

From: [redacted 38(1)(b)]

Sent: 26 June 2018 14:21

To: [redacted 38(1)(b)]

Cc: Hicks C (Clare) [redacted 38(1)(b)]

Subject: CONFIDENTIAL - FOR YOUR INFORMATION. Education Bill - Ministerial Statement

Please see attached a copy of the statement that Deputy First Minister, John Swinney MSP will be delivering to Parliament at 14:20 today.

Many thanks

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Education Bill Team

People and Infrastructure | Learning Directorate | 2A South | Victoria Quay | EH6 6QQ
Aonad Cumhachdachadh Sgoitean | Daoine agus Bun-structair | Buidheann-Stiùiridh an
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Attachment shown below.

Presiding Officer,

The aim of this Government's education policy, is to ensure that we achieve excellence and equity for all of our children and young people in a highly performing education system.

To make this a reality, we must raise the bar for all and close the attainment gap in our schools.

Our education system is already delivering improving results. For the third year in a row we have seen more than 150,000 Higher passes – despite falling pupil numbers - and nearly 60,000 skills-based awards and achievements.

We are seeing the proportion of young people getting qualifications at SCQF levels 4, 5 and 6 – mainly Nat4s, Nat5s and Highers - increase and increase fastest in the most deprived areas.

We are seeing almost 23% of school leavers in the most deprived areas going into Higher Education – compared with 16.5% seven years ago.

International evidence demonstrates that successful education systems are those where decisions about our children's education are made as close to them as possible. That is why our approach is to empower schools – to empower headteachers, teachers and parents and the wider school community – to make these key decisions which affect the educational outcomes of children and young people.

We set this out in our manifesto when we said we will “put teachers, parents and communities in the driving seat”

Presiding Officer

We have a great many high quality professionals working in Scottish education but I do not believe they are currently sufficiently empowered to work together and to use their skills, judgement and creativity in the

way they think best. That is critical to ensure the potential of Curriculum for Excellence is achieved.

Empowered professionals must also be supported by specific measures in the National Improvement Framework to secure improvements in Scottish education.

The combination of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding are delivering results by empowering the teaching profession. Teachers and headteachers are taking radical, focused and innovative approaches to improve outcomes – because this funding puts them in the driving seat.

The interim evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund, showed that 78% of headteachers had already seen an improvement in attainment and wellbeing as a result of the fund. And nearly all headteachers (97%) expected to see further improvements in the coming five years.

Some would say that all of this progress is more than enough – that the system does not need further interventions from government.

Some would say that many schools already enjoy the kind of empowerment that our reforms are aiming for – that there is great work already being done in a number of areas.

In other words, that some children and young people have got the sort of education system they need and that some of them will reach their potential.

“Some children” is simply not good enough.

We must raise the bar and close the gap for all.

That is why we published Education Governance: Next Steps a year ago. Since then a significant amount of progress has been made.

We worked intensively with local government to reach agreement on Regional Improvement Collaboratives to provide additional support to schools.

All six Regional Improvement Collaboratives are now up and running with their leadership appointed and already collaborating with Education Scotland to respond to local needs and aspirations. The first set of regional improvement plans have been developed and the second plans are due in September. All of this has been achieved, at a pace that would previously have been thought highly unlikely if not impossible – but achieved as a result of creative joint-working between national and local government.

Next Steps also committed the Scottish Government to work with partners to support readiness for a school- and teacher-led system. This

led to rationalising the existing structures and governance arrangements in Scottish education.

I now Chair the Scottish Education Council which brings together young people, education leaders and representatives from local authorities, the teaching profession and our partners in COSLA. It works collaboratively to ensure that there is a system-wide focus on improvement, and to agree priorities for improvement activity and delivery.

Education Scotland has taken significant action to deliver on its enhanced role and remit. The Scottish College for Educational Leadership is now integrated into Education Scotland - building further the culture and capacity of leadership throughout the system.

Last November we consulted on proposals for achieving empowerment through the Education Bill, including the Headteachers' Charter.

Our aim was to ensure schools had wide-ranging powers over their own management, staffing and what is taught in their classrooms - creating a culture of empowerment that enables all professionals to contribute to the agenda of improvement.

