

## SCOTTISH EDUCATION COUNCIL

### REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVES – MAKING AN IMPACT ON SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

#### Context

1. To ensure culture change and sustainable models, steps have been taken initially to connect with school leaders and to address some of the system-level challenges underpinning classroom improvement. To make the best impact possible at classroom level, for teachers and pupils, requires school leader buy-in supported by effective systems and the delivery of high quality professional practice.
2. If we are to embed the RICs fully in our education system, we need to create the correct culture where our school leaders understand why we should collaborate, the benefits that collaboration will bring, and how the systems that we are creating together can support significant change. In this way we will develop a collaborative model that creates the right culture, develops the best systems, develops our school leaders and shows an impact at practitioner and pupil level.
3. As we develop the RICs there will be some ambiguity as to whether the class teacher and other practitioners attribute any improvement in their practice directly to the RIC, their local authority, their school leadership or themselves. How we communicate and brand pieces of work will help improve practitioners awareness of the contribution that RICs and local authorities are making in supporting school improvement. However, the real prize will be where we see outcomes improve for our children and young people due to effective classroom practice, without having to arbitrarily quantify or artificially attribute a single root cause.

#### Timeline to Present

- January 2018:** Draft Regional Improvement Collaboratives plans.
- March 2018:** In the period of February to March 2018 a series of events for school leaders, involving the Deputy First Minister were held to engage stakeholders directly in the emerging work of the RICs. This period was an important step in **raising awareness** of practitioners of the potential of the RICs to support their work in improving outcomes.
- June 2018:** Updates taken from RIC Leads on progress, showing the emerging work streams and plans for deeper stakeholder engagement. These updates have identified:

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- Emerging issues from the initial phase
- Important next steps for phase two
- Some initial quick wins

### **Issues emerging**

4. Each of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives has focused on engagement with teachers and head teachers as an area of immediate priority. The following issues have been highlighted as areas of initial prioritisation:

- Governance
- Communication
- Establishing a baseline for future improvement planning

#### Governance

5. It is important for the RICs to establish effective governance to ensure that emerging plans are effectively developed and resourced in a way that will add significant value over time and enable improvements in relation to the wider policy intentions.

6. This has meant building teams across local authorities to progress individual work streams. Since these teams all need to go through processes of building effective plans based on a clearly established evidence base for improvement, it is important that this phase of activity is not underestimated.

7. It also meant creating the lines of communication and reporting to ensure effective delivery of programmes and projects that make up the plans being brought forward.

8. Lastly, it has involved the establishment of a clear outcomes focus and framework, so as to ensure that there is a clear vision for improvement governing any processes which RICs establish, including specific work streams.

#### Communication

9. To do this, RICs are exploring new means of communication and building new systems as a result. This has involved the use of a wide range of ICT applications, as well as face to face events which have enabled participants to engage with key areas of activity that might be addressed through the RIC work streams.

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10. There are also excellent examples in all RICs of face to face engagement with practitioners. Moreover, there is evidence such engagements are meeting with approval from those involved and are a means of enriching existing planning.

11. There is probably an issue emerging of making sure that such events are effectively branded as RIC events, so as to ensure that practitioners involved see the benefits of such work, as part of a planned national and local collaborative approach.

#### Establishing a baseline for future planning

12. Each RIC is engaged in activity to ensure that there is a clear evidence basis for planned improvements. This includes the sharing of data to ensure that a clear picture of the current performance of the systems that exist across the regions which make up the collaboratives. But, it also includes the direct engagement of Higher Education Institutions to support research based improvement planning and activity, especially to support practitioner engagement and CLPL activities. This is, of course, part of the wider national research strategy which draws into alignment a number of actions to ensure that research informed practice to tackle educational inequalities is well established throughout Scotland.

#### **Next Steps**

13. Regional Improvement Collaboratives are bringing forward actions to ensure that the second phase of activity continues to be effective. There are three emerging issues:

- Establishing a culture of collaboration
- Building practitioners understanding of RIC plans
- Measuring impact of RIC activity

#### Establishing a culture of collaboration

14. There have been significant examples in all Regional Improvement Collaboratives of work being done to build a culture of collaboration across local authorities. Each RIC will face specific challenges relating to this work, some of which relate to scale and geography, others relate to creating the right context of system level leadership.

