

## Curriculum and Assessment Board

**Meeting 3 – Friday 15 June 2018 (09:30 – 12:30)  
Harris Academy, Dundee**

### **Minute of Meeting**

#### **Attendees**

##### **Members and Substitutes**

Peter McNaughton (SQ)	Association of Directors of Education (ADES)
Andrew Griffiths (AG)	ADES
Tim Wallace (TW)	Association of Headteachers and Deputies in Scotland
Jim Metcalfe (JM)	College Development Network
Ken Thomson (KT)	Colleges Scotland
Robert Hynd (RH)	Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland
Jean Carwood-Edwards (JCE)	Early Years Scotland
Andrea Bradley (AB)	The Educational Institute of Scotland
Gayle Gorman (GG)	Education Scotland (Co-Chair)
Joan MacKay (JMa)	Education Scotland
Mike Corbett (MC)	National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
Fiona Nicholson (FN)	National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS)
David Barnett (DB)	School Leaders Scotland (SLS)
John Edward (JE)	Scottish Council of Independent Schools
Aileen Ponton (AP)	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
John Kemp (JK)	Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
Fiona Robertson (FR)	Scottish Government (Co-Chair)
Andy Bruce (ABr)	Scottish Government
Paul Smart (PS)	Scottish Government
Kevin Campbell (KC)	Scottish Secondary Teachers Association (SSTA)
Gill Stewart (GS)	Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
James Russell (JR)	Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
Mark Priestley (MP)	University of Stirling
Peter McGeorge (PM)	Universities Scotland

##### **Young Representatives**

Gregor Trickett (GT)	Harris Academy
Lindsey Gordon (LG)	Harris Academy
Amy Simmons (AS)	Young Scot
Cal Menzies (CM)	Young Scot

##### **Young Scot Representative**

Paul Gault (PG)	Co-Design Manager, Young Scot
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##### **Secretariat**

Malcolm Pentland (MPe)	Scottish Government
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Liam Cahill (LC)                      Scottish Government

**Additional Attendees**

Julie Anderson (JA)                  Scottish Government

**Apologies**

Steven Quinn	ADES
Jane O'Donnell	COSLA*
Alan Armstrong	Education Scotland
Sheena Devlin	Regional Improvement Collaboratives
Neville Prentice	SDS
Seamus Searson	SSTA
Louise Hayward	University of Glasgow

*\*COSLA informed meeting organisers that they were unable to send a representative as a result of not being consulted on the timing of the meeting.*

**1. Welcome and introductions**

1.1 The co-chairs welcomed members to the third meeting of the Board and handed over to the Headteacher of Harris Academy, Barry Millar. Mr Millar welcomed Board members to Harris Academy and provided an overview of life at the school.

**2. Tour of Harris Academy**

2.1 Mr Millar invited Board members to follow a group of pupils from Harris Academy who led a tour of the school.

**3. Minute and actions from last meeting**

3.1 Following the conclusion of the tour of the school, GG thanked Mr Millar and the pupils of Harris Academy for welcoming the Board to the school.

3.2 GG then sought agreement on the minute and associated actions of the 8 March meeting. The minute of the meeting was agreed without comment.

**4. Curriculum for Excellence – update from the narrative sub-group**

4.1 FR introduced Paper CAB-03(01) and handed over to MPe to provide further detail. MPe informed Board members that a CAB sub-group had been set up to look at strengthening the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) narrative as agreed at the Board's meeting on 8 March 2018. Paper CAB-03(01) provided the Board with an update on the sub-group's work including its membership, its proposed direction of travel and proposed next steps. MPe invited Board members to comment on the contents of the paper.

4.2 Board members were supportive of the work of the group and its proposed direction of travel. Specific points from the related discussion were as follows:

- There is a need to be really clear about what we are trying to achieve through this work, with a clear definition of the ‘curriculum’.
- It is important to avoid any unintended/perverse consequences and a need to be cautious to avoid any sense of re-defining the curriculum or unsettling the system.
- The narrative should be viewed as providing a ‘point of entry’ to CfE for practitioners.
- The sub-group should engage communications specialists in production of ‘end product’ to ensure narrative is as impactful, accessible etc. as possible.

4.3 AB offered to assist the work through helping set up some focus groups with EIS members and the Board members representing Colleges Scotland, Early Years Scotland and Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland expressed a desire to ensure their organisations or representatives from their sectors are involved in the work either through representation on the sub-group or through other means of engagement.