The analysis of the consultation, which was published in March this year, showed a great many people agree wholeheartedly with our aim of school empowerment but many were not convinced about all of the details of how we planned to achieve that aim.

These voices raised the question of whether we could deliver the Headteachers' Charter faster, with less disruption, in partnership with local authorities. And, if so, why wait 18 months for an Education Bill?

In light of these responses, I have been in detailed discussions with local government for some months.

This work has not always been easy but I can announce that we have reached a clear, shared commitment.

Presiding Officer

I am today fast-tracking the reform of Scottish education.

The Scottish Government and Scotland's local councils have reached an agreement that endorses and embraces the principles of school empowerment and provides clear commitment to a school - and teacher-led - education system.

And it does so without the need to wait 18 months for an education Bill.

So, while I am publishing a draft Education Bill today along with its Accompanying Documents and appropriate Impact Assessments, I have decided that I will not introduce the Bill to Parliament at this time.

Instead of waiting for the passage of legislation which cannot be fully in force until 2019 or 2020, we have an opportunity to reform our schools

more quickly through our investment in consensus building and collaboration rather than through legislation.

In coming to this decision, I have also reflected on the advice of the International Council of Education Advisers who encouraged me to consider the benefits of pursuing a collaborative approach rather than legislating. I have listened to this advice and taken the view that by building on the Joint Agreement with local government we have greater prospects of achieving more at a swifter pace.

This means that the Headteachers' Charter can become a reality faster. School leaders will be able to make the key decisions on the crucial areas of curriculum, improvement, staffing and budget – crucial to ensuring effective learning and teaching - more quickly.

And, by implementing jointly with local government and the education profession, we can develop guidance on empowerment and the Charter as a matter of priority – and more quickly than statutory guidance under an Education Bill.

On budget powers, we have already begun work with our local government partners on new guidance for Devolved School Management Schemes.

And on parental involvement and pupil engagement, we will launch a joint action plan on parental engagement next month and will continue the

work started in this Year of Young People in relation to enhance the voice of pupils in schools.

Finally, on the General Teaching Council for Scotland we will explore what can be done – within the scope of current legislation – to provide the benefits of regulation and registration to a wider group of education professionals. I do, however, accept the strength of feeling from teachers about the body's independence and its guardianship of professional standards.

Presiding Officer

By taking the steps I have set out to Parliament today, we are demonstrating a clear commitment to working with local government and education professionals.

We are fast-tracking progress and so we expect progress to be sustained and swift.

But I must also make this very clear today - if sufficient progress is not made over the next twelve months to deliver the empowerment of schools we have agreed with local authorities, I will return to Parliament and introduce an Education Bill.

Presiding Officer

The approach I have set out today requires tailored and targeted support. I am therefore announcing over £46 million of investment to support the improvement agenda.

In addition to existing leadership development programmes, I can today announce a further investment of up to £4 million over three years to ensure headteachers can access high quality professional learning including further investment in the highly regarded Columba 1400 Leadership Academies.

I can also announce up to £10 million to enhance regional capacity to support schools. This funding, through Regional Improvement Collaboratives and Education Scotland working together, will help schools to close the attainment gap and tackle rural deprivation, support collaboration to share best practice and the delivery of regional interventions.

And, to ensure we maintain progress for Looked after Children, I will make funding available of around £8 million for the remainder of this year and £12 million in each of the subsequent two years to supplement funding Pupil Equity Funding and the Challenge Authorities and Schools Programmes.

Presiding Officer

This government believes that every child in Scotland - no matter their background - should have the very best start in life.

This landmark agreement published today marks the next phase in reforming our school education system.

It means it can be delivered more quickly than by legislation.

It means that we will empower teachers to drive improvement in schools and help pupils flourish.

It means the whole system – schools, councils and Regional Improvement Collaboratives - all focused on improving the outcomes for Scotland's children and young people.

Teachers and parents will be the key decision makers in the life of a school.

Education remains, by far, the most effective means we have to improve the life chances of all of our young people. I am confident that this approach, one that builds consensus and fosters collaboration but with high expectations for what we can achieve together, is the right approach for Scotland.

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