15. The culture of collaboration is important to get right, as without it, any new structures will be less effective. The focus in RICs is therefore, rightly, around 'How we work together'. Again, it is important that this work happens effectively and so time needs is being devoted to this as part of the planning of the RICs. Where there have been significant successes in RICs so far, the cultural aspects are being naturally addressed within the context of planned activities and development.

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### Building practitioners understanding of RIC plans

16. Whilst there are significant examples emerging in all RICs of practitioner centred approaches to planning and delivering improvements, this will remain a priority area of activity for the future.

17. Under the current timetable, and within the academic session 2017 – 2018 focus has been on establishing structures and systems. Deeper engagement at nationally coordinated events has initially focused at headteacher level on the system challenge of building RICs.

18. Emerging examples of teacher engagement are evident in all RICs. However, this will be increased as the structures bed in, plans mature and activity builds up across Scotland which is devoted to enabling teachers to improve practice.

### Measuring impact of RIC activity

19. Each of the RICs is considering the best ways to ensure a range of measures are in place to measure the success of activities. Ultimately, these will be seen in the improvement of 'hard' outcomes at a higher level, including NIF outcomes. But, a wider suite of softer measures, including the feedback from stakeholders and a number of softer outcomes, or more local measures will also be part of the evidence base which shows the improvement. It is important that such successes are being shared within and across the RICs and in due course, it will be important to ensure that this happens through a combination of national and regional governance arrangements.

### **Quick wins for Regional Improvement Collaboratives**

20. The recent update from Regional Improvement Leads (**Annex A**) shows a number of significant highlights that have been achieved in relation to planning and delivery, including emerging practice in stakeholder engagement and also evidence of the volume of participants in (and their positive feedback for) RIC activities and events.

21. This is an important thing to highlight, as the RICs are in an early phase of system change, in which stakeholder perceptions require to be managed (including practitioners). It is also important that leaders at all levels have confidence in the rate of progress and that the change process is being effectively managed.

22. These include a number of specific examples of the RICs taking forward actions which get closer to the classroom and have a positive impact on classroom

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practice. It also shows how work is being progressed which will raise the profile of RICs at school level. Some examples include:

- Practitioners and trade unions represented in governance processes
- Surveys of teachers to establish what they would like the RICs to provide
- Teachers involved in work stream activity to develop resources / approaches
- Large numbers of practitioners engaged in RIC CLPL conferences devoted
- A wide range of mechanisms for communicating with practitioners emerging
- Work on building curricular pathways and support packages for young people
- Evidence based plans for Phase Two to engage practitioners systematically

### **Issues for discussion**

23. The Council is asked to:

- note the progress being made within and across the Regional Improvement Collaboratives
- offer comments on the progress made so far and highlight other effective means of raising the profile of RICs at school level and ensuring the work of the Collaboratives has a positive impact in the classroom.

### **Regional Improvement Leads**

**June 2018**

<b>What things are working well in each RIC?</b>
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**Northern Alliance**

- Work streams are all up and running and leads appointed.
- Each local authority has indicated its contribution to each work stream and work stream leads have also identified gaps where Education Scotland could best provide support.
- Good levels of consultation with external partners, such as universities, SDS and so on, keen to be involved in some of the work streams.
- Engagement with HTs, teachers (through joint LNCT meeting) has also been positive.
- Governance structure is bedding in well and we are forward planning this for a couple years to ensure pace and continuity.
- Practitioner voice is represented within the governance structure
- Working relationships with ES have been very positive with Regional Advisor very much part of the team and sponsoring one of the work streams.

**South West Improvement Collaborative**

- Where groups of staff have come together they are working very positively and are optimistic about the value of collaborative working at the scale of SWEIC.
- In addition to the PEF event in February there have been meetings of all secondary HTs and a meeting for PTs primary which had 80 PTs from across the South West
- A survey with over 700 respondents on a baseline on assessment and moderation has been completed with a strong desire to collaborate.

