

From: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

Sent: 02 June 2021 18:52

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Griffin J (Joe) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; McLean L (Liza) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Pentland MK (Malcolm) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: Restricted advice: calls with ES & SQA CEOs 3 June 2021

Cabinet Secretary

Further to our discussion this afternoon, please find below some key lines to support your calls with the Chief Executives of the SQA and Education Scotland on Thursday morning.

Overarching message on reform

The COVID pandemic has shone a spotlight a range of issues we need to address in Scottish education. This includes significant variability in the outcomes young people achieve, the need to intensify efforts to tackle child poverty and inequity in education as well as the need to increase the pace of improvement overall. We also have manifesto commitments to devolve more power to teachers and schools, and intensify the empowerment agenda. The status quo is no longer an option. As well as addressing the issues which have been brought in to sharp relief by the pandemic, a key outcome of any reform programme will be to provide schools with the highest quality of support and challenge to enable them to improve outcomes.

Today I will signal my intention to reform Scottish education, starting with the national agencies. This will be guided by the recommendations of the OECD review (which is likely to recommend the creation of a new agency for curriculum and assessment – see wording at end of this email). There is frequent criticism and lack of clarity around who provides support to the profession on delivery of the curriculum and qualifications. [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)]

I am calling today to give you the heads up in confidence that this will be part of my statement in the debate this afternoon, so that you can prepare comms for your staff to issue after I have addressed Parliament.

Education Scotland

- Thank Gayle for her leadership of the agency since she was appointed in December 2017. In particular, welcome support for remote learning during the pandemic, including the national e-learning offer and the weekly reports from the inspectors.
- [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)]
- [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)]
- Keen to look at how we increase transparency and challenge in Scottish education. [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]
- There are a number of recent independent reports on aspects of Scottish Education (including by the ICEA and by Audit Scotland) which make commentary that would point towards reform of the role of Education Scotland.

- Keen for you to work with SG officials who will be leading this work and advising me. Important for ES to continue to deliver during this process of reform.

SQA

- Thank Fiona for leading the NQ21 group and working with partners to develop and implement the Alternative Certification Model, in very challenging circumstances. Thank SQA staff for their flexibility in adapting their approaches during the pandemic to enable young people to gain qualifications in the absence of an exam diet.
- **[REDACT, s. 30(b)]**
- There has been significant scrutiny and criticism of the SQA, particularly in the light of events around the approach to qualifications during the pandemic.
- Criticism pre-dates the pandemic. The Education and Skills Committee called for reform of SQA (and Education Scotland) in 2016/17 **[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)]**
- **[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]**
- Keen for you to work with SG officials who will be leading this work and advising me. Important for SQA to continue to deliver during this process.

You may be pressed on timescales – the next step will be publication of the OECD report on 21 June, which will guide the action that we take. I would highlight that you intend to give more details to Parliament w/c 21 June, as part of your response to the OECD report.

[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]

Thanks, Graeme.

Graeme Logan
Director of Learning
Scottish Government

Tel: **[REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]**

Next steps on Reform – Supplementary Paper
2 June 2021

Purpose

1. To provide the Cabinet Secretary with further information on:
 - Rationale for reform of the national agencies (Annex A);
 - Likely stakeholder views (Annex B); and
 - Next steps (below).

Next Steps

2. On the basis that the Cabinet Secretary is content to commit to considering how to reform Education Scotland and SQA, suggested next steps could be:
 - **Consultation** - The overarching purpose for any reform in education will be to improve the quality of support for schools, increase the pace of improvement and reduce variability in the outcomes achieved by children and young people across the country. The work should put service design principles at its core, in order to ensure that the outcome will meet the needs of its users. [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].
 - **Timeline** - A timeline of key milestones and decisions will need to be agreed; [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]. Subsequent to this clear timelines will need to be established for implementation. The set-up of Education Scotland took place between October 2010 and July 2011. This was an incredibly tight timescale and meant that some of the key decisions re. staffing and structure had to be taken post-establishment.
 - **Governance** - Establish the strategic governance required to give oversight and assurance to the process. [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].
 - **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications** - Develop a clear narrative and wider engagement strategy to establish clarity of purpose and logic for reform, and ensure that we reach learners, practitioners and parents. This will also need to establish regular communication with staff and stakeholders, reinforcing the rationale, providing regular updates and setting out what has and has not been decided.
 - **Operational** - There are a significant number of operational aspects to take forward, including:
 - Further work on options, [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].
 - Due diligence to gather and analyse [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)] information about the bodies.
 - Establish the project structure, as well as strategic governance above this will need to be clear on accountabilities and decision making.
 - Establish the project team, as this will need to be properly resourced by both specialist and generalist policy staff, working closely with other [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

