

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS - DRAFT MINUTES AND REPORT

Purpose

1. To seek the Deputy First Minister's approval to publish the draft minutes and report from the second meeting of the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) which was held on 27 and 28 February 2017. Both documents have been agreed by the members of the Council and, if approved, will be published on the Scottish Government website.

Priority

2. Routine.

Background

3. The Deputy First Minister chaired the second meeting of the ICEA on 27 and 28 February in Edinburgh, and the draft minutes are attached at **Annex A** for approval. Following the conclusion of the meeting, the Council confirmed it would bring forward specific recommendations as to how excellence and equity can be strengthened in Scotland's schools. The draft report at **Annex B** sets out the Council's initial analysis and discussion of the challenges involved, and the action the Council recommends.

Recommendation

4. The Deputy First Minister is invited to approve the publication of:
- the draft minutes of the second meeting of the ICEA, and;
 - the report of the initial findings of the ICEA.

[redacted – exemption applies]

Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Minister• Minister for Childcare and Early Years• Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science		X	X X		

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Paul Johnston	DG Learning and Justice
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
Fiona Robertson	Director of Learning
Bill Maxwell	Education Scotland
Graeme Logan	Education Scotland
Donna Bell	DD Strategy and Performance
Andrew Bruce	DD Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic
Clare Hicks	DD People and Infrastructure
Audrey MacDougall	DD Analysis, Intelligence and Performance
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]
[redacted – exemption applies]	[redacted – exemption applies]

ANNEX A

SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS - DRAFT MINUTES AND REPORT

Minute of second meeting: 27 – 28 February 2017

The following Council Members were present:

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP (attended 28 February pm only)
Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP (Chair)
Dr Carol Campbell
Professor Chris Chapman
Professor Graham Donaldson
Dr Avis Glaze
Professor Andrew Hargreaves
Professor Alma Harris
Dr Pak Tee Ng
Dr Pasi Sahlberg
Dr Allison Skerrett

Also present:

Paul Johnston, Director General, Learning and Justice, Scottish Government (28 February am only)
Fiona Robertson, Director of Learning, Scottish Government
Bill Maxwell, Chief Executive, Education Scotland
Donna Bell, Deputy Director, Learning Directorate, Scottish Government
Audrey MacDougall (27 February pm only), Deputy Director, Learning Directorate, Scottish Government
Claire Hicks (27 February pm only), Deputy Director, Learning Directorate, Scottish Government
Andy Bruce (27 February pm only), Deputy Director, Learning Directorate, Scottish Government

Secretariat

Judith Tracey, National Improvement Framework Unit, Scottish Government
Katie Brydon, National Improvement Framework Unit, Scottish Government
David Stewart, National Improvement Framework Unit, Scottish Government

Purpose

This note provides an overview of the discussion and key points from the second meeting of the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA). The meeting took place in Edinburgh on 27-28 February 2017 and focused on three key themes:

- Capacity building in educational leadership and professional learning
- Building collaboration and collective responsibility in Scottish education
- What works educationally to close the equity gap

27 February 2017

Breakfast meeting (Apex Hotel – Grassmarket)

Fiona Robertson and Bill Maxwell led a discussion with the Council focusing on events and activity in Scotland since the last meeting in August and September 2016. This included interactions around the PISA data published in December 2016, the Scottish Government's Governance Review, the draft Research Strategy and progress with the National Improvement Framework including development of national standardised assessments,.

Council Session 1 (St Andrew's House)

The Deputy First Minister welcomed members to the second meeting of the ICEA and said that he was looking forward to a robust and challenging discussion over the next 2 days, and was keen to hear the Council's recommendations as to how excellence and equity can be strengthened in Scotland's schools.

The discussion was based around the three key themes set out above, and the supporting papers that had been provided to accompany the discussion: Capacity building in educational leadership and professional learning (ICEA (17) 01), building collaboration and collective responsibility in Scottish education (ICEA (17) 02) and what works educationally to close the equity gap (ICEA (17) 03).

