

# ICEA REPORT 2018

## BACKGROUND

The International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) was established in August 2016 by the First Minister, to advise Ministers and officials on how best to achieve excellence and equity in the Scottish education system. The role of the ICEA is:

- to advise on the Scottish Government's priorities for education
- to ensure the actions set out in the Delivery Plan for Scotland published in June 2016 are influenced by international best practice
- to advise on the reporting and planning cycle of the national improvement framework and improvement plan.

The membership of the ICEA is made up of education professionals, academics and business experts with a range of knowledge and extensive experience of advising educators and governments on education leadership, school improvement and reform. Biographies of all 11 members are included at Annex A.

The ICEA has two full meetings a year, where the Council is usually joined by both the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. The dates and locations of the meeting, to date, have been as follows:

- 31 August and 1 September 2016 - Edinburgh

- 27 and 28 February 2017 - Edinburgh
- 20 and 21 September 2017 - Glasgow and Edinburgh
- 26 and 27 April - Inverness

At each meeting the ICEA have held discussions with a variety of stakeholders involved in Scottish education including the Teacher Panel, the professional associations, teachers, and pupils from a number of different schools, and the new Regional Improvement Leads. These discussions have helped to provide a rounded picture of Scotland's education system, which has informed our consideration of how Scotland can continue to build a world class education system that delivers excellence and equity for all. At the final session of each meeting, the ICEA have had the opportunity to share their conclusions and recommendations to the First Minister, and the Deputy First Minister.

This is the ICEA's formal report following the initial two-year period of appointment. It sets out considerations of the challenges involved, the analysis of key policy issues, and suggestions for the action required to make Scotland's education system even stronger and of a world class standard.

This ICEA report builds on the interim report, published in July 2017, and encapsulates all the advice that the ICEA has provided to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister since August 2016. It explores in greater detail the policy considerations and policy issues that the ICEA has deliberated upon during this initial, two-year term of appointment.

## INTRODUCTION

This introduction provides a general reflection, from the ICEA, on the current policy direction in Scotland and its stated ambitions. Overall, the ICEA is supportive of the direction that the current reform process is taking, and it commends the central policy aspiration of raising achievement and securing equity. The ICEA supports the overall policy direction and the aspirational goals of ensuring success for every child, irrespective of context, setting, or background.

The ICEA supports the central policy aim of ‘closing the poverty-attainment gap’, while recognising that this aspiration is one that will require sustained investment, ongoing support and new ways of working, if these ambitions are to be fully achieved. The ICEA note that the pupil equity fund is already making a difference to schools and young people in receipt of free school meals and that this targeted resource is helping school leaders to respond creatively to a wide variety of learner needs. The ICEA suggests that the Scottish Government should capture examples of how the pupil equity fund is being used most effectively, within schools in different settings, to share as important additional guidance to schools. It also advocates the introduction of mechanisms to ensure that the pupil equity fund is used more effectively in areas where there is less clarity about impact.

The ICEA also note that the CFE remains forward-looking and is the cornerstone of educational transformation in Scotland. The ICEA commends the Scottish Government for its continued support of CFE and note the considerable progress being made with CFE in Scottish schools. The ICEA reinforces that going forward, it

is important that the reform agenda, and its various parts, do not lead to a narrow view of education and schooling that limits the aspirations of CFE. Rather, the ICEA suggests that the Government should consider how the existing reforms, and those in the future, support the aspirations of CFE so that young people in Scotland to fulfil their potential.

The ICEA agree that a policy focus on leadership, pedagogy, and collaboration are significant strengths within the current reform agenda. The ICEA notes that with focused attention upon capacity building, going forward, the focus on leadership, pedagogy and collaboration should contribute to improvements at school and system level. Later in the report, a commentary on the importance of capacity building will be outlined.

The ICEA invite the Scottish Government to think about three aspects of their current reform agenda. Firstly, how far are the current reforms sufficiently contextually nuanced and contextually embedded? Secondly, is there an explicit theory of change that underpins and supports the current reform agenda? Thirdly, could the reform agenda be simplified to provide better focus, and at the same time achieve greater coherence and support a compelling narrative that influences all parts of the system?

The ICEA suggest that building on recent successes and ongoing developments, the next phase in the policy formation and policy implementation should focus on capacity building and cultural change. The structural changes required to secure and sustain change are now in place, or underway, so the ICEA proposes that there

should be a shift in focus to capacity building imperatives that will contribute to deep and lasting cultural change within the system.

The ICEA propose three key policy imperatives for the next phase of reform that will help to create a self-improving system which are professional empowerment, responsiveness, and ownership. The ICEA believes that these three imperatives will deepen and consolidate the move towards a self-improving education system in Scotland. These three aspects will be returned to later in this report

This report is organised into the following sections:

1. Policy context and developments
2. Strengths of the Scottish education system
3. Structural Change
4. Capacity Building
5. Cultural Change
6. Opportunities and risks for the Scottish education system
7. Reflections on progress and Recommendations

Some more intro text needed – Scottish Govt to contextualise

**It would be helpful if this section went back to Mike Russell's announcements in Spring 2013 this would build a stronger longitudinal picture and incorporate the launch of SAFOECD review,**

## 1. Policy Context and Developments

Scotland was one of the first countries across the world to adopt a new approach to describing the aims of the school curriculum. Previously, it had adopted a conventional approach to describing the curriculum in terms of subjects or curriculum areas to be covered by pupils within a stage or period of schooling. Pupils had an entitlement to teaching and learning across 5 curriculum areas between the ages of 5 and 14 and across 8 curriculum modes in the third and fourth years of secondary education. In the 5-14 period, outcomes of learning were specified at 6 age-related levels, A-F. The curriculum, although non-statutory, was followed by schools throughout Scotland.