- Develop the key artefacts, including outline/full business case, impact assessments, risk assessments etc.
- Make links and create synergies with the wider work on public sector reform.

ANNEX A – Rationale for any potential reform of SQA and Education Scotland

Top lines

- The overarching purpose for any reform in education will be to improve the quality of support for schools, increase the pace of improvement and reduce variability in the outcomes achieved by children and young people across the country.
- We have heard the views expressed by others for some time. That includes other parties, as well as a range of external commentators.
- All parts of the system must have confidence in the clarity and coherence of roles within and between national agencies.
- We need to consider how functions relating to assessment and curriculum dovetail, and do so in a way that is consistent with CfE.
- The forthcoming report from the OECD will provide us further advice on how to undertake such reform in a way that delivers maximum impact.
- This decision is not a judgement on the performance of these two agencies, and particularly during the unprecedented challenges of responding to the pandemic. Instead, it is intended to [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)] to deliver maximum progress as we embark on a period of renewal in the period ahead.

General

- The overarching purpose for any reform in education will be to improve the quality of support for schools, increase the pace of improvement and reduce variability in the outcomes achieved by children and young people across the country.
- Support for greater school empowerment remains high. To ensure empowerment works effectively, it is right to review the governance landscape, [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].
- National agencies must be well placed to support and challenge an increased pace of improvement in Scottish education, and to do this with credibility, rigour and impact. [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].
- The International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) most recent Report notes that the ICEA has consistently underlined how cultural change, capacity building, and structural change are key elements in securing sustained improvements in Scotland's education system.
- [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)].
- The Education and Skills Committee's report (Mar 2021) stated that "Confidence among practitioners in these organisations also appears low and it is clear that structural reform is now required. With the OECD report due to be published this year, we urge our successor committee to undertake work early in the new Parliamentary session with a view to establishing what such structural reform could and should encompass."
- This programme of reform will be able to take account of recommendations made by the OECD review in an efficient and pragmatic way.

Education Scotland

- There is a clear need to drive the pace of improvement and reduce variability in the outcomes achieved by children and young people

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

- [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)]
- [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)].
- There are a number of recent independent reports on aspects of Scottish Education (including by the ICEA and by Audit Scotland) which support the case for change, [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT s. 30(b)].

SQA

- There has been significant scrutiny of the SQA, particularly in the light of events around the approach to qualifications during the pandemic.
- Lib Dems and Greens manifestos called for reform of SQA Board, with greater frontline teaching experience among Board members and more stakeholder representation (young people, parents).
- The Lib Dem Education Debate, 17 Feb 2021, raised concerns [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)]. The Lib Dem motion passed.
- Criticism pre-dates the pandemic. The Education and Skills Committee called for reform of SQA (and Education Scotland) in 2016/17 [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)].
- [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)], [REDACT, s. 30(b)]

ANNEX B – Likely Stakeholder Views

Key Policy	Possible Actions	Likely Stakeholder Views
[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]
[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]
[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]
[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]
[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]
[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]	[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Sent: 03 June 2021 09:36

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Pentland MK (Malcolm) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Wilson M (Mick) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; McLean L (Liza) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Director for Children and Families <DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Cumming A (Alison) Early Learning & Childcare [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Thank you [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Please find attached a clean copy with those amendments included.

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] [Professional Insight Adviser | National Improvement Framework Unit | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government](#) | [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 02 June 2021 22:03

To: Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Pentland MK (Malcolm) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Wilson M (Mick) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; McLean L (Liza) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Director for Children and Families <DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Cumming A (Alison) Early Learning & Childcare [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

All

Attached is speech with revises from Cab Sec – let me know if you have any issues with these changes.