Points made during the discussion included:

- The need to focus on evidence informed interventions that would assist in closing the equity gap.
- How to help equip headteachers to use the pupil equity funding on focussed, evidence informed, interventions. Building that evidence base will need to allow headteachers the freedom to say what hasn't worked, as well as what has.
- The need to address the variation between schools and local authorities in the delivery of excellence and equity.
- In terms of governance, there should be a focus on the three key and connected elements around reform – structural change, cultural change and capacity building.
- The need for strategic alignment but tactical empowerment – a clear national direction but with local autonomy to deliver. How do we harness good local leadership and make that endemic?
- Building ideas on how we can most effectively empower leaders to drive improvement in schools. The need to look beyond schools and engage the community that surrounds young people. Community and deep parental engagement in learning is a hugely powerful lever if used properly.
- Literacy and numeracy should not be the sole focus of a good education system – they are both necessary but as part of a broader system of children's learning.
- Policy, practice and preparation are all equally important in capacity building.

- The importance of having a student voice and identifying and making use of the passions of young people.

At the end of the discussion, in considering what needs to be done in order to move in the right direction towards excellence and equity, the Council identified 5 key issues at the heart of Scottish education and recommended that the Scottish Government give further thought on how to make progress in these areas:

- Effective intervention across the system to improve excellence and equity;
- Centrality of teachers and the importance of improving pedagogy for specific subjects;
- Broad issues of governance – structure, culture and capacity building;
- Harnessing good leadership;
- Unlocking the untapped potential from within the system, and removing any barriers to improvement.

Working lunch with the Teacher Panel

The following Teacher Panel members were present:

Stephen Ross
Gareth Surgey
Scott Duncan
James Cook
Clare Bryden
Catrìona Chaimbeul
Ellen Turnbull
Annette Beaton
Deborah Davidson
Pauline Walker
Andrew Travis

The Teacher Panel and members of the International Council split into three groups to hold a facilitated discussion on each of the three key themes. Following this the group provided collective feedback to the Deputy First Minister.

Capacity building in educational leadership and professional learning

Points made during this discussion included:

- Professional learning needs to be fit for purpose.
- Isolation of, and within, schools is the enemy of improvement.
- The importance of collaboration – there should be more opportunities for teachers to work together. Local and national government need to consider how best to create those conditions.
- Need to look at making the profession more attractive, particularly around the structure for career progression. Collaborative and collegiate working is important.

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- Make use of high performing teachers and their leadership skills within schools e.g. create a “master teacher” role to support and mentor other teachers.
- The need for a culture of improvement, and the tools to help deliver that.
- The current inspection model does not encourage innovation within schools.

Building collaboration and collective responsibility in Scottish education

Points made during this discussion included:

- Don't want pockets of excellence working in isolation. Need greater collective responsibility to create a national culture of excellence.
- The importance of schools making use of the pool of leaders within schools “leading from the middle” and not just focussing on leadership from depute heads and headteachers.
- Looking at worldwide and local examples of collaboration, such as the Northern Alliance, and focussing on moderation of practice/assessment
- There should be a balance between face to face and virtual collaboration
- The need to look at ways of embedding collaborative enquiry into the system without demanding it. For example – drawing on a large number of experienced people who can coach and support schools locally and nationally.
- Consider standardising school holidays and in-service days to facilitate better collaboration and access to shared services across local authority areas.

What works educationally to close the equity gap

Points made during this discussion included:

- There needs to be a clear understanding of the meaning of equity – what does it look like?
- Fairness and inclusion is absolutely crucial.
- The need for professionals to understand their pupils and the large variety of data that is available to support their learning.
- The importance of understanding community/family life and what can be done to support the needs and aspirations of young people from socially-deprived areas.
- Tailoring teaching to context – does the curriculum allow that?
- Ensuring that there is a high quality of learning available and stressing the importance of effective classroom teaching.
- Relationships with pupils are absolutely vital – young people need to feel valued.
- The importance of fostering a culture of achievement and aspiration – the curriculum needs to be able meet the needs of all.