**Action: MPE to follow up with representatives from EIS, Colleges Scotland and representatives from the early years and CLD sectors in relation to the sub-group’s work.**

**Action: MPE to ensure that the narrative sub-group progresses its work in line with paper CAB-03(01) and the Board’s related discussions.**

## **5. Curriculum for Excellence – progression and transitions**

5.1 GG introduced Paper CAB-03(02) and handed over to JMa to provide further detail. JMa detailed that the paper: outlined existing strengths and opportunities for improvement related to progression and transitions between ages 3-15; presents a case for change; and suggests possible ways forward. JMa then asked Board members for comments.

5.2 The points made in relation to the paper were as follows:

- The paper’s reference to how interdisciplinary learning (IDL) can support progression is welcome and there are lots of opportunities for IDL to be included as part of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda. However, educators from all sectors should be supported in developing a shared understanding of IDL.
- The paper’s recommendations are sensible however there is still too much focus in education on the national qualifications and this is as a result of recent changes in that area.
- We must recognise the good work that is taking place to support progression and transitions. Efforts should be made to more fully understand the level and standard of this support.
- If we are to revisit progression as part of curriculum design we should use the opportunity to review some of the experiences and outcomes.
- The Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) will have a role to play in supporting this work, in particular helping the teaching profession to understand the concepts of progression and transitions.

- Resource, specifically the amount of time teachers have, is proving a barrier to improvement in this area.
- Research into transitions commissioned by the National Improvement Framework (NIF) Programme Board will support work in this area.
- The physical environment should also be considered when taking forward work to improve transitions.
- There should be a stronger focus on engaging with parents to support transitions.
- There should be a stronger focus on curriculum architecture in the senior phase.
- Work should be done to clarify the role of teachers in early years provision. This will support the transition between nursery and P1.
- We should not focus the discussion on transitions too narrowly. Less evident transitions such as the ones learners experience year on year also need focus.
- The Board should ensure that the voice of learners is heard as part of any work on progression and transitions.
- There should be engagement with third sector partners to support the progression and transitions of learners who have become disengaged with education.

5.3 The young representatives at the meeting made the following comments:

- Dedicated support for transitions between primary and secondary schools, for example transition days, were very helpful from a learner's perspective. However, the support for learners should not just stop after a single day or week.
- Supportive parents can have a positive impact and facilitate smooth transitions throughout the learner journey.
- The curriculum feels different from a learner's perspective in primary and secondary and in secondary schools it tends to be more challenging. This can negatively impact some learners if they have not reached a required level before making the transition to secondary school.
- There are examples of teachers teaching in both primary and secondary schools and this can support learner transitions if they have the same teacher in both schools.

5.4 JMa summed up the discussion and noted the points that were made about the importance of coherent curriculum design, strong parental engagement and the challenges around resources for educators. There was an agreement that further exploratory work on this topic should be conducted and the findings of that work should be discussed at a future meeting of the Board with a view to identifying clear actions to overcome challenges in this area.

**Action: JMa to lead on conducting exploratory work on progression and transitions, feeding findings and related recommendations into a future CAB discussion.**

## 6. Learner Journey Review

6.1 GG introduced paper CAB-03(03) and asked JA to provide further comment. JA detailed that the paper provided Board members with an update following the publication of the 15-24 Learner Journey Review on 10 May 2018. JA also provided an overview of how the Review links to actions relevant to the senior phase that had already been agreed by the Board. JA then asked Board members for comments.

6.2 The points made in relation to the paper were as follows:

- It is right that the Learner Journey Review recognises the strong progress in this area and the needs of learners should be at the heart of any further work related to the learner journey.
- There is a need to ensure that any messaging and advice relating to the learner journey is consistent across the education system and as part of this there is a need to support the wider education system in understanding how the Learner Journey Review fits in with other priorities in education.
- Any work in this area should reflect related resource challenges which have impacted on the provision of careers advice and the breadth of curriculum choices.
- The Review's recommendation to clarify and rationalise SCQF level 7 is welcomed.
- It is important to ensure that College leadership is supported as part of this work.
- This work should not just promote traditionally academic pathways but also promote vocational qualifications and training.
- Parental engagement is central to the learner journey and parents/carers should be actively involved far earlier in a learner's journey.
- More should be done to communicate the richness of opportunities within the senior phase to schools, learners and parents.
- The recommendation of a senior phase prospectus should be welcomed as in general, young people find it difficult to visualise their trajectory and therefore make choices about their future.
- There should be a clearer picture of what educational provision looks like across the country and data collection should be considered as a part of this.