**South East Improvement Collaborative**

- 5 workstreams are up and running with Leads and sponsors appointed. Headteachers and Depute Headteachers also involved in most workstreams to keep them school focussed.
- Edinburgh University are now part of SEIC Board and keen to support research and professional learning aspects of our work.
- The ES Regional Adviser and RIC Lead have met with one of the senior education officers from ES to start the process of matching ES resource to workstreams to help support identified priorities.
- A number of networks have been established where practitioners have seen a benefit in being able to collaborate more widely. Areas of Interest, discrete to each local authority have also been identified and ways to access these are being developed.

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### **West Partnership**

- There is a cohesive approach at leadership level, including elected members
- Agreed a vision for the partnership which will inform Phase 2
- Working with Glasgow University to develop a learning system which will support and encourage learning at all levels
- We have reached out to stakeholders through PEF events, surveys of HTs, etc. to feed into Phase 2 of our plan
- Agreed a three-year programme of conferences with Education Scotland with subject content based on needs identified by stakeholders
- Have established groups to take forward themes and sub-themes, with buy-in from all partners involving over 70 EA and school staff
- Have met with TU partners (established 2 groups), FE Principles and NPFS representatives
- Working to establish a communications strategy
- Education Scotland supporting a number of LAs (QI teams and HTs) who have partnered up to develop approaches to quality assurance, evaluative writing
- Have designed, agreed and now working towards implementing a data sharing agreement across all partner local authorities
- Have established most baselines for critical indicators, supported by ES Regional Adviser

### **Forth Valley and West Lothian Improvement Collaborative**

- Our working groups are now well established and enthusiastic with representation from all authorities in all areas.
- The groups are now developing in some detail actions to take forward.
- There is linkage between the groups for literacy, numeracy and early years with our groups for CLPL and for performance and improvement (and data).
- Other professional groupings have begun to collaborate (Educational Psychology) and CLD.
- There is lineage between the Educational Psychologists and the literacy and numeracy streams.

### **Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative**

- Good working relationships across Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative in the area of Leadership Development with a clear understanding of what we want to achieve - Establish a culture of collaboration, innovation and exploration through the development of a shared leadership strategy to improve leadership and management of schools.
- Six day programme created for new headteachers in partnership with SCEL running from September 2018 – March 2019.
- Programme design clear with range of professional learning activities including professional networking, dialogue, coaching, working trios across collaborative, 360 evaluation, masters level reading and reflection through learning journals.

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- Better informed about current priorities in partner authorities; enhanced opportunities to share; deeper appreciation of each other's context; common themes running through sub-groups – greater consistency and cohesion
- Clear work streams developed and cross section of professionals working collaboratively to impact on classroom practice.

**What steps have been taken to get the message about the RIC to classroom level?**

### **Northern Alliance**

- Communications strategy being developed for 2018/2019 (happy to share once complete) and website currently being refreshed.
- Good engagement with classroom teachers at individual work stream level, ie literacy.
- LNCT rep to have a place within governance structure to support key messages getting back to teachers in the classroom.
- Each local authority within the Alliance has taken proactive steps to share RIC-level work with practitioners.
- Monthly update newsletter has been produced by RIC lead to provide an overview of month-by-month activity. The medium term plan is to shift this online as a blog post on a monthly and then in time, weekly basis, to keep practitioners informed of developments at RIC level

### **South West Improvement Collaborative**

- The survey on assessment and moderation was aimed at classroom practitioners with a view to supporting them with the challenging task of ensuring consistency in standards.
- Engagement at classroom level will be broadly in relation to the work streams identified within the plan.
- The PT event was focused on sharing good practice on closing the gap and as all PTs primary are class based, it was practical and focused on the classroom.

### **South East Improvement Collaborative**

- A staff survey with 1200 responses has been completed.
- Headteachers are part of the SEIC Board and are involved in 4 of the workstreams.
- A primary/special/nursery HT focus group, secondary HT focus group and an officer focus group have been held to gather views on how we make the work of SEIC more accessible to classroom practitioners.
- A trade union group has been established to take on staff views and look at how best to get messages to practitioners.
- In two local authorities a Staff Collaborative Panel has been established.
- Newsletters through sway and powtoon have been developed and shared with a SEIC email address to take feedback from practitioners.
- Information has also been given out through Headteacher meetings in each local authority.