Research Strategy

Audrey MacDougall gave a brief overview of the draft Research Strategy. She said that it was vital that the strategy should empower practitioners to use data to help

tailor teaching and learning, and to ensure that they feel comfortable in doing so. The Council covered the following key points in discussion:

- The emphasis should be on “knowledge mobilisation” i.e. ensuring the research produces information and advice that practitioners can use, rather than impenetrable research reports.
- The practitioner’s voice needed to be taken into account in identifying research needs, and there should be support for practitioners around utilising the data in the classroom.
- It would be beneficial to compare the scale and nature of investment in research with countries of a similar population size e.g. Norway.

On the evening of 27 February, the Council members attended a dinner hosted by the Deputy First Minister at Home Restaurant, 7-8 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh.

28 February 2017 (Apex Hotel, Grassmarket and the Scottish Parliament)

The meeting resumed on Tuesday 28 February at the Apex Hotel, Grassmarket, with a brief breakfast meeting between Council members and Scottish Government senior management. There were discussions around key issues and conclusions from the previous day.

Council members spent the remainder of the morning working together to consider their conclusions from the previous day’s meetings and to provide some initial recommendations to present to the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister later that afternoon.

Meeting with young people (Scottish Parliament)

S5/S6 pupils from Holyrood High School, Boroughmuir High School and Trinity Academy joined Council members for a discussion on school life. This was an opportunity for the Council to hear about school experiences in Scotland first hand to further inform their recommendations. Three discussion groups were set up involving young people from each school and Council members. This was followed by a full group discussion which included feedback on the group discussions. The First Minister and Deputy First Minister joined the meeting towards the end of the group discussion.

Points made during the discussion included:

- School is a safe place to be.
- If you are a “middle of the road” performer you can go unnoticed as there is a lot of focus on helping the high and low achievers.
- Quality of teaching is good, but it would be helpful to have more resources for things like IT equipment.
- It would be helpful to provide career guidance from an earlier stage.

- There is excellent support from schools for those applying for university but not as much support and guidance for college applications etc
- There is a great deal of choice of subject matters across the curriculum, and school becomes more enjoyable in the senior phase as you have more control over what you study.
- Some concern about the level of disruption caused by less engaged pupils in S1 to S3.
- Still a noticeable gap in attainment and opportunity between those from affluent and less affluent areas within the same school.
- Pupils would like to discuss contemporary social issues more in school, but the focus on examinations in the senior phase crowds out the time for doing so in any depth (except for those who are taking modern studies).

Council Session 2 (Scottish Parliament)

The Deputy First Minister reconvened the meeting, with the First Minister in attendance. There was a brief discussion sharing reflections on the meeting with young people and how valuable the Council had found it.

The Council recommended Scotland should prioritise three areas for action as it takes forward reforms to make its education system world class. These are:

- Improving pedagogy for specific subjects, using clear evidence to identify what works in the classroom
- Developing effective leadership at all levels in Scottish education– unleashing untapped potential within the system
- Ensuring a culture of collaboration exists throughout Scottish education, at classroom, school, regional and national level.

A more detailed paper provided by the Council setting out the its recommendations on these issues has been published separately.

Any other business

It was agreed that the Council would meet again in September 2017 and that further evaluation and discussion around the recommendations would continue between meetings.