Following the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, a national debate was mounted to guide future education policy. The conclusions of that debate led to a major rethink about the aims and purposes of the school curriculum. It led to a significant move away from a curriculum based on coverage of defined subjects or areas to one which sought to describe what young people should become as a result of their learning.

The aspiration for all children and for every young person was that they should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work. This fresh approach to describing the aims or purposes of the curriculum is also reflected in thinking about the curriculum internationally. The Melbourne Declaration in Australia, the aims of the curriculum in

Singapore and aspects of the OECD's 2030 project, for example, reflect similar long-term aims.

The long-term aims of education in Scotland were also reflected in a clear statement of the values that young people should develop in school. Wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity, the words which are inscribed on the mace of the Scottish Parliament, were defined as being important aims for the personal development of all young people.

The long-term aims underpin Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The recent OECD report on progress with the Curriculum for Excellence reaffirmed the ambitious nature of these aims and they remain as the stated policy of the Scottish Government. As noted earlier, the Council welcomes the continuing commitment of the government to Curriculum for Excellence and will continue to consider its progress as a Council.

Education policy and practice must inevitably respond to short-term pressures while continuing to pursue long-term aims for the country's young people. Reconciling the short and the long-term is one of the most difficult challenges facing governments. The Scottish Government has set out its vision for Scottish education in a National Improvement Framework (NIF). This National Improvement Framework focuses on excellence and equity as the key drivers of policy.

Major priorities, as part of the reform agenda, also include literacy and numeracy, health and wellbeing and closing the attainment gap. Employability skills and positive

leaver destinations for all young people are also core aims. A range of measures have been developed to gauge progress towards these goals. The Council endorses the current aims for Scottish education and concurs that they are vital aspects of a short to medium-term reform agenda for Scottish education.

As the National Improvement Framework becomes embedded in schools, the ICEA offer a caution that there is a risk that the original ambitious aims of CfE will assume lesser visibility and importance. The ICEA proposes that there is no inherent conflict between the 4 capacities of the CfE and the government's excellence and equity agenda. However, they note that it will be important for both policy and practice in Scotland to maintain a focus on the 4 capacities and the values of CfE as the specific measures in the NIF are concurrently pursued. The ICEA suggest that learning intentions relating to the 4 capacities should be developed and set alongside the important NIF priorities. This issue was also highlighted by the OECD.

### The National Improvement Framework

The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education (NIF) was published in January 2016, and set out the Scottish Government's vision and priorities for children and young people's progress in learning. This was followed in June 2016 by the Delivery Plan for Scotland which outlined the specific steps the Scottish Government would take to achieve the system-wide improvements envisaged by the NIF. Scottish Ministers have a statutory duty to review the NIF each year, and to publish an annual plan setting out the action they will take to close the poverty-



related attainment gap. The most recent of these, the NIF and Improvement Plan for 2018, was published in December 2017 [*insert link*].

Part of the rationale for the introduction of the National Improvement Framework was the lack of detailed data about the performance of the Scottish education system. As part of the NIF, a wide-range of additional information and data is now gathered and reported upon that can be used to drive improvement forward. In terms of children and young people's progress from ages 4-15, the key indicator is whether they have achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence level by the end of P1, P4, P7 and S3. This is based upon the professional judgement of teachers – a judgement that is based on the full range of evidence available to them. From the 2017/18 school year, this has included evidence provided by the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA).

SNSA give teachers a single, nationally developed, consistent set of standardised assessments, designed to reflect the way Scotland delivers education in Scotland, through Curriculum for Excellence. They are expected to replace the variety of existing standardised assessments that local authorities and schools used previously.

SNSA are delivered online and automatically marked through the online system, providing information to teachers in real time. For teachers and school leaders. SNSA provide an objective and comparable measure of children's progress in aspects of reading, writing and numeracy. The ICEA note that these assessments should not be used in isolation and should not be viewed as a replacement for the

ongoing assessment of children's progress which is central to Curriculum for Excellence. The ICEA welcome clarification over the holistic nature of these new assessments as Council had previously expressed some reservations about national testing in the form of high stakes testing.

The ICEA note that the Scottish Government is clear that the purpose of all assessment, including national standardised assessments, is to help teachers understand how children are progressing, and to help teachers tailor aspects of future learning accordingly. The assessments are not "high stakes tests". The results do not determine any key future outcomes for students, such as which school they go to, or whether they can progress to the next level. There is no pass or fail. Children are not expected to revise or prepare for assessments. They will simply continue to undertake routine classroom learning activities. The assessment data will be used to improve educational outcomes for every child and young person. The ICEA welcomes this approach to assessment and its central interpretation and formative use.