6.3 The young representatives at the meeting made the following comments:

- There should be more and stronger guidance on what an individual can do with their qualifications.
- Guidance on routes through education and beyond should start earlier in the learner journey.
- There should be more individualised support for high achievers, in general they can be neglected as support is channelled to learners who might need more support with education.
- There should be advice on how to align passion for certain subjects with related careers.
- There needs to be more clarity on what an Advanced Higher can be used for. They are often not required by universities and learners can sometimes be put off taking them as a result.

- There is too much pressure on undertaking traditionally academic routes and there is too much focus on gaining academic qualifications over gaining skills to advance yourself as a person.

6.4 GG summed up discussions and reminded Board members to contact JA should they wish to be involved in a working group to take this work forward.

**Action: JA to lead on establishing a working group that will develop actions to support senior phase delivery in Scotland and support the implementation of the specific recommendations of the Learner Journey Review.**

## 7. National 4 – update on work to develop an evidence base

7.1 FR introduced Paper CAB-03(04) and asked ABr to provide further comment. ABr detailed that the paper provides an update on the outcome of stakeholder discussions on the perceived credibility issues associated with National 4; an overview of recent presentation approaches to National Qualifications; and to outline the next steps to improve the National 4's currency. ABr then welcomed comments from the Board members.

7.2 The main points in relation to the paper were as follows:

- There were differing views as to whether the structure of the National 4 qualification should be changed.
- Some stakeholders felt that the interim arrangement for recognising positive achievement through 'fallback' should be removed as it leads to learners being presented for National 5 when it is not in their best interest, it adds to teacher workload and it leads to multi-level teaching. In relation to the timing of any change, some stakeholders felt this should happen for AY 2018/19, whilst others felt it should not happen until AY 2019/20 as learners have already made their senior phase choices this year on the assumption that 'fallback' will be in operation.
- More needs to be done to understand why 12% of National 5 entries included three unit entries to enable 'fallback' to National 4. There was a consensus that this number was too high especially as guidance stated that 'fallback' should only be used in exceptional circumstances.
- The number of learners presented for National 5 with a 'fallback' option might be influenced by pressure from parents.
- It is important to ensure that removing the 'fallback' procedure does not result in a lowering of aspiration amongst learners.
- An extension of the grade D in the National 5 qualification should be enough to catch aspirational learners who might be on the border between a National 4 and a National 5.

7.3 The young representatives at the meeting made the following comments:

- Learners tend not to see National 4 as a 'real' qualification as it doesn't include an externally assessed exam. This culture needs to change.
- National 4 should be seen as a foundation to support work towards a National 5 and not something you end up with if you fail to gain a National 5.

7.4 ABr summed up discussion and noted the range of views on the qualification. ABr assured Board members that these views will be fed into advice that will be provided to the Deputy First Minister.

**Action: ABr to ensure feedback from CAB members is represented in advice to the Deputy First Minister relating to the credibility of the National 4 qualification.**

## **8. AOB**

8.1 No other business was raised.

8.2 FR brought the meeting to a close and thanked attendees and the pupils and staff at Harris Academy for their contributions.

**Meeting concludes.**

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### **List of Actions**

- 1. MPe to follow up with representatives from EIS, Colleges Scotland and representatives from the early years and CLD sectors in relation to the sub-group's work.**
- 2. MPe to ensure that the narrative sub-group progresses its work in line with paper CAB-03(01) and the Board's related discussions.**
- 3. JMa to lead on conducting exploratory work on progression and transitions and feeding findings, and related recommendations, into a future CAB discussion.**
- 4. JA to lead on establishing a working group that will develop actions to support senior phase delivery in Scotland and support the implementation of the specific recommendations of the Learner Journey Review.**
- 5. ABr to ensure feedback from CAB members is represented in advice to the Deputy First Minister relating to the credibility of the National 4 qualification.**

**Curriculum and Assessment Board Secretariat  
Scottish Government**