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills

T: 0131 244 [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] | M: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] | E: cabsecES@gov.scot

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

From: Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Sent: 02 June 2021 21:12

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Cc: McAllister C (Colin [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <Elizabeth.Lloyd@gov.scot>;

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [REDACT, s.

38(1)(b)]; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children &

Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training

<MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) [REDACT, s.

38(1)(b)]; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) [REDACT, s.

38(1)(b)]; Pentland MK (Malcolm) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Wilson M (Mick) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)];

McLean L (Liza) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Director for Children and Families

<DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science

<DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Cumming A (Alison) Early Learning & Childcare

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]>; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

As agreed at the pre-brief earlier, please find attached short notes on each of:

1. Additional Support for Learning
2. Education recovery programme narrative
3. Key stats and figures
4. Teacher contracts

[REDACT, s. 30(b)]

[REDACT, s. 30(b)]

I don't think it changes the substance of our responses, but it is worth being aware of for context.

We'll confer on names for the Teams chat in the morning and get back to you,

Sam

Sam Anson | Joint Head of the Covid Education Strategy and Recovery Division | Learning Directorate |

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 02 June 2021 19:06

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Pentland MK (Malcolm) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Wilson M (Mick) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; McLean L (Liza); Director for Children and Families <DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Cumming A (Alison) Early Learning & Childcare [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]
Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Apologies, quick question – reply in morning is absolutely fine

Please advise of names of officials to be added to Teams chat tomorrow to support Ministers.

Thanks.

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills

T: 0131 244 [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] | M: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] | E: cabsecES@gov.scot

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 02 June 2021 18:57

To: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Pentland MK (Malcolm) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Wilson M (Mick) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; McLean L (Liza) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Director for Children and Families <DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Cumming A (Alison) Early Learning & Childcare [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Importance: High

Hi folks

Please see amendments submitted from opposition parties – all accepted by the PO with the exception of that from the Lib Dems. **[REDACT, s. 30(b)]**

It would be helpful if we could have a final additional annex on these amendments with key lines on each. If we could have that by noon Thursday that would be ideal.

Many thanks.

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills

T: 0131 244 **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]** | M: **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]** | E: cabsecES@gov.scot

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGHEH1 3DG

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

From: **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**

Sent: 02 June 2021 17:01

To: Anson S (Sam) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

<CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) <Colin.McAllister@gov.scot>; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Drought A (Andrew) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Pentland MK (Malcolm) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]** Wilson M (Mick) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; McLean L (Liza) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Director for Children and Families <DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Cumming A (Alison) Early Learning & Childcare **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Dear all

Updated briefing pack attached.

Best wishes

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) Secretariat
Learning Directorate | Scottish Government

From: Anson S (Sam) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**

Sent: 01 June 2021 16:18

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]** Lloyd E (Elizabeth) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Drought A (Andrew) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; DG Education & Justice <dgej@gov.scot>; Griffin J (Joe) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; Taylor A (Alison) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Pentland MK (Malcolm) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Wilson M (Mick) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; McLean L (Liza) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Director for Children and Families <DirectorforChildrenandFamilies@gov.scot>; Director of Advanced Learning and Science <DirectorofAdvancedLearningandScience@gov.scot>; Cumming A (Alison) Early Learning & Childcare **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Ahead of this debate on Thursday, please find attached a draft opening statement and associated briefing. ALS colleagues are developing in parallel material for Mr Hepburn for his closing remarks, and there are one or two late updates we will need to make to the briefing following **[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)]**

Can I record my thanks particularly to **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]** for their work on the statement and briefing respectively.

[REDACT, s. 30(b)]

Thanks,

Sam

Sam Anson | Joint Head of the Covid Education Strategy and Recovery Division | Learning Directorate |
[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

From: **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]** On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**

Sent: 27 May 2021 16:42

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Anson S (Sam) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**; Drought A (Andrew) **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Re-sending from the correct box – sorry again.

