

**SCOTTISH EDUCATION COUNCIL**  
**19 June 2018, Forthview Primary School, Edinburgh**

**Present**

John Swinney, MSP	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (Chair)
Fiona Robertson	Scottish Government, Director for Learning
Bernadette Malone	Chief Executive, Perth and Kinross
Sheena Devlin	RIC Lead, Tayside Collaborative
Jim Thewliss	General Secretary, School Leaders Scotland
Larry Flanagan	General Secretary, EIS
Carrie Lindsay	Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) Lead, South East Collaborative
Douglas Hutchison	RIC Lead, South West Collaborative
Mhairi Shaw	RIC Lead, The West Partnership
Morag Redford	Scottish Council of Deans of Education
Robert Naylor	RIC Lead, Forth Valley and West Lothian Collaborative
Laurence Findlay	RIC Lead, The Northern Alliance
Ken Muir	Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland
Joanna Murphy	Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland
Cal Menzies	Young people's representative

**In attendance**

Graeme Logan	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
Elizabeth Morrison	Education Scotland
Kit Wyeth	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
David Leng	Scottish Government Learning Directorate
Kathleen Marshall	Scottish Government Learning Directorate (Secretariat)
Maria Harris	Scottish Government Learning Directorate (Secretariat)
Jane O'Donnell	COSLA
Eddie Follan	COSLA
Toni Andrews	Young Scot Representative

**Apologies**

Councillor Stephen McCabe	Children and Young People Spokesperson, COSLA
Gayle Gorman	Chief Executive of Education Scotland and Chief Inspector of Education
Maureen McKenna	President, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)
Janet Brown	Chief Executive, SQA

## **Welcome & introductions**

1. DFM welcomed Council members to the fifth meeting of the Scottish Education Council (SEC). He thanked the staff and young people of Forthview Primary School for the warm welcome to their school particularly at such a busy time of the school year.
2. DFM advised that any comments or queries around previous minutes and action points should be raised through correspondence with officials. Apologies from Council members were noted.

## **Regional support for improving Scottish Education [paper 05(01)]**

3. Carrie Lindsay introduced this paper on behalf of the Regional Improvement Collaborative leads, providing an update on the challenges involved and work underway to ensure that the Collaboratives were making an impact on schools and teachers.
4. Carrie said that the paper focused on the need for whole system change: culture; structure and processes and the need for effective collaboration to ensure they all move forward concurrently ensuring change across all the elements without one outpacing the others.
5. Communication was a key focus to ensure awareness and understanding of why this collaboration was so important and the benefits it would bring. This would help develop the best systems, engage school leaders and show an impact at practitioner and pupil level. The RIC leads were continuing to develop work streams and plans, both jointly and individually, and it would be important to ensure the clear and effective branding of the RICs within the communications. Schools were not always aware of the improvement activity being driven by the RICs.
6. Carrie said that engagement was being carried out with the higher education sector with a focus on improving research-based improvement activity to support planning at all levels. Learning events and conferences have been useful in obtaining feedback from the sector which will assist in shaping RICs' future direction.
7. Following the presentation the DFM invited comments and suggestions on the progress being made, in particular what more could be done to achieve a collaborative culture. He welcomed examples of good practice. Open discussion followed:
  - Examples of good practice included setting up regional headteacher groups similar to the national BOCSH (Building our curriculum secondary head group) which helps address regional issues which often come from the school level upwards. Some secondary principal teachers have also set up a group similar to BOCSH across the Tayside area with a particular focus on pedagogy.
  - It should be recognised that RICs were a combination of local authorities and as such included staff who were making contact with classrooms daily and

were working with headteachers to develop the phase 2 regional improvement plans.

- Schools had been invited to put forward what they would like to see in the RIC plans. Two-way communication was highly important and this would become more commonplace and meaningful with time. It was suggested that teachers undertake professional enquiry within their own schools to determine what works – it wasn't just about adopting best practice. There was a need to build capacity in the whole system and continue to learn from it to bring to life a school-led system.
- Clarification of the RIC offer to schools needed to be communicated clearly and effectively.
- Although it was critical for RICs to build a culture of collaboration it may not always be the case that change is attributed to RICs. The key was cultural change and for the RICs to act as a catalyst to encourage and facilitate that change.
- It was acknowledged that it may take some time before teachers recognise that change has occurred because of the National Improvement Framework. Improvement can happen because of a range of interventions and assumptions should be made with caution.
- It was recognised that there had been a lot of development in a short period of time. Sharing good practice and learning across collaboratives needed to become an increasing feature of activity across the RICs.
- There needed to be ongoing support for collaboration and networks that already existed at local level. The RICs can build on this and extend the reach of successful networks.
- It was noted that universities have been working with some practitioners on professional enquiry and ways of working collaboratively. Universities will have a role to play in providing further support.
- It was noted that eleven key measures were now place to monitor closing the attainment gap and raising attainment. Evidence of good practice and strong collaboration can assist in achieving these objectives and the RICs have a role in this. Working collaboratively with specialist networks or drawing on regional good practice was important so that teachers have access to what is leading to improvement.

8. DFM noted the importance of developing a school-led system and that it would be beneficial for the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to have further discussion with RICs on what more can be done to build their capacity to support improvement.

**Action: SEC 05 – (01) – Scottish Government, Education Scotland and RICs to arrange a meeting to discuss further support for RICs.**

### **National support for improving Scottish Education [paper 05(02)]**

#### Education Bill proposals and other enablers/levers to support empowerment

9. DFM gave a brief update on the Education Bill. He advised that discussion with local authorities and partners about the key proposals had been constructive.

