

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS
EDUCATION REFORM – COLLABORATION FOR IMPROVEMENT
PAPER BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Introduction

1. Extensive engagement between national and local government from early 2018 led to a landmark joint agreement in June which commits both parties to deliver, without the need for new primary legislation:

- Meaningful school empowerment through the establishment of a Headteachers' Charter and associated guidance;
- A local authority self-evaluation framework to test school empowerment; and
- An evaluation strategy.

2. The draft Education Bill, originally proposed as the vehicle for delivering school empowerment, was published in June ([on the Scottish Government website](#)) together with the text of the joint agreement. Also published were documents setting out the Bill's policy and financial implications and assessing its impacts on equality, children's rights and wellbeing, and business and regulatory matters.

3. Ministers have committed to making progress on school empowerment through collaborative working with key partners in the education system during the current academic year. If insufficient progress is made within that time, they will return to parliament to introduce the planned legislation.

A Collaborative Approach

4. Work is already under way to progress the joint agreement through a steering group chaired by the Chief Inspector of Education. The steering group involves the key bodies responsible for delivering the joint agreement: the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Association of Directors of Education (ADES) and Education Scotland. The steering group also includes representation from the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS), the Improvement Service, the Chief Social Work Adviser and a number of practicing headteachers nominated by professional associations and trade unions.

5. The Joint Steering Group has developed a detailed work plan, organised into three workstreams, reflecting the three bullet points above, each of which will be co-led by two of the bodies responsible for delivering the agreement. Key deliverables from the workstreams include:

- Publication of the Headteachers' Charter which empowers headteachers to be able to make decisions on curriculum, improvement, staffing, and budgets. Guidance to support this empowerment of schools will be co-produced between the Scottish Government, local government and teacher and headteacher organisations.
- Enhanced high quality professional learning opportunities designed to maximize the improvement that can be delivered with empowerment. This will be provided for headteachers but also for business managers and middle leaders in schools, recognising the key role they have in supporting headteachers to fulfill a more empowered role.
- A self-evaluation framework which will allow local authorities to test the current level of empowerment within their schools.
- An evaluation strategy to enable consideration to be given to whether significant progress has been made over this academic year. Sources of evidence will include: school inspections, local authority inspections and three thematic inspections by education Scotland of readiness for empowerment, curriculum leadership and parent and pupil participation in schools.

Wider Programme of Improvements

6. Six Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) have been established and have developed regional improvement plans along with associated resource requests. These are currently being assessed with funding allocations expected to be confirmed by the end of September. We expect RIC capacity for deepening and strengthening collaborative working, and for supporting schools in improving outcomes for pupils, to develop during the next academic year.

7. Progress is also being made on the development of different career pathways for teachers. The independent panel tasked with this, chaired by Moyra Boland (Deputy Head at the School of Education, University of Glasgow) has agreed to expand its remit to consider new leadership opportunities and roles for teachers and the creation of new leadership roles for Headteachers in and beyond the school. The Panel (which includes representation from Education Scotland, ADES, SOLACE, the Society for Personnel and Development (SPDS), teacher professional associations and COSLA) will make its recommendations to the tripartite Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) by the end of the year. SNCT is the national forum in which matters relating to teachers' pay and conditions of employment are agreed.

8. New guidance and training is being developed under a comprehensive National Action Plan (co-produced with parent organisations) to support parental involvement, parental engagement, learning at home and family learning.

A Scottish Learner Panel is being established to enable young people themselves to shape improvements to pupil voice and participation.

The Council is asked to consider:

- **How might Scottish Ministers ensure that empowerment of headteachers as leaders of learning and teaching enhances collaboration in the education system, rather than creating isolation at school level?**

- **Are there lessons which can be learned from other countries on how to generate cultural change alongside changes to roles and responsibilities?**
- **Are there examples of good practice from other countries of effective support being provided to enable schools and school leaders to take on more empowered roles?**
- **How might Scottish Ministers best effect the transition from the language of reform to the language of improvement?**

Scottish Government
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