#### The National Improvement Framework Evidence Report

The NIF evidence report is published annually and gives an overview of Scottish education and the context in which children and young people learn. It brings together available current evidence on achievement, attainment, health and wellbeing, and the wider education system, with a specific focus on differences between children living in the most deprived and least deprived areas. It aims to

present an objective picture of Scottish education, based on a wide range of sources.

Key elements of the report published in December 2017 [[link](#)] include:

- Teacher numbers increased for the second year in row - rising to 51,513 in 2017, an increase of 543 on last year
- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level results show that between 69% and 85% of pupils in primary schools achieved the relevant CfE level in aspects of literacy and numeracy. The proportion of S3 pupils achieving Third Level or better is between 88% and 91% for each organiser (reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy).
- Proportion of schools reported with good or satisfactory condition increased to 86%. 751 schools built or substantially refurbished since 2007-8
- Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research shows vast majority of staff in schools report pupils as being generally well behaved but some concerns over low level disruptive behaviour in primary schools and view that lack of resources affecting management of behaviour
- The exclusion rate for 2016/17 was 26.8 per 1,000 pupils which is the lowest since the statistics began in 2002/03
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The ICEA welcome the provision of a greater range of data that can be used for diagnostic purposes and future planning purposes.

Education reform agenda

In terms of structural change, the Deputy First Minister launched the Education Governance Review on 13 September 2016, seeking views on how the Scottish Government could further empower teachers, practitioners, parents, schools and early learning and childcare settings. The Review commenced with a clear view that decisions about individual children's learning and school life should be taken at the school level.

The Review took a whole system approach looking at both the strengths of the existing governance arrangements as well as the barriers to delivering excellence and equity. The Review sought views on what decisions should be taken at a school level, and what support should be in place at a local and national level to support teachers and practitioners, as well as how best to support collaboration and partnership working.

No single preferred model of governance emerged from the consultation process, but a number of important themes emerged including:

- The importance of leadership and the strong message from teachers and headteachers that they want to be leaders of learning together with differing views on what was needed to enable them to fulfil that role;
- A high level of variability within the current system;
- The importance of professional development and support;
- A variability in the level of parental engagement and support;
- A desire for flexibility but a concern about variation;

- A focus on collaboration and on the barriers that could make partnership working difficult
- A desire for clarity and coherence.

The Education Governance: Next Steps paper was published in June 2017, setting out the Scottish Government's vision for education, and the reforms it would take forward following the review of education governance. This was followed in November by the publication of a consultation on the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill, which is intended to create a school and teacher-led education system.

*[text on the outcome of the consultation to be added later]*

Regional Improvement Collaboratives

A commitment to Regional Improvement Collaboratives was announced in the 'Education Governance: Next Steps' paper. The Scottish Government worked in partnership with local government and Education Scotland to develop and to take forward arrangements for their establishment.

Each Collaborative is led by a Regional Improvement Lead, employed by one of the local authorities in the Region. The Regional Improvement Collaboratives are intended to bring a collective focus to driving continuous and systematic improvement, particularly in relation to closing the attainment gap. It is anticipated that they will demonstrate, strengthen and support collaborative working, innovation

and the sharing of best practice within, between schools and across the education system. The action the Regional Improvement Collaboratives have taken thus far to secure improvement was set out in the annual Regional Improvement Plans, the first of which were produced at the beginning of 2018.

**(put this list in an appendix?)**

The six Collaboratives are:

*The Northern Alliance*

Aberdeen City ICEA

Argyll and Bute ICEA

Highland ICEA

Orkney Islands ICEA  
Aberdeenshire ICEA

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Moray ICEA

Shetland Islands ICEA

*The Tayside Collaborative*

Angus ICEA

Perth and Kinross ICEA

Dundee City ICEA

*The West Partnership*

East Dunbartonshire ICEA

Glasgow City ICEA

North Lanarkshire ICEA

South Lanarkshire ICEA East Renfrewshire ICEA

Inverclyde ICEA

Renfrewshire ICEA

West Dunbartonshire ICEA

South West Collaborative

East Ayrshire ICEA

South Ayrshire ICEA North Ayrshire ICEA

Dumfries and Galloway ICEA

South East Collaborative

Edinburgh City ICEA

Fife ICEA

Scottish Borders ICEA East Lothian ICEA

Midlothian ICEA

Forth Valley and West Lothian Collaborative

Clackmannanshire ICEA

Stirling ICEA Falkirk ICEA

The ICEA is supportive of the development of the RICs as a potentially powerful capacity building mechanism and a source of lasting cultural change within the system. RICs will be revisited later in the report.

### The Scottish Attainment Challenge

The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched by the First Minister in February 2015. Backed by a commitment of £750 million over the course of this parliament it prioritises improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing of those children adversely affected by the poverty related attainment gap in Scotland's primary and secondary schools.

In 2017, Pupil Equity Funding was introduced to provide funding directly to schools, for headteachers to use at their discretion for additional staffing or resources that they consider will help close the poverty related attainment gap. 95% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding for pupils in P1-S3 based on those known to be eligible for free school meals. Schools now have their plans in place for using their funding and will be implementing those plans.