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Sent: 27 May 2021 16:42

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Hi [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Apologies, please see slightly updated motion, with the addition in red.

*“That the Parliament recognises the difficult circumstances which children, young people, **students** and parents have faced over the course of the pandemic; commends the extraordinary work done by university, college, school and childcare staff over the past year to maintain education and childcare; recognises that the pandemic has nevertheless had an impact on the health, wellbeing and education of many children and young people across Scotland, particularly the most disadvantaged; agrees that work to address these impacts, and remove the barriers to learning that too many still face, should be at the heart of Scotland’s COVID recovery efforts; and welcomes the government’s commitment to implement ambitious plans to support our education system during its first 100 days.”*

Thanks

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 27 May 2021 15:12

To: Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: RE: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Hi [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

With thanks to policy colleagues, please see motion cleared by Cab Sec

“That the Parliament recognises the difficult circumstances which children, young people and parents have faced over the course of the pandemic; commends the extraordinary work done by university, college, school and childcare staff over the past year to maintain education and childcare; recognises that the pandemic has nevertheless had an impact on the health, wellbeing and education of many children and young people across Scotland, particularly the most disadvantaged; agrees that work to address these impacts, and remove the barriers to learning that too many still face, should be at the heart of Scotland’s COVID recovery efforts; and welcomes the government’s commitment to implement ambitious plans to support our education system during its first 100 days.”

Thanks

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

From: Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>

Sent: 25 May 2021 13:18

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Lloyd E (Elizabeth) <[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]>; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Minister for Parliamentary Business <MinisterPB@gov.scot>

Subject: Scottish Government Debate: Education 030621

Please see details for debate scheduled for Thursday 3 June

1400-1700 Scottish Government Debate: Education

- Speech times – the debate is scheduled for **3 hours** therefore Ministers will have **17** minutes to open and **12** minutes to close. Please confirm who will be opening and closing the debate by **Thursday 27 May**.
- A final motion should be commissioned as soon as possible and thought given to support from the relevant opposition parties. The final motion should be sent to the Minister for Parliamentary Business mailbox no later than **1400 Tuesday 1 June** for lodging.
- Please confirm whether there will be any documents to accompany this debate by close **Thursday 27 May**. Please note that any document referred to in a debate must be published 48 hours before.

Please provide a copy of the Ministers' speeches to the Official Report (Official.Report@scottish.parliament.uk) just ahead of the debate.

Thanks,

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] | Deputy Private Secretary to Minister for Parliamentary Business | T4.21, Scottish Parliament | 0131 244 [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] |  [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Introduction

Presiding Officer, following my statement yesterday on qualifications, I am pleased to have the opportunity to highlight both the exceptional efforts that continue to be made across our education sector to support learners during this pandemic, and to outline the steps we will take to ensure the best possible outcomes for all of Scotland's children and young people over the coming years.

Due to the supreme endeavours of many, the education of our children and young people has been sustained despite the significant disruption from COVID-19.

I would like to express my appreciation for the extraordinary efforts of all those in the education workforce, who have gone to great lengths to continue learning and teaching, and to support the safety and wellbeing of young people and their families.

Parents and carers have contributed significantly to supporting the education of children, often while balancing other commitments. Above all else, I want to especially thank the children and young people of Scotland for their resilience and hard work through this, and to assure them we are listening to their concerns and hopes about the way ahead.

Building on existing successes

Before I look forward Presiding Officer let me first take you back to 2015, when the First Minister underlined this Government's aspiration that all children in Scotland should have the best start in life, and that there should be no better place in the world to be educated than here in Scotland.

That remains the commitment of this Government.

In taking this forward, we build on the achievements of recent years. These start in the early years, where we are delivering transformational change through the expanded provision of early learning and childcare. I will say more about that shortly.

Across the system, our policies – including the initial £750 million Scottish Attainment Challenge - have resulted in Scotland investing more in education per person than anywhere else in the UK. Teacher numbers are currently the highest they have been since 2008, with the number of primary teachers the highest since 1980.

In terms of outcomes, 63.9% of young people leaving school in 2019/20 had achieved 1 pass or more at SCQF Level 6 or better. And 93.3% of school leavers from that year were in education, employment or training 3 months after leaving school, up from 87.7% in 2009/10.