Essentially there was general agreement around moving towards a school- led, empowered system in a way that built on the existing strengths of the system. The Bill was with the Presiding Officer and would be published during the week beginning 25 June. DFM said that he was keen to continue discussions with partners going forward.

#### 15-24 Learner Journey review [paper 05(02)]

10. DFM introduced paper 05(02) which discussed the findings of the 15-24 Learner Journey review. He noted that the headlines emerging from research included very clear findings about the importance of parity of esteem between different learner journeys. There was a comprehensive offer in place, but it was not always clear and perhaps some pathways were not as valued by some as progression from school to university. Specific workstreams have been identified to take forward the recommendations of the Learning Journey review.

11. DFM also noted that feedback from young people suggested that careers advice was not always as effective as it needed to be and that improvement in the quality of that advice was important in some cases. He said that the interaction between schools and further and higher education about different pathways for learners needs to be of consistently high quality. Dialogue with further and higher education needed to take place to address this. This was important to ensure there was coherence in the system. It was acknowledged that the SEC was a good forum for ensuring this could happen.

12. In discussion on the Learner Journey review, the following points were made:

- There was a need to ensure that current pathways for learning were being used and were easy for young people to navigate.
- It was suggested that parity of esteem will not be achieved until it is recognised that university is not always the best way forward for all learners.
- It was perceived that what we measure is what we value and that we need to ensure that all types of achievement are recognised. There needed to be a shift in focus so that parents and others can see the value of different types of pathways for young people.
- We need to support informed choices about which pathways suit different learners. There needed to be clear guidance about what was available. Young people should be able to focus on a career goal and determine what steps they need to take to achieve this.

13. It was agreed that there needed to be further discussion at future meetings as this discussion will inform system change.

**Action: SEC 05 – (02) – Education Scotland/Scottish Council of Deans of Education to work on ensuring a more cohesive approach and enhanced interaction between schools and further education.**

**Action: SEC 05 – (03) – Scottish Government – Secretariat to ensure further discussion on the 15-24 Learner Journey review is considered for future SEC meetings and included in the forward work plan.**

Reflection on Year 1 of BGE assessment model including Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) [verbal update]

14. Graeme Logan advised that it was clear from recent discussions with almost all local authority directors that there was increasing confidence in the quality and consistency of teacher judgement about whether children and young people had achieved the relevant CfE level. Data on the achievement of CfE levels would be gathered in the autumn and would inform the NIF evidence report and the data presented through the BGE Benchmarking Tool. The nature of how the data in the tool will be classified this year (ie whether it would continue to be badged as experimental data) was still being decided. A range of factors need to be considered by the Chief Statistician to decide whether data was classed as experimental or not.

15. David Leng gave an update on the first year of the SNSA. Thanks were expressed to all who had been involved, around 570,000 assessments have been taken across the country.

16. In order to support ongoing enhancements and improvements to the SNSA system, a sense of user experience had been gathered and a user review report was being prepared. Along with a significant amount of data from the assessment provider the SG SNSA team had carried out a series of focus groups and school visits. Feedback and ideas on how the assessments could be improved further had been gathered and were being considered by the team.

17. Generally the feedback had been positive with teachers welcoming the useful diagnostic information from the assessments which they can use to plan next steps in learning. The primary 1 assessments had generated the most comments and was the main area where the user review would recommend changes and enhancements.

18. The issues raised included technical challenges in operating the SNSA system, effective classroom management of the assessments and the design of questions. Next steps for the new school session would include addressing these issues. Questions would be replenished and any questions that did not work well will be removed. The style of questions will be considered. On classroom management, there were some excellent examples of how the assessments have worked well in classrooms and this will be shared with the profession. A practitioner forum will be set up to consider the specific issues in relation to primary 1. A system feedback form will be built into the system. A detailed longscale will be introduced this year to replace the high/medium/low bandings and provide a description of children's progress over time.

19. In response to the update the members welcomed the longscale being introduced this year. EIS members were providing feedback which was currently being collated and this will be shared with Scottish Government to inform future improvements.

**Action: SEC 05 – (04) – EIS – to provide details of EIS member feedback on the Scottish National Standardised Assessments.**  
**National Improvement Framework highlight report [paper 05(04)]**

20. Due to time constraints members were asked to feedback any issues or concerns to Scottish Government secretariat on this paper.

#### **Strategic Board for Teacher Education update [paper 05(05)]**

21. Due to time constraints members were asked to feedback any issues or concerns to Scottish Government secretariat on this paper.

#### **Curriculum and Assessment Board update [paper 05(06)]**

22. DFM noted that there needed to be a point of clarity on the National 4 issue. At present there was no consensus from members of the Curriculum and Assessment Board on this issue and further discussion and a decision on the way forward would be made soon.

#### **Action log [paper 05(07)]**

23. Due to time constraints members were asked to feedback any issues or concerns to Scottish Government secretariat on this paper.

#### **Any other business**

24. DFM closed the meeting by thanking Bernadette Malone for her service at Perth and Kinross Council. He thanked her for her contribution to Scottish education and wished her well for a long and happy retirement.

#### **Date of next meeting**

25. The next meeting of the Council will be held on 20 September 2018, at Broughton High School, Edinburgh, timings to be confirmed. It was intended that this meeting would allow Council members to meet the International Council of Education Advisers.

**National Improvement Framework Unit  
July 2018**