An [interim evaluation report](#) on the progress and impact of the Attainment Scotland Fund was published on 16 March 2018. The report includes an evaluation strategy for the next two years of the Attainment Scotland Fund, which will incorporate Pupil Equity Funding. The evaluation covers the Challenge Authority and Schools



programmes and aims to provide evidence about the overall implementation of the fund and the extent to which the aims of the fund have been met.

Stakeholder views were sought about the positive or negative aspects of the fund along with its ability to reduce some of the inequalities amongst particular groups. The evidence revealed that most stakeholders felt that there had been a strong focus on reducing poverty related deprivation but limited impact on wider inequalities. However, some felt that having improved approaches to monitoring and tracking pupil needs, as a result of the fund, that this would now benefit all pupils. More widely, it is felt that this work has contributed significantly to the Scottish evidence base around what works or does not work to improve attainment and close the attainment gap.

The findings show that in Year 2 of the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme:

- **78%** of headteachers indicated that there had been improvement, or they expected to see improvement in attainment and health and wellbeing as a result of the Attainment Scotland Fund.
- **97%** of headteachers expect to see improvements in closing the poverty-related attainment gap over the next 5 years.
- There was wide support for the aims of the fund, with schools reporting greater collaboration and a focus on improving teaching skills and practice.
- The report found praise for the support provided by local authorities and Attainment Advisors in schools.

- The fund appeared to be a driver for change and cohesion. Stakeholders reported an increased understanding and shared commitment to address the impact of poverty on attainment.
- Widespread agreement that the fund had made a positive impact on professional development and leadership opportunities; use of data to drive improvements; and the level of collaboration both within schools and with external partners.

The ICEA notes the importance of this funding and the significant progress being made with the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It recommends that this work is continued and sustained in the system.

### Building a Guiding Coalition

The Scottish Government's reform programme provided the opportunity to review and rationalise the existing structures and arrangements for the governance arrangements and a chance to reflect upon Scottish education policy. One of the outcomes was the establishment of the Scottish Education Council as the key forum for oversight of improvement in education in Scotland, as defined by the NIF.

The SEC is chaired by the Deputy First Minister and brings together young people, education leaders and representatives from local authorities and the teaching profession. The role of the SEC is to work collaboratively to ensure that there is a system-wide focus on improvement and to agree priorities for improvement activity and delivery

The establishment of the Scottish Education Council saw the disbanding of the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board and its supporting structures i.e. the CfE Implementation Group and Assessment and National Qualifications Group; as well as the National Improvement Framework Strategic Group and the Scottish Attainment Challenge Advisory Group. In their place, the tier beneath the Council now comprises the new Curriculum and Assessment Board and the existing Strategic Board for Teacher Education. The ICEA welcome this new development and look forward to meeting SEC members in due course. The ICEA note, however, the importance of not over cluttering the middle tier and ensuring the responsibility for action, for each of the new bodies, are clear.

The Curriculum and Assessment Board is the key forum for oversight of curriculum and assessment activity in Scotland. The Board is jointly chaired by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland and contains representation from a range of organisations involved in the delivery of education in Scotland.

The Strategic Board for Teacher Education is the key forum for oversight of teacher professionalism and school leadership. Membership is drawn from a broad cross-section of those involved in teacher education, teaching standards, the delivery of education and all teaching unions.

The ICEA welcomes these new forms of representation within Scottish Government but signals the importance of clear communication and the demarcation of functions.

## 2. Strengths of the Scottish Education System

The ICEA note that recent structural changes have established a much-needed platform for improvement. The ICEA also note that there are considerable strengths of the Scottish Education System. There is a clear vision for Scottish Education set out in the National Improvement Framework that encompasses:

**Excellence** through raising attainment: ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications, and achievements to allow them to succeed;

**Achieving equity**: ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the deprivation-related attainment gap.

The ICEA wish to reinforce the importance of a whole system focus on equity and excellence. There are many countries where excellence is achieved at the expense of equity, therefore, the ICEA would wish to commend the Scottish Government for its dual focus on excellence and equity, that is now at the epicentre of policy formation and policy implementation within the Scottish Education system.

The ICEA also note that the priorities for 2018 are:

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;

Improvement and employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

The ICEA note the sustained policy attention and investment in securing equity for all children and young people, plus its clear focus on health, well-being and employability. These aspects are important in shaping a future workforce that has a wide range of employment choices, irrespective of background, and the personal capability to self-manage and to be resilient within a rapidly changing world.

The ICEA note that the dual focus on the health and well-being, of children and young people in Scotland, is commendable but would also suggest that the Scottish Government now needs to consider exactly how improvement in both areas is measured, gauged and evaluated so that any progress can be clearly established and validated.

The ICEA notes that since 2016 significant progress has been made by Scottish Government towards its educational aims. Recent data highlights key elements of success:

**RECENT DATA SLIDE HERE FROM FIONA's Presentation**

## Impact of the ICEA on Policy Development to date

At the first meeting on 31 August and 1 September 2016, the ICEA gathered a wide range of information about education in Scotland to enable us to offer well-informed advice to Ministers. The ICEA consequently focused our initial work on 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.

These themes were the focus of our second meeting, after which the ICEA published its initial report *[insert link]* identifying three priority areas where the ICEA felt the Scottish Government needed to concentrate its efforts upon, in order to deliver the improvements set out in the National Improvement Framework (NIF), whilst retaining the vision and holistic approach of Curriculum for Excellence.