Background papers presented for the meeting are published at: [web page link](#)

Communique issued following the meeting: [attach link to news release](#)

ANNEX B

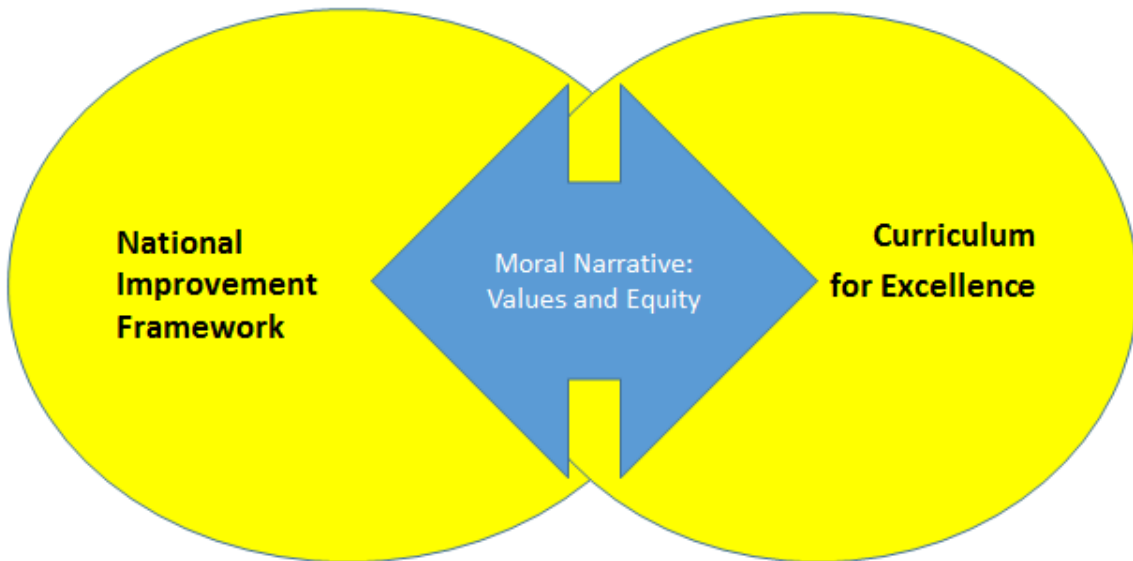
SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS - DRAFT MINUTES AND REPORT

REPORT OF THE INITIAL FINDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS APRIL 2017

1. The International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) was established in 2016 to advise Ministers on how best to achieve excellence and equity in the Scottish education system.
2. At the first meeting on 31 August and 1 September 2016, the ICEA agreed to take forward work examining three key themes:
 - Capacity building in educational leadership and professional learning.
 - Building collaboration and collective responsibility in Scottish education.
 - What works educationally to close the equity gap.
3. The second meeting of the ICEA took place on 27 and 28 February 2017 in Edinburgh, and focussed on those three key themes. Following the conclusion of the meeting, the Council confirmed it would bring forward specific recommendations as to how excellence and equity can be strengthened in Scotland's schools. This report sets out the Council's initial analysis and discussion of the challenges involved, and the action required to make Scotland's education system world class. The Council welcomes this opportunity to share its insights on those areas it has discussed to date.

Key Issues

4. In presenting its thinking to Ministers, the Council has looked at the ethos of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and how that is encapsulated in the vision, the priorities and the drivers of improvement set out in the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education (NIF) published in December 2016.



5. Both CfE and the NIF share a clear and positive narrative of a bold nature which, if applied consistently, will help to raise attainment and close the poverty-related attainment gap. However, the Council was concerned that, in the drive to deliver clarity of purpose for all those involved in Scottish education, there was a risk that education policy was moving away from the “whole child” approach of CfE towards a more specific, measurable approach as required by the NIF. As a result, the Council identified three priority areas where it feels the Scottish Government needs to concentrate its efforts in order to deliver the improvements set out in the NIF, whilst retaining the vision and holistic approach of CfE.

