

TEACHER PANEL

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

Purpose

1. The Teacher Panel is asked to consider the following questions.
 - a) Do teachers feel empowered to deliver, develop and design CfE in their local context, and what more support is required?
 - b) How can effective school leadership, supported by the Headteachers' Charter foster teacher agency and lead to greater professional collaboration?
 - c) The thematic review of Readiness for Empowerment suggests that the 'learning and teaching' aspect of empowerment is further advanced than the 'management of resources' aspect – does that reflect Panel members' experiences?
 - d) Does the Panel feel progress is being made across all the key aspects of leadership support? Where would they like to see greater focus?

Background

Education Reform: Successful Implementation of CfE Requires an Empowered Profession

2. The OECD's review of the implementation of our curriculum approach (*Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective*, December 2015) recommended that educational leadership be strengthened and supported and that mutual support and learning across local authorities with schools and networks of schools be provided. The proposed Headteachers' Charter and Regional Improvement Collaboratives seek to take forward these recommendations.
3. Curriculum for Excellence provides the national framework for the design of learning and teaching in Scottish schools. Within it, schools have the freedom to design curricula that best meet the needs of their individual learners; this is based on a fundamental presumption that decisions about individual children's learning and school life should be taken as close to that learner as possible. In an empowered school-led system, school leaders should be part of the collective leadership of the system, as well as leaders within their own organisation. The leadership skills required include: working across organisational boundaries; building shared values and trust; drawing on a wide range of perspectives and resources across systems to design local solutions; and reflecting local context, communities and aspirations.

4. An empowered system is built on mutual trust, cooperation and highly effective communication. In an empowered system headteachers and local authorities are partners, each contributing and supporting each other and respecting the different role each plays.
5. The Scottish Government and local government are committed to empowering schools within a wider empowered education system in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. Our joint agreement commits us to deliver 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 to measure progress towards delivering this.
6. Guidance on Empowering School Leaders and the Headteachers' Charter is being developed in the context of an empowered system and will clearly set out how headteachers should lead their learning community in the following three key areas: leading learning and teaching; empowering their learning community; and making the best use of resources. The wider education system – including the Scottish Government and Local Authorities – should provide school leaders with the necessary freedom and support to fulfil these aspirations.

Support for a school and teacher led education system

7. Scotland's six Regional Improvement Collaboratives will support a school and teacher led education system. The Scottish Government is providing £5 million of additional funding to support the Collaboratives' improvement plans for the current school year. The plans aim to enhance regional capacity for collaboration and deliver additional support to schools, teachers, pupils and early years establishments. This includes providing focused support to teachers through the creation of new teacher networks, the sharing and learning of best practice and the enhancement of professional development and collaborative support.
8. We are also enhancing the support that will be provided by Education Scotland through the Regional Collaboratives. This includes securing additional, dedicated Education Scotland support within the new regional model, at Senior Education Officer and/or Education Officer level in areas such as Inclusion and Wellbeing; Developing the Young Workforce; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; Literacy; Numeracy; Additional Support for Learning and wider curricular support. Through this additional recruitment and through closer collaboration across the system, Education Scotland staff will be better able to support teachers in the classroom by bringing in support and expertise from across the regions to help individual teachers build professional expertise and networks.
9. The new Education Scotland regional model is focused on supporting schools and teachers directly through modelling good practice, high quality support materials and access to professional training.

Progress and Issues to Consider

10. The report of Education Scotland's thematic review of Readiness for Empowerment is due to be published in the week commencing 17 December. Participants reflected on a noticeable change in culture and attitudes over the last 12 months, with a growing focus on empowerment. Headteachers reported that improvement planning processes were more streamlined and schools have more space to identify their own priorities. They also reported an increasing focus on "curriculum rationale", with headteachers embracing empowerment to design a curriculum and facilitate learning and teaching. Around half of the headteachers involved reported that they felt adequately empowered in relation to staffing and budget decisions – but half did not.
11. This would suggest that the 'learning and teaching' aspect of empowerment is further advanced than the 'management of resources' aspect – does that reflect Panel members' experiences?
12. Headteachers must be supported as well as empowered. This support will come from different sources and look different for individuals, depending on their experience and needs e.g. support for pedagogy and curriculum design; time to collaborate; practical and strategic support with the 'management' aspects of headship; back-office functions provided by local authorities; and support in developing leadership skills and confidence through structured programmes such as Into Headship, Excellence in Headship and Columba 1400 Head Teacher Leadership Academies.
13. Does the Panel feel progress is being made across all the key aspects of leadership support? Where would they like to see greater focus?