The three priority areas were:

- 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.

Throughout our discussions with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister the ICEA have been clear that addressing cultural change, capacity building, and structural change were the key elements of securing meaningful improvements in Scotland's education system. The ICEA welcome the fact that the Scottish Government has taken the recommendations from the ICEA into account and is using them to firstly, implement policies that will secure the achievement of excellence and equity in the Scottish Education system and secondly, to establish a school and teacher led education system designed to empower the workforce, parents, pupils and communities.

### ***Collaboration***

In our initial report, the ICEA stated that collaboration among teachers and schools was uneven and was not sufficiently ingrained throughout the education system in Scotland. The ICEA reflected on collaborative improvement initiatives and cited the Northern Alliance and the Tayside Strategic Collaboration as promising examples of partnership activity. The ICEA suggested that such examples needed to be developed further, and potentially shared throughout the country. The ICEA note the potential of the 6 Regional Improvement Collaboratives, to embed collaboration for improvement across the whole of Scotland.

### ***Leadership***

In terms of leadership, the ICEA recommended that the Scottish Government consider:

- ways of making the teaching profession, particularly entry into leadership roles, more attractive, through a clearer career progression;
- how to make use of high-performing teacher leaders within schools e.g. creating a system of peer support role to support and mentor other teachers; and
- establishing clear, broad and multiple career pathways for teaching professionals, and to look at ways for teachers to contribute to leadership practices while remaining in the classroom.

The ICEA note that the Scottish Government continues to work with the teaching profession and other partners (including Education Scotland, GTCS, further and higher education institutions and specialist groups) to develop new career pathways for teachers allowing greater opportunities for development and progression into leadership, specialist, or improvement roles. This policy direction has been agreed jointly with the teacher unions as part of Scotland's country commitments for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (2017 and 2018) and will be taken forward by an independent panel linked to the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers.

Another consistent theme in the advice the ICEA have provided to the Scottish Government has been the need to ensure a school, and teacher led education system. The ICEA have consistently under-scored the importance of capacity



building and cultural change, at all levels in the education system and these are themes that will be revisited later in this report.

## **Education Reform Programme**

At present the Scottish Government is pursuing a bold and integrated education reform programme building upon previous successes.

This Education Reform Programme aims to contribute to the achievement of excellence and equity in the Scottish Education System by developing a school and teacher led education system which will empower the workforce, parents, pupils and their communities.

**Education Reform Programme Diagram HERE**

The ICEA note that the language around the education reform programme tends to be instrumental and largely aspirational. The ICEA approve the aspirations and the core components of the programme but in time, would want to see a detailed implementation plan with buy-in across the system that would ensure that each of these components could be sufficiently embedded and sustained for benefit of future generations

In its considerations thus far, the ICEA has put forward a range of advice to the Scottish Government which fall under **three broad headings**; structure, culture, and

capacity. While it is recognised that these three areas are inter-related, their separation in this report aims to help guide the Scottish Government's to think about The ICEA now outline advice about the next stages of development under these three headings.

## **Structure**

*ICEA reflections on what is working well, and anything more that needs to be done to deliver a school led system. Thoughts on the need for further legislation*

## **Culture**

*ICEA reflections on what is working well in terms of cultural change, and what more we need to do to e.g. ensure an empowered profession to deliver CfE. Any further advice on how to ensure outstanding pedagogy.*

## **Capacity**

*ICEA reflections on main strengths and progress, and any further advice e.g. 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.*

### **3. Structural Change**

The ICEA note that in term of structural improvements, the core building blocks, within the current reform agenda and the necessary pre-conditions are now in place. The regional improvement collaboratives are emerging as a new and potentially powerful infra-structure. They have begun to establish ways of working and are providing a focus for debate and as promising platforms for local innovation and change.

The ICEA note, however, that the regional improvement collaboratives are relatively new and that it will take time to fully establish them as a new and dynamic platform for improvement and collaborative capacity building within the system. The ICEA also note that the regional improvement collaboratives are at very different levels of functioning and development and vary considerably in size and structure. In time, however, the ICEA advise that all the regional collaboratives should be providing additional capacity, within the system, to support sustainable innovation and collectively charged change.

The ICEA note that while the regional improvement collaboratives have the potential to support system self-improvement this will be achieved only if they are adequately resourced. They ICEA note that the regional improvement collaboratives also need to be flexible enough and sufficiently motivated to support collaborative innovative ways of working that directly impact on learning and teaching.

The ICEA endorses the recent structural changes are concur that they are moving in the right direction with the right components. There are 7 key issues regarding

regional improvement collaboratives, however, that the ICEA wishes the Scottish Government to consider:

Issue – 1. How to increase the pace and quality of the innovative work within Regional Collaboratives so that there are clear, positive outcomes for learners?

Issue -2 As the Regional Collaboratives develop what structures and processes will optimise the movement of instructive practice, innovation and ideas between the Collaboratives?

Issue -3 How can we ensure that all professionals, agencies and other assets are aligned within and between the Regional Collaboratives to achieve the collective impact necessary to realise the aspirations of the Collaboratives?

Issue -4 How to ensure that the Regional Collaboratives are working optimally and are evaluating their own impact? What partners need to be engaged to ensure that this is a rigorous process?

