for embedding practice

3. Enquiry-oriented learning

4. Focus on refining teaching and learning

5. Working towards aspirations for specific students side by side with theory

6. Effective scaffolding and modelling of learning by both teachers and school leaders

The Standard for Teacher Professional Development (UK DfE, 2016) is a useful framework for school leaders to use in evaluating the purpose and value of all TPD offered. It incorporates the critical components of effective TPD (Cordingley et al., 2015) within its foundation and recognises the powerful impact of 'situated learning', where the learning opportunity is embedded by activities within the context in which each teacher works, on teacher development.

For international school leaders, geographic barriers to accessing high-quality TPD have been overcome by the growth of online teacher professional development (oTPD). Whilst research on online learning has proliferated throughout 2020 for students, there has been less focus on the unique needs of teachers learning online. My doctoral study over the last five years has researched the overlap of 'characteristics of effective TPD' (known to be a complex research body in its own right) and the separate and distinct research on effective online learning. For teachers undertaking oTPD, there are unique factors to consider.

BENEFITS OF ONLINE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (OTPD)

GLOBAL NETWORKS

The rapid, global growth in oTPD, means teachers are no longer restricted to collaboration with colleagues in local schools. Staff can now connect with other educators and experts across the world to expand educational perspectives, exchange knowledge and cross-fertilise broader pedagogical perspectives. The growth of oTPD has enabled teachers to access lobal networks of professional communities through removing the restrictions of geography, time and accessibility. This is a very efficient way for school leaders to support staff development and 'to meet current needs and demands' (Bates et al., 2016, p. 70) in various ways. Participation in a global professional network can be useful for obtaining new resources as well as finding solutions to identified local challenges and needs. Equally, participation in online global teacher networks can achieve spontaneous, unpredictable and serendipitous learning. Working collaboratively in professional online 'Communities of Practice' enables 'Paragogical Praxis' (Corneli, 2012) (peer learning), known to be invaluable for effective TPD. Opportunities for social interaction are prevalent within many oTPD course infrastructures where sharing resources and group discussions are embedded within the virtual learning environment (VLE).

SUSTAINED LEARNING

A significant benefit of oTPD is the inherent opportunity for courses to provide sustained learning opportunities over many months. Effective professional development requires opportunities for teacher change, best achieved through transforming practice over time. Returning regularly over time to an oTPD environment is possible due to the removal of multiple barriers encountered in face-to-face TPD. Teacher learning that is distributed over time affords the gradual implementation of new practice though the iterative process of trialling new ideas and reviewing impact. When online learning incorporates tasks that are situated within the context in which each teacher works, *Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984)* highlights the powerful possibilities for changing teacher behaviour and classroom practice.

ENQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Research consistently indicates that enquiry-based activities for teachers have the greatest professional impact. Where teachers research and reflect on their own practice in situ, supported by oTPD facilitators and school-based colleagues, there is the greatest likelihood of long-term change in professional practice. Transformational learning is rarely quick, but oTPD provides sustained opportunities for learning where new ideas can be discussed with online course delegates, critiqued amongst school colleagues and then trialled in practice. Through questioning past practice and experimenting with alternative 'ways of being', teachers undertaking an oTPD course can access authentic learning opportunities to embed 'transformational learning' (Mezirow, 2009) within a supportive professional community of practice.

In summary, by overcoming geographic, temporal and political boundaries, oTPD provides opportunities for durable teacher change that can support longer-term gains in teacher effectiveness and pupil outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS CONSIDERING OTPD FOR STAFF

It will come as no surprise that the oTPD encompasses a wide spectrum of different professional development activities. OTPD includes formally organised courses and informally-developed networks as well as synchronous (live) and asynchronous delivery, highlighting a 'dizzying array of opportunities available to educators' (Lantz-Anderson, 2018). In my recent doctoral thesis on pedagogy for oTPD, I have identified several key features that will support international school leaders evaluating the oTPD opportunities available for their staff.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT: oTPD designed around social presence and collaboration amongst teachers is most likely to facilitate engagement and sustained continuance of learning, which ultimately are the factors that are most likely to bring about transformational changes in teachers' practice. *Consider the opportunities for social engagement with oTPD as this is the highest predictor of course continuance and therefore course impact.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL BASED COLLABORATION: oTPD course design that incorporates school-based collaboration activity is most likely to lead to classroom based changes in practice. School-based opportunities to customise and embed the learning and resources attained through oTPD will have the greatest likelihood of creating lasting change and development. *Expecting teachers to embed the outcomes of learning activities without sustained engagement with oTPD course facilitators and school-based colleagues is less likely to be successful.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINED, ENQUIRY-BASED LEARNING: Pedagogies for oTPD that incorporate strong theory-practice links for teachers through tasks aligned with everyday classroom practice have repeatedly demonstrated effective professional growth. Enquiry-based approaches that incorporate the needs of adult learners (andragogy) can overcome traditional barriers to successful transfer of knowledge into practice. *Consider the course design and assess how likely it is to create to impact within your school.*

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTUITIVE VLE PLATFORMS WITH TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT: oTPD delivered on high-quality VLE platforms that are intuitive to use, overcome barriers of access that can be experienced by teachers who require reliable websites that are efficient to access. Research has demonstrated that teachers who could access effective technical support whilst undertaking oTPD had the greatest gains in classroom practice sustained over time. *Don't assume all oTPD and all VLEs are the same!*

CONCLUSIONS

This research report highlights the significant interconnection between the provision of quality CPD and recruitment for international schools.

The research into current recruitment challenges will be of no surprise to many who are closely engaged with the international schools sector. Recruitment challenges existed for many international schools in the years prior to COVID-19 and they have been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic. Those international schools and school groups that had already taken steps to respond proactively and ethically, and with benefit to the entire international schools sector prior to the recruitment crisis are experiencing the positive impact of these steps.

Although discussed for at least a decade, dependency by many international schools on qualified teachers and leaders from a few hand-picked nationalities needs to move at pace from discussion to action; both due to the extensive limitations such practice affords, and also for its response to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. Additional routes to sourcing and developing the international educator talent pool is now an urgent market-wide need. Ethical recruitment practice within the sector is an immediate necessity. This report highlights some shifts occurring that represent good recruitment practice. Such practice needs to be expanded with immediate effect.

International school CPD has experienced notable changes, accelerated by the impact of COVID-19, none more so than the move to online provision. As our research shows, although a swing back to face-to-face learning is a desire for some, the benefits of online delivery, or a hybrid version, appear likely to see significant transformation for educator CPD within the international schools market. This, coupled with a data-led approach to identifying professional learning gaps and, as a consequence, the rigorous selection and tracking of CPD. The impact of such a response on staff retention and school improvement could be considerable.

This report highlights the value that many international schools and educators place on lifelong learning, the standard of learning some international schools seek out, and the routes international school educators select to effectively engage with learning content. The international schools market will only continue to maintain the reputation that currently precedes it if schools continue to seek out and support lifelong learning.

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