Let me thank the Deputy First Minister for his tireless work in building this platform, and I look forward to taking forward the next phase of progress.

Response to Covid

However, we still face challenges and we know there is more to do. In the short term, we must continue to manage the risks of COVID as we – hopefully – move towards a greater sense of normality. I will continue to take expert advice, and work with stakeholders to ensure the best possible educational experience for children and young people as we emerge from the pandemic.

We know that the pandemic has had an impact on education globally; the issues being experienced in Scotland are ones that are common to countries across the world. Research shows us that Covid has had adverse consequences on the health and wellbeing of some children, as well as their attainment.

Recognising these risks, this Government has already committed £400 million over 2020/21 and 21/22 to support education recovery. The Nuffield Foundation reported earlier this year that the funding committed in Scotland for ‘catch up’ was the most generous on a per pupil basis across all of the UK nations.

This funding has enabled local authorities to recruit an additional 1400 teachers and more than 200 support staff, has led to around 70,000 devices and 14,000 connectivity packages being distributed to learners, and has ensured no child has gone hungry thanks to free school meal alternatives during the period of remote learning and school holidays. In addition to that, we have introduced a £20 million Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) Premium for 2021/22 – increasing investment in PEF to £148 million this year.

A focus on mental health and wellbeing

Looking ahead, we know that the health and wellbeing of our children must take primacy, and that this is the first step in supporting effective learning. In addition to the significant investment in support for the positive mental health and wellbeing of our young people I outlined in this chamber yesterday, we are also rolling out a £20 million Summer Programme to help restore the wellbeing of children and young people, particularly those who have been most impacted by COVID, to reconnect with each other, play, be active and have fun.

Wider education recovery and 100 day commitments

This support for wellbeing sits as part of a comprehensive programme of education recovery, that continues to be guided by the principles of excellence and equity – underpinned by a high-quality and empowered profession – and we owe it to this generation to be ruthless in our efforts to deliver that vision.

As in the pre-pandemic period, we are prioritising additional support for those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds – and that is why we have committed to investing over £1 billion over the course of this parliament to close the poverty related attainment gap.

I look forward to working with our partners to think about how best to use that investment to improve the life chances of children living in poverty. I want to ensure we are taking a joined up approach; I strongly believe that schools cannot do this alone.

Of course, we know that teachers and support staff are central to the quality of learning in schools - we were elected on a mandate to devolve even greater powers to teachers and schools and to intensify the empowerment agenda. In the first 100 days of this new Government, we will fund councils to support the recruitment of a further 1,000 teachers and 500 classroom assistants – as part of our commitment to 3,500 additional teachers and classroom assistants over the parliamentary term.

We are also committed to ensuring that every schoolchild in the country has access to the technology they need to support their education, during this Parliament.

These are big ambitions, but we will start delivery of them immediately.

That means that, within these 100 days, we will make free lunches available to all primary 4 children in Scotland – as the next step towards extending them to all primary school children, all year round. This will include primary 5 children in January 2022 and the provision of free school meal approaches to all eligible children and young people in primary and secondary through all school holidays. We are providing over £49 million in funding to our local authorities to support the implementation of these approaches in 2021-22 – a significant investment in the health and wellbeing of our children and young people.

To help families and give pupils the best start, we will increase both the school clothing grant and the Best Start Food grant, which helps families with children under 3 to buy healthy foods, and we will take steps to remove charges for core curriculum activities, and for music and arts education – including instrumental music tuition. We will also agree the first allocation of funding to councils for refurbishment of play parks.

And before we formally expand the Scottish Child Payment next year, and prepare to double its value, we will provide interim support for eligible children – including a £100 payment near the start of the summer holidays.

Presiding officer, I am proud to say that during these first 100 days we will also complete one of the major legacies of the last Parliament. From August, all three and four year olds, and two-year-olds who need it most, will be eligible for 1140 hours of free early learning and childcare each year.