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**West Partnership**

- Over 220 practitioners from 150 schools / centres taking part in training for assessment and moderation events
- Surveyed head teachers groups on content for conference programme
- Recently surveyed all classroom / playroom practitioners to seek views on support they would like through Google Forms

**Forth Valley and West Lothian Improvement Collaborative**

- We have surveyed at classroom level for the numeracy workstream to seek to identify “the ask” from front-line practitioners.
- We have some practitioners (in literacy and early years) on our working groups.
- We intend to communicate more widely at the start of the new session when we can refer to our Phase 2 plan with more detail of what the collaborative has done thus far and what we aim to achieve in the next 18 months or so.

**Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative**

- Future impact through targeted professional development for senior leaders in schools.
- Taking every opportunity to keep local networks informed about the work of the TRIC, e.g. Numeracy Champions
- Information about RIC shared at Angus Maths Conference which was also attended by practitioners from Dundee and Perth & Kinross
- Newsletters, cascade through HTs from RIC lead and CEdOs. RIC events with school leaders.

<b>What impact has been seen at a classroom level to date?</b>
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**Northern Alliance**

- Real progress seen with the emerging literacy project, with highly positive evaluations from staff and evidence of impact related to SIMD data in one local authority area which we hope to see replicated in other areas from next session onwards.
- Other projects, 1+2 and Equalities also have evidence of impact, but not yet at scale.
- The e-learning work stream has allowed more choice for learners across various Northern Alliance local authorities who were struggling to offer specific subjects

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### **South West Improvement Collaborative**

- Feedback from primary PTs who are all class based has shown a very positive response. This should result in improved classroom practice as a result of sharing some very good practice across the South West.

### **South East Improvement Collaborative**

- Subject networks/quality improvement networks for secondary subjects have been offered for a lead representative from each other's LAs to attend looking for consistency of approach and where collaboration will have greatest impact. PTs/DHTs and HTs are participating as part of the workstreams.
- There have been a number of requests for groups of staff to create their own networks e.g. 1+2 languages, Education Psychologists and ICT where the permission to collaborate is beginning to show results.
- Informal feedback from staff has been positive and we are looking for ways to gather these views more systematically.

### **West Partnership**

- Moderation of assessment in BGE involved approx. 225 classroom practitioners across West Partnership (and a further 20 QIOs, HTs, EDOs) and included high quality and highly evaluated CLPL on assessment and moderation of teacher judgements. Confidence – level ratings were taken before and after the programme. The outcome of the whole programme was an increase in confidence and understanding of not only the moderation process and model but knowledge of current national guidance (Avg pre-workshop 3.2; post-workshop 5.4 on a scale of 1 – 7).
- Detailed and individual feedback was given to each EA lead, identifying areas for improvement, which can be addressed both individually and collectively.
- Next session the work will continue offering training and participation to different clusters of schools, thus continuing to build capacity.

### **Forth Valley and West Lothian Improvement Collaborative**

- We can't evidence this at this stage and in the longer term it may prove challenging to attribute change at classroom level to the RIC and not PEF / SAC etc. It will take much longer to evidence this. However we will be working in both literacy and numeracy in the new session with groups of schools that have volunteered to participate in RIC led initiatives – this may lead to evidence of improvement in the schools involved.

### **Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative**

- Future impact through targeted professional development for senior leaders in schools.
- Angus Maths Conference positively evaluated - delegates commented on how much they valued the opportunity to hear from practising teachers and said they had gained much new knowledge, along with practical ideas to take away and adapt for use with their own classes

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- Maths students from University of Dundee also attended. Lecturer tweeted to publicly thank us for the opportunity and said she had observed impact on student's learning whilst visiting them on placement
- Approximately 20 practitioners from across all three authorities currently piloting a suite of four online professional development tutorials and are sharing observations, ideas and insights via Yammer
- 3 TRIC primary schools and 3 TRIC secondary working together as whole staff groups on feedback
- 12 TRIC schools working together to develop numeracy practice
- Whole staff groups in XX focused on collaborative school improvement.
- TRIC programme already in place for probationers, now being extended for new leaders.
- Established TRIC practice in place for the development of 1&2 in Tay classrooms.
- Already consistent classroom practice in sexual health, parenting.