Priority Areas

6. The three priority areas are:
 - Improving pedagogy for specific subjects, using clear evidence to identify what works in the classroom
 - Developing effective leadership at all levels in Scottish education– unleashing untapped potential within the system
 - Ensuring a culture of collaboration exists throughout Scottish education, at classroom, school, regional and national level.
7. In considering these areas, the Council acknowledged that Scotland’s education system had a lot of strengths. However it is clear that if Scotland wants to continue to build a world class system, further improvement is required.
8. In particular, the Council felt that teaching was a well-established and respected profession in Scotland, and that there was clear evidence of collaborative intent throughout the education system. However, the Council felt that collaboration was uneven and was not sufficiently ingrained throughout the education system. They cited the Northern Alliance, which

comprises the 7 northern and island councils: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Highland, Moray, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles, as a good example of partnership activity, as was the Tayside Strategic Collaboration and Enhanced Partnership Working. They suggested that these examples needed to be developed further, and extended throughout the country.

9. The Council also mentioned the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) as an excellent resource for developing educational leadership, as well as the Scottish Government's commitment to improvements in teacher education. The Council was keen to establish a way to harness what they saw as the power and performance of school leaders, and make sure they are not being overlooked via the traditional promotion and employment routes. There was a concern about the level of untapped leadership potential within schools, and how that could be co-ordinated and utilised more effectively.
10. To that end, the Council made a number of recommendations.

Recommendations

11. In order to improve pedagogy for specific subjects, using clear evidence to identify what works in the classroom, the Scottish Government should:
 - Establish and fund a network of proven and well-trained teaching professionals who are highly accredited for their pedagogy but also have a strong knowledge of the community/health and wellbeing aspects of CfE.
 - Identify a systematic, sequenced and selective plan for literacy, including a research based approach to improving learning and development, that ensures they can both achieve targeted academic goals while being responsive to the unique needs of each learner.
 - Consider expanding the role of universities to work more closely with schools in the spirit of collaborative inquiry.
12. In order to develop effective leadership at all levels in Scottish education— unleashing untapped potential within the system, the Scottish Government should:
 - Consider providing a greater financial incentive to encourage teaching professionals to take on greater leadership roles and, in particular, to apply for headships.
 - Establish clear, broad and multiple career pathways for teaching professionals, and look at ways for teachers to progress while remaining in the classroom (e.g. as a teacher mentor employing leadership skills within a classroom environment, or by leading change in pedagogy in a certain subject area) other than the more administrative route to headteacher.
 - Establish a clear structure for bringing together leaders from across the teaching profession, local authorities, business etc, at a regional level in order to share learning and engage in joint practice development.

13. In order to ensure a culture of collaboration exists throughout Scottish education, at classroom, school, regional and national level, the Scottish Government should:

- Consider incentivising collaboration by making it one of the required criteria for any financial programme e.g. future iterations of the pupil equity fund.
- Establish a national training programme on how to collaborate fully i.e. “working together not just talking together”.
- Look at creating federations of schools – this can be done on a simple collaborative basis or on a more formal standing with shared headteachers or “chief executives” leading across a number of schools.

14. In addition to the priority areas, at the Deputy First Minister’s request, the Council also made some recommendations around the issue of governance. The Council felt that it was important to consider how to de-clutter the system without damaging it. The Council advised against becoming too focussed on changing the structure of the education system when, arguably, the more important aspects are the culture and capacity within the system. In particular the Scottish Government should:

- Learn from existing attempts to formally share education services between local authorities e.g. the Northern Alliance, and other forms of non-structural regionalisation that have been successful internationally.
- Create learning hubs around the country where education professionals can go to learn about different elements of educational practice.

Future Work Programme

15. Looking forward, the Council will continue to focus on how the talent and capacity of everyone involved in Scotland’s education system can be harnessed to remove the obstacles of disadvantage or poverty, and deliver wider improvement. The Council will report more formally in 2018 (at the end of the current 2 year appointment of the Council) on the action required to make real practical progress in delivering the Scottish Government’s vision for Scottish Education.

[] April 2017