We know that high quality early learning and childcare can make a huge difference to children's lives, particularly when they are growing up in more disadvantaged circumstances, and is a cornerstone for closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Collectively we can now focus on realising the transformational benefits the expansion will bring, including improved educational and development outcomes for children, enhanced family wellbeing and greater employment and training opportunities for parents and carers.

And we do not intend to stop there. In this Parliament, we will expand childcare further - both by developing the provision of wraparound care and after-school clubs, and working with

children and young people to develop their own charter for school age childcare in Scotland.

And of course, in Scotland, we prioritise fundamental children's rights. We will press on with the implementation of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to the maximum extent possible and fight any legal challenge to children's rights.

Reform

I hope this programme outlines our determination to deliver improvements with pace and urgency. I also want to be clear with Parliament today that I am open to considering what further reform is necessary, with the clear purpose of doing all we can to improve outcomes for children. This includes reducing variability in the outcomes children and young people achieve across the country.

I can reassure those working on the front line in our education establishments that this will not mean extra pressure or work for them at this critical time as we look to recovery. I do, however, want to look at options for reform which ensure that schools get the best possible support and challenge to enable them to improve further and to do the very best for the children in their care. To enable them to focus relentlessly on providing the highest quality of learning and teaching for our children. And to ensure that those working in education outwith schools are fully focused on doing everything they can to provide the highest quality of support.

Today I want to signal my intention to start this process by considering how to reform our two key national education agencies – the SQA and Education Scotland. This will include looking at the role, remit and purpose of the organisations, as well as considering their functions and governance arrangements. This will be a key priority for me and will be informed by the findings of the OECD review on 21 June.

FE / HE

Presiding officer, so far I have focussed mainly on our work to improve outcomes for children and young people within early learning and childcare settings and schools.

However, our determination to deliver extends beyond that. For example, since 2012 we have invested over £1 billion per year in Scotland's universities, meaning that a record 260,490 students enrolled at Scottish universities in 2019/20.

In addition, since 2007, the college sector resource budget has increased by over 30% in cash terms. And, in the coming academic year, we are increasing the college sector budget by £33.7 million – the largest cash uplift since the 2018-19 budget.

I know the Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training will say more about such issues in his closing remarks, but let me cover in brief some key points.

I am acutely aware of the challenges our colleges and universities have faced throughout the pandemic. I am appreciative of the proactive, collaborative and innovative ways in which they have responded, and remain grateful to staff and students for their continued patience, understanding and support as we progress towards greater normality.

Looking ahead, we will continue to work collaboratively with the further and higher sector as planning intensifies for 2021/22, including through the recently established Advanced Learning Covid Recovery Group and on the basis of expert advice provided through the new COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Universities and Colleges.

Our further and higher education institutions are key strategic assets in our economic and social recovery. We will continue to work closely with the sector and the Scottish Funding Council to understand the impact of the pandemic, to ensure our institutions remain sustainable in the long-term and at the forefront of global education and research.

Closing

Presiding officer, in closing, let me make two final observations.

First, I am conscious of Audit Scotland's recent observations that – and I quote – *“Those involved in planning, delivering and supporting school education were working well together prior to the pandemic. This strong foundation helped them to collaborate to deliver a rapid response to Covid-19 in exceptionally challenging circumstances.”*

As we move further into the recovery phase of the pandemic - and beyond - my firm intention is that this strong collaborative approach will continue. Working together, we will ensure that all pupils are given the support they need to recover their learning and health and wellbeing. This includes maximising how we support and challenge improvement, and reduce variability in what children achieve in different parts of the country.

Second, it is right that the voice of children and young people themselves must be at the heart of our approach. I expect them to be engaged in every aspect of our policy considerations, and know they will bring the energy and insight borne of lived experience to those discussions.

I am deeply conscious of the privilege of holding this office, and I look forward to working with colleagues from across Parliament and beyond as we continue to deliver a high quality education system that ensures that all children and young people can achieve their potential.

Thank you.