Issue 5- Given that incentives can kick start and accelerate progress what additional resources will stimulate focused activity and increase pace|?

Issue 6. What forms of networked accountability are necessary to foster joint responsibility within Regional Collaboratives?

Issue 7- Given that ownership of reform is a key dimension of successful change what is the optimal role for Scottish Government and Education Scotland in supporting the development of the Regional Collaborative?

There are some potential drawbacks about structural change at scale that the ICEA feel are worth highlighting to the Scottish Government. These include the possibility of structural disconnection and dissonance as various changes are introduced within the system simultaneously. Hence, the ICEA suggest that there is a need to maintain policy coherence, as various waves of reform are put in place, and to clearly communicate the alignment between core policy priorities.

The ICEA also suggest that the process or processes of policy implementation need to be streamlined and clearly connected. Explicit linkages between policy priorities need to be carefully but clearly communicated at all levels in the system.

The ICEA notes that there need for consistent messages about the purposes and processes of structural change going forward. The ICEA suggests that a clear and consistent narrative of change is needed with a clear account of implementation, goig forward. The ICEA notes that cohesion and clarity is particularly important at this stage in the reform process. The ICEA suggests that the language of 'delivery' needs to be adjusted so that it is more aligned to the principle of the self-improving school agenda in Scotland i.e. premised on professional empowerment, responsibility, and ownership.

In their report, the OECD suggested moving from a centrally managed system to an empowered system.

*“We call for a strengthened “middle” operating through networks... within and across local authorities... to create coherent and cohesive cultures of system-wide improvement.”*

(OECD, 2015: 15)

The roots of this transformation can be traced back to 2013 and the work of the School Improvement Partnership Programme and other collaborative improvement efforts. Current reforms are building on these foundations and the ICEA note that the current policy direction is supporting and reinforcing this policy direction and ambition. The ICEA also note, however, that as the structural changes are embedded there is commensurate need to address issues of capacity building and positive cultural change.

The ICEA suggests that in the next phase of policy implementation, creating the culture and building the capacity to nurture and support a self-improving education system needs to be the core priority. The ICEA suggests that a focus on professional empowerment, responsibility, and ownership should be the hallmarks of the next wave of reform. How professional empowerment, responsibility, and ownership might be supported and embedded, in the system, is discussed in further depth in the next section.

The ICEA observes that the Scottish Education has a clear sense of the need for deep structural and cultural change across the education system. The priority of

achieving excellence and equity for all students in a society where noticeable academic achievement differences exist between students experiencing poverty and those of other social classes represents both a moral and professional imperative for change.

It is clear to the ICEA, from our meetings with various members within Scottish education—Local education authorities and now Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RIC's), headteachers, and teachers—that the broad education system and its many sub-communities value and are working toward the desired structural and cultural shift of greatly reducing the academic achievement gap through building capacity throughout the system.

#### **4.Capacity Building**

The ICEA acknowledge that schools do not necessarily or automatically improve because of the new policies and the programs they adopt but that capacity building is also necessary at all levels in the system. The Scottish Government has rightly decided to use capacity building as a primary means of School and system improvement.

The Scottish education system aims to be a self-improving system. This will require effective capacity building based upon a culture of collaboration. The ICEA recognises that if the school system in Scotland is to improve, there must be an investment in developing people people. In this regard, the ICEA commends the Scottish government for the financial investment it has made towards professional learning and human development.

The Scottish government has been working to develop many of the key components that result in system wide capacity building. The ICEA welcome the Scottish Government's proposals for a Headteachers' Charter which will empower headteachers so that decisions that most affect children and young people's outcomes are made in a collaborative way at the school level. The ICEA also welcomes its continued focus on leadership and leadership development along with its commitment to the best use of high quality evidence.

The ICEA note the progress made regarding the development of leaders at all levels. The ICEA were already familiar with work of the Scottish College for Education Leadership (SCEL) and in its first meeting commended the work it was doing. SCEL is now part of Education Scotland, and is taking forward an enhanced leadership development offer and is extending its work to encompass wider professional learning needs across Scotland. This additional emphasis upon and investment in professional learning, will ensure that headteachers, and other leaders within the school system, have the support and professional development required to make the most of their new powers and to ensure they are able to maximise the impact they have on children and young people.

Ultimately, the success of the Headteachers' Charter and further empowerment of schools will be intrinsically linked to appropriate leadership development and building leadership capacity across the system.

Our initial report highlighted the need to focus on pedagogy and pedagogical change. The ICEA note that there is a potential risk of becoming too focussed on



evidence-based interventions, and it is crucial to have learning and teaching at the forefront of everything that is being done to secure excellence and equity in Scottish education. The ICEA agree that there is still need for a clear and better understanding of what excellent and effective pedagogy looks like within Scotland's schools, this issue was raised by the ICEA in its first interim report.

The ICEA note that it is positive that the need to improve pedagogy is now informing the work that Education Scotland is doing to support to generate improvement in education in Scotland. The ICEA note that re-engaging the country in a discussion around pedagogical approaches is now needed. Collaborative support for pedagogy is now fundamental to the new role of Education Scotland, and much of the work will be delivered through the Regional Improvement Collaboratives with teams of professionals who will have the singular focus of helping teachers to improve their practice.