**What further activity is planned to ensure practitioner engagement and impact at classroom level?**

### **Northern Alliance**

- Looking to develop curriculum champions who will be able to support classroom practitioners and will be working to develop this with SCEL and ES. This will initially be with secondary schools (starting with Maths), but with a view to extending to primary schools, specifically looking at how we collaboratively support improvement in schools of varying sizes.
- Work will be led by the Numeracy/Maths work stream to focus on classroom practice supporting those young people who are "hard to teach/hard to learn", using the champions approach as outlined above
- Lead Officer has been identified for the 1+2 work stream who will lead work on engaging secondary practitioners with the changes required to deliver this policy initiative
- Work stream leads have all been asked to consider how best to secure ongoing and meaningful practitioner engagement.
- From 2018-2019, a secondary Head Teacher curriculum development group is being developed, supported by ES, to lead secondary curriculum mapping and planning
- Early discussions have taken place with the University of Aberdeen in relation to the potential future development of a "Teachers Hub" to support career long professional learning across the Northern Alliance

### **South West Improvement Collaborative**

- Having established the baseline in relation to assessment, the group leading this work stream will plan appropriate professional learning which will be aimed

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directly at classroom practitioners. The ultimate goal will be to ensure appropriate pace and progression of all learners based on more consistent standards at all levels of the BGE. There will also be follow up on the recent PT event taking account of their feedback.

### **South East Improvement Collaborative**

- For phase 2 of the SEIC plan there is a focus on getting more engagement from practitioners. The scale of the staff group means that this needs to be carefully planned
- Families of schools are being identified through the numeracy workstream that have similar characteristics and can look at moderating outcomes in the Broad General Education.
- Areas of Interest will be made available for practitioners to visit or make contact within each local authority.
- Leadership opportunities will also be developed further for those staff who have already undertaken systems leadership or Collaborative Leadership programmes. These staff will be central to driving the work of the SEIC to reach the classroom
- The HT focus groups have requested a social media presence, a video to be shared with all practitioners, simple summarised versions of the plan and 2-way communication to ensure that awareness of the work of SEIC reaches the classroom and can be shaped to best meet the needs of our practitioners.
- Looking for ways to measure impact on children and young people's learning and progress.

### **West Partnership**

- Phase 2 of the plan will focus on leading the development of the West Partnership learning system with professional enquiry at every level, especially in the classroom, at the heart; building capacity throughout.
- School Learning Partnerships are already beginning to 'spring up'; these will be supported and facilitated by the Partnership and will encourage class and play room practitioners to collaborate to find solutions to underperformance
- Led by ES Regional Adviser, local authority partners are planning to deliver sessions which will increase capacity in schools related to school-based QA activities, including focus groups (pupils and staff) and learning observations
- Establishing West Partnership Champions in each school to bring attention of class and playroom practitioners to offers from West Partnership
- Learner Journey theme will focus on three key areas going forward:
  - High quality learning, teaching and assessment including developing the use of digital technology;
  - Extending the range of moderation and assessment activities for school leaders, class teachers and practitioners;
  - Work with Developing the Young Workforce partners to improve the range of curricular pathways for children and young people 3 -18.
- Improvement theme conferences based on feedback will be held for ELC, Primary and Secondary.

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### **Forth Valley and West Lothian Improvement Collaborative**

- Each of our workstreams are developing approaches / interventions / CLPL inputs. There will be direct engagement with front line practitioners in the new session. We also intend to issue fliers (coincident with the publication of the new plan) to raise awareness of the RIC and to inform staff who they can contact for help/support/ advice relating to the work of the various workstreams.

### **Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative**

- Future impact through targeted professional development for senior leaders.
- Creation of bespoke Middle Leaders offer with a focus on DHT/PTs leadership of change in working with individual and groups of teachers to develop learning and teaching/pedagogy through improvement methodologies.
- Feedback from conference delegates and tutorial 'trial group' to inform modifications to online PLC
- Each authority has agreed to ring-fence a percentage of next session's Numeracy Hub Champion grant. This will be used to release one 'champion' from each authority for a set number of days to develop further content for the online PLC
- Practitioners from focus group of schools to engage in collaborative professional enquiry – case studies to be uploaded to online PLC. Possibility of a Tay Maths Conference next session has been mooted.
- Focusing on the work above and embedded it.
- Plans in place for the sharing of this work next session to involve more schools.
- Develop consistent Tay programme for education of substance misuse