Word count: approx. 2220

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] On Behalf Of Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 03 June 2021 13:09

To: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Ingebrigtsen R (Ross) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Nicolson S (Stuart) (Special Adviser) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Communications DFM & Education <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Logan G (Graeme) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)] [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; McLean L (Liza) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FOR CLEARANCE: Draft news release/Tweet - education debate

Hi [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Cab Sec is content to clear

Thanks

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

From: [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Sent: 03 June 2021 12:38

To: Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills <CabSecES@gov.scot>

Cc: McAllister C (Colin) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Ingebrigtsen R (Ross) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Nicolson S (Stuart) (Special Adviser) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Communications DFM & Education <CommunicationsEducation&Skills@gov.scot>; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Logan G (Graeme) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; McLean L (Liza) [REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]; Minister for HE, FE, Youth Employment and Training <MinisterHEFEYET@gov.scot>; Minister for Children & Young People <MinisterCYP@gov.scot>

Subject: FOR CLEARANCE: Draft news release/Tweet - education debate

Good afternoon CabSec/PO

Below is a draft news release and Tweet to be issued following the debate this afternoon. SpAds and policy colleagues are content. Grateful for clearance.

Many thanks

[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Education recovery: next steps

SQA and Education Scotland to be reformed.

Key national agencies Education Scotland (ES) and the SQA will be reformed as part of ambitious plans for Scotland's education recovery.

Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said the role, remit and purpose of both organisations will be considered, as well as their functions and governance arrangements.

Ms Somerville announced the reforms as she outlined wide-ranging plans for education recovery in the first 100 days of government and beyond. They include:

- investing over £1 billion to close the poverty related attainment gap
- recruiting 3,500 additional teachers and classroom assistants
- ensuring every schoolchild has access to the technology they need to support their education
- making free school lunches available to all P4 children before extending to all primary school children, all year round
- expanding free early learning and childcare and developing the provision of wraparound care and after-school clubs
- increasing the school clothing grant and the Best Start Food grant
- providing interim support – including a £100 payment near the start of the summer holidays - for eligible children before the formal expansion of the Scottish Child Payment next year
- offering a £20 million Summer Programme to help restore the wellbeing of children and young people, particularly those worst hit by COVID-19
- removing charges for core curriculum activities and music and arts education
- working with colleges and universities to ensure they remain sustainable and at the forefront of global education and research.

Laying out the Scottish Government's visions and ambitions for education, the Education Secretary said the priority was to continue to deliver excellence and equity, despite the pandemic, with the health and wellbeing of pupils at the forefront of the plans. This next phase of recovery activity builds on almost £400 million of investment committed in this area to date.

Ms Somerville said:

“I hope this programme outlines our determination to deliver improvements with pace and urgency. I am open to considering what further reform is necessary, with the clear purpose of doing all we can to improve outcomes for children. This includes reducing variability in the outcomes children and young people achieve across the country.

“I want to look at options for reform which ensure that schools get the best possible support and challenge to enable them to improve further and to do the very best for the children in their care; to enable them to focus relentlessly on providing the highest quality of learning and teaching for our children, and to ensure that those working in education outwith schools are fully focused on doing everything they can to provide the highest quality of support.

“I want to signal my intention to start this process by considering how to reform the SQA and Education Scotland. This will be a key priority for me.”

Ms Somerville said the reform plans would be informed by the findings of the OECD review into Curriculum for Excellence, which is due to be published on 21 June.

Draft tweet

Children & young people's health, wellbeing & education is at the forefront of @scotgov's COVID recovery programme.

Education Secretary @S_A_Somerville says reforms to Education Scotland & SQA will ensure learners and schools get the best possible support. *Link to NR*



[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]

Senior Media Manager

Communications Education & Skills

Desk: **[REDACT, s. 38(1)(b)]**

Scottish Government | news.gov.scot

From: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>

Sent: 03 June 2021 08:17

To: Director of Learning <DirectorofLearning@gov.scot>; McLean L (Liza) [REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]; Drought A (Andrew) [REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]; Anson S (Sam) [REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]; Pentland MK (Malcolm) [REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]; [REDACT s. 38(1)(b)]

Subject: Meeting on next steps on reform/ OECD report

Colleagues

I think it would be helpful if we could meet as a group (early next week please) to discuss next step with reform, [REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].

[REDACT, s. 29(1)(a)].

Thanks

Graeme.