It is clear to the ICEA that the right capacity building measures are now in place to create the cultural shifts within the Scottish Education System. The challenge going forward is how to deeply embed these measures to secure long-term positive outcomes for children and young people in Scotland.

## **5. Cultural Change**

The ICEA observes that embedded within Scottish Education are important educational beliefs and values. The ICEA notes these values and beliefs as special to the culture of Scottish Education and it encourages Scottish educational leaders to create a stronger narrative about these goals which can then permeate the thinking and innovative practices in every classroom across Scotland. Equity and Excellence for all, rather than the narrative of closing/reducing the achievement gap, should encapsulate the vision, mission, and culture of Scottish education.

The ICEA notes that the creation of robust and flexible tools and other supports for changing cultures, like the Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) and increased Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) provide all within the school system resources with which to work toward strengthening the culture in which values, beliefs, and practices are all united around the goal, as well as manifest in the outcomes of, closing the achievement gap.

Cultures can be hard and slow to change. Not only must the majority of educational stakeholders share the priority of equity and excellence for all (broadly defined) as a moral and educational imperative, they must also be knowledgeable of how, as well as be deeply committed to, developing the discourses, tools, and practices to bring about change.

The ICEA offers some insights and suggestions about generating and promoting productive cultural change to achieve the core aims and broad goals of Scottish Education.

1. Creating structures for deep dialogue across all stakeholders within Scottish Education about the established/historical culture(s) of Scottish education and aspects of cultures that need to be enhanced or changed. These exchanges must ultimately move to members' exploration of present, potential, and necessary shared values, belief systems, and practices that can enhance and transform cultures toward achieving educational goals.
2. Analysis of the tools and resources available and needed to create cultural change. Currently in Scottish Education the large investment in PEF can be understood as an indispensable resource to drive educational change. However, cultures do not change as a function of one or even several sets of resources and tools.
3. CfE and the National Improvement Hub (NIH) can also be understood as a set of powerful resources for developing more robust educational practices and improving student learning outcomes. Yet headteachers, teachers, and others who have those resources at their disposal also need to develop sound ways of curriculum analysis and innovation so that they thoughtfully adapt and integrate curricula and instructional tools and practices to best serve their unique student populations.
4. An open stance toward learning new discourses (ways of thinking, believing, talking, and valuing) and practices. One consideration here for Scottish education, proposed by the ICEA, is whether there needs to be greater investment in the preparation of new teachers and professional development of mid-career and more established teachers by university-based teacher

preparation programs, as these programs are also invested in the generation and application of the most powerful research-based knowledge and practices for teaching, and other sound providers.

The ICEA believes that the elements of culture and cultural change detailed above are present in the policy-related changes witnessed in Scottish Education over the past two years. The ICEA proposes that by deeply examining new changes already underway, and those being considered, through the insights about cultures presented above, that Scottish education can move more deliberately and confidently toward achieving the broad goals of Scottish Education.

The ICEA commends the drive and commitment to achieving equity and excellence for all as evidenced, in part, by the establishment of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RIC's) across Scottish Education. The ICEA met with several representatives of Local Education Councils in the September 2017 meeting in Glasgow and met with representatives of the RIC's in the April 2018 meeting in Inverness. The ICEA heard strong support of this move towards greater collaboration from the RIC's.

The RIC's reported on how they had been developing collaborative partnerships as they moved from a system of multiple local education authorities to larger clusters of RIC's through developing social and human relationships and building trust, listening to each other's needs and goals for their constituents, and establishing shared goals and plans for improving educational outcomes for all students.

The ICEA noted that some of the RIC's, particularly those who had a longer history of working together across local authorities before the formalization of RIC's, reported that collaboration was occurring both within the RIC's as well as "on the ground," meaning collaboration within and across schools, including collaboration among teachers who were collectively inquiring into their teacher knowledge and practice to develop more effective approaches to close the attainment gap between students coming from different social class backgrounds.

These examples of collaboration illustrate the significance of changing cultures through dialogue and collective engagement across communities. The ICEA noted, however, that several of the newer established RIC's shared that they were still focused on building relationships and learning how to collaborate and thus had not yet achieved the level of school and teacher collaboration toward educational improvement.

Examples of collaboration in Scottish education and their impact on moving toward equity and excellence are clearly visible (Chapman et al., 2014, 2016). Through collaborative inquiry, teachers and other educational stakeholders are developing deeper knowledge and stronger educational practices. Evidence points to the positive impact upon educational outcomes for students in areas of disadvantage.

The ICEA notes that collaboration is and will continue to be a strong aspect of strengthening the educational culture(s) of Scotland. The ICEA recommends greater and stronger efforts across all RICs to move collaboration into schools and classrooms. It also advocates that there is support for the essential work of

generating and supporting professional inquiry in schools, potentially led by a local University in partnership with RICs.

The ICEA sees possibilities for RICs to continue working carefully on building collaboration and shared goals and initiatives at their level of the system—recognising the RIC’s themselves may need additional support for doing so—while simultaneously deploying professional support and resources to schools and teachers for learning how to collaborate effectively. The support and resources provided to schools and teachers around collaboration should serve a shared agenda of strengthening schools’ and teachers’ knowledge and practices of evidenced-based approaches to powerful collaborative inquiry through which they can feel empowered and knowledgeable in generating their own, as well as selecting from, high quality educational approaches to improving educational experiences and outcomes for all students.

