

SCOTTISH EDUCATION COUNCIL**UPDATE FROM THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT BOARD**

1. The Curriculum and Assessment Board met for the first time on Wednesday 6 December. The agenda included an overview of the new education governance arrangements, the role and remit for the Board and a discussion on possible work themes the Board may like to consider over the next year. In the latter discussion, there was general agreement that the Board should focus firstly on revisiting the purposes, reach and perception of CfE in order to better guide future work streams.

2. The Board's substantial item of discussion was on measures to strengthen the National 4 qualification, this being one of the outstanding items of business from the final meeting of the Assessment and National Qualifications Group. The measures considered comprised: a package of measures to support curriculum design in schools; a revised qualification containing an optional, externally assessed and graded element for learners; and a communications and engagement campaign to raise the credibility of the qualification. In the discussion, there was general agreement that many of the perceived concerns over National 4 were less to do with the design of the qualification and more to do with systemic issues associated with curriculum design in secondary schools and assessment practice in support of identifying and providing individualised learning pathways through the Senior Phase.

3. As a result of both the discussion on work themes and on National 4, the Board was in general agreement that an initial piece of work should be carried out to consider the original principles of CfE and to identify those areas where further attention was required to ensure the benefits of CfE were fully realised. It was agreed that time should be taken to develop and agree effective and meaningful proposals to bring about systemic change and improvement. As such, and in relation to National 4, it was agreed that:

- There should not be a wide consultation on a possible alternative National 4 model at this stage, but instead we should establish whether we have a firm evidence base from a broad range of stakeholders on the perceived credibility issues associated with National 4.
- This intelligence should be used to undertake a communications and engagement exercise to address the current myths and negative perceptions around the National 4 qualification to improve its currency amongst learners, teachers, parents and employers, within the context of a wider range of pathways available to learners.

4. The Board will next meet on Thursday 8 March. At this meeting, the Board will consider a paper which identifies the key areas of curriculum design and assessment for the Board to focus on over the coming 12 months.

**Curriculum and Assessment Board Secretariat
January 2018**