Through the ICEA’s engagements with RIC’s, schools, and teachers there is evidence to suggest that educators and others can benefit greatly in developing highly effective collaborative inquiry in Scotland. The ICEA encourages collaboration in its broadest sense as a central way of transforming the culture of Scottish Education and moving it towards a self-improving system.

**To be completed.**

## **6. Reflections: Opportunities and risks for the Scottish education system**

This report has offered a synthesis of the ICEA’s observations on the current reform agenda and an analysis of progress to date. This analysis has highlighted the importance of culture and collaboration as key levers in securing educational change and reform. This section of the report moves on to explore the role of culture and collaboration in more depth and reflects on the opportunities and risks associated with the reform agenda.

As the system attempts to a more networked, self-improving system where schools are empowered to lead the change, the ICEA observes that it is important that the system does not inadvertently erode some of the considerable strengths of the Scottish education. Furthermore, ICEA observes that it is important that the system is not seduced by some of the perceived advantages of other systems, or experiences some of the unintended consequences these reform agendas that would not sit easily with the core values and beliefs that underpin the Scottish education system and wider civic society.

In order to help explain the opportunities and risks associated with educational reform ICEA draws on the work of Mary Douglas, Christopher Hood and others to frame educational reform on the dimensions of social cohesion and social regulation (see figure 1 below).

**Figure 1: Socio-cultural perspectives on education reform**

	Low social cohesion	High social cohesion
High social	<p><b>‘Fatalistic culture’</b> <i>‘uncertain nostalgic organisations’</i></p>	<p><b>‘Hierarchical culture’</b> <i>‘bureaucratic, managed organisations’</i></p>

<b>regulation</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Low social regulation</b>	<b>'Individualistic culture'</b> <i>'market-based state-funded organisations'</i>	<b>'Egalitarian culture'</b> <i>'mutualistic self-improving organisations'</i>
	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

Where social cohesion and regulation are both high (quadrant A) hierarchical cultures prevail and public service organisations tend to reflect their culture as bureaucratic managed educational organisations, put simply, these are the public service cultures and organisations associated with many traditional state education systems in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Where social cohesion is low, but regulation is high (quadrant B) 'fatalistic' cultures prevail. Within these cultures educational organisations tend to be uncertain in nature, and unclear about what and when the next policy mandate or intervention is likely to involve or come from. Organisations operating in this culture often harp back to a 'golden era' when things worked so much better and everyone knew 'where they were and what they were doing' because things were well managed and collaborative relationships were more positive across the system.

Where social cohesion and regulation are both low (quadrant C) an 'individualistic' cultures are come to the fore. Here the market is a key driver and quasi-independent educational organisations funded by the state tend to lead the way, as is the case in England with the Academies Programme and in other parts of the world with various types of 'Free Schools' and Charter School type organisations.



Where systems where social regulation is low but social cohesion is high (quadrant D) 'egalitarian' cultures tend to be the norm. Here mutualistic or 'self-improving' organisations work laterally across the system providing mutual support for each other's development in a networked system where those in the front line take responsibility and ownership for improvement while others act as brokers and facilitators to connect schools and others and create the conditions for improvement.

The ICEA interprets the findings of the OECD review and the Scottish Government's response to the review as a positive attempt to shift the system to an egalitarian culture associated with a self-improving system. In this type of system it is anticipated that high levels of social cohesion would be manifested through partnership, collaboration and co-production between service providers (and the communities they serve) and low levels of social regulation would promote high levels of flexibility, agility and innovation.

The ICEA considers that the opportunities to transform the system, and take performance and outcomes to the next level are a realistic proposition for Scottish education. The ICEA recognises that in order to achieve this, Scotland will need to maintain and build on the sense of shared purpose and collegiality that exists within the system along with a commitment to the tradition of 'consensual' policy making whilst empowering the workforce within an authorising environment with fewer rules and ascribed behaviours where risk taking and innovation become the norm.

The ICEA also recognises there are risks associated with this agenda. For example, if social cohesion is undermined and a breakdown in trust and relationships occur, then Scotland is more likely to shift towards a fatalistic culture (quadrant A) with

higher levels of social regulation. The ICEA is concerned that this may include unnecessarily high levels of mandated reforms and legislative interventions that might further undermine confidence and trust across the system. In turn, this may well exacerbate the sense of nostalgia or loss across the system and create further resistance to change.

Furthermore, the ICEA considers that any unintended shift or move towards a fatalistic culture may have the consequence of creating conditions where individualism begins to grow within Scottish system. This is a particular concern if the empowering schools agenda does not have the appropriate checks and balances in place to monitor quality effectively and to manage markets. The ICEA note the scenarios outlined above and suggest that these are a useful point of reference for Scottish Government.

For Scotland to move towards a more egalitarian culture with mutualistic self-improving system, the ICEA recommends that the key messages, within this report, relating to structures, cultures and capacity must be carefully considered to by Scottish Government. In addition, the ICEA suggests that a focus on empowerment, responsibility and ownership must now be prioritised within Scottish education If a self-improving system is to become a reality.

**Do we need a section 7 with a commentary, overview etc?**