

November 2017

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Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs)

As you may be aware, the Scottish Government launched the SNSAs in August.

Advice has been issued to Local Association Secretaries on the actions to be taken in instances where local authorities fall short of compliance with the guidelines issued by Scottish Government, including the cessation of all other forms of standardised assessment. This advice can be found here <http://www.eis.org.uk/public.asp?id=3765>

Action for Representatives:

School Reps are advised to monitor the use of SNSAs at school level with a view to ensuring compliance with EIS policy and Scottish Government advice. Emerging issues should be raised with the Headteacher in the first instance and the Local Association Secretary informed should the matter remain unresolved.

SNSA Norming Study

The Scottish Government recently advised that additional 'norming studies' will be taking place in late November and again in March, involving small numbers of pupil per school. SG has advised that this exercise is to calibrate the validity of the assessments without requiring the use of "testing windows". This should enable teachers to use the assessments at any point in the year in the interests of ensuring that assessment genuinely supports learning and teaching.

The EIS has raised the issue of potential additional workload generated by the norming studies with SG and has stressed that any requirement for teachers' participation in these activities must be accommodated within the parameters of the 35 hour week.

Action for Representatives:

Please discuss with your Headteacher how time will be made available within the parameters of the 35-hour week, for this additional task, in the event that pupils in your school are selected for participation in the norming studies, and teachers are required to support this work. If no satisfactory resolution is agreed, raise the matter with your Local Association Secretary.

GTCS Elections

As in previous years, the EIS is supporting a number of our members as candidates in the forthcoming GTCS Council elections. We are supporting 11 nominations with the aim of seeing an EIS-endorsed candidate in each of the 11 vacancies for GTCS Council.

This year, the GTCS elections are of even greater importance.

The Scottish Government's proposal for the creation of an Education Workforce Council to replace the GTCS, poses many risks to the power of teacher voice in shaping professional standards. It would remove the teacher majority on the Council and replace it with a Board, similar to the current arrangement for the SQA. In other words less teacher input and more political direction.

The EIS will seek to defend the GTCS from such political interference.

It will be essential, therefore, that EIS members give full backing to the 11 EIS-supported candidates when voting gets underway in January.

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

In preparation, please display the enclosed poster in your establishment and make members aware that by Friday 8 December 2017 they should make sure:

- GTCS hold an up-to-date email address so that they receive their ballot email with information and their unique PIN to enable them to vote (from 10th January 2018)
- They are in the correct election category in order to vote
- They update their details as necessary at www.gtcs.org.uk/mygtcs.

Further updates and advice from the EIS will follow in due course.

Council Elections 2018/19

The EIS Council is the principal executive committee of the EIS. It meets around five times a year, usually in Edinburgh, and at the AGM. Voting for members interested in standing for election to Council for 2018/2019 will begin in December.

Nomination forms will be available from your Local Association Secretary and from the EIS website.

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please make members aware of the upcoming elections.

Political Fund Ballot Results

Members of the EIS have voted overwhelmingly in favour of retaining its Political Fund. The results of the ballot provide a clear indication that members support the need for the union to continue its important campaigning work.

The results were as follows:

Members voting to retain the fund – 97.3%

Members voting against retaining the fund – 2.7%

The ballot turn-out was just over 20%.

The EIS is not affiliated to any political party, and is not aligned to any political party, therefore the EIS Political Fund does not pay into or contribute to any political party.

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please make members aware of the ballot result.

Educational (Scotland) Bill

A consultation on the Education (Scotland) Bill has been launched. The EIS will play an active part in this consultation process.

The consultation is entitled 'Empowering Schools', which is an aspiration that the EIS strongly supports. We believe that it is essential, however, that this empowerment is based on a democratic model which enables all teachers to contribute to the leadership of learning within their schools.

The EIS consultation response will share our views on how best to support Scottish education. Local associations, school branches and individual members may also wish to respond to the consultation, which can be accessed via www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/11/9712

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please make members aware of the role of the EIS in the consultation process.

Pupil Equity Funding Survey

We are seeking information from school representatives about the use of school committees, with EIS participation, which monitor the deployment of Pupil Equity Funding. A short survey has been emailed to all School Representatives.

Action for Representatives:

If you have not already done so, please complete the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/pef_survey

STUC St Andrew's Day Anti-Racism March and Rally: 25 November 2017, Glasgow

The annual STUC St Andrew's Day Anti-Racism march and rally will take place on Saturday 25 November 2017 in Glasgow. Marchers will assemble at 10.30am at Glasgow Green (by the McLennan Arch, near Saltmarket), marching off at 11.00 am through the streets of Glasgow, and ending the march at Adelaide's, 209 Bath Street, where there will be a rally with speakers from 12 noon. The theme of this year's march is "Educate; Agitate; Organise!"

In the past few years year the EIS turnout at this important event has been excellent, and substantially higher than in previous years. At this year's march, happening in just a few weeks' time, we hope to have the EIS similarly well represented, to show that we reject racism, demonstrate our solidarity with refugees, and defend communities from hate and discrimination wherever it occurs. In the current climate of xenophobia and the rise of the far-right it is vital to stand firm against racism, support anti-racist education and to agitate and organise among our membership.

Further information can be found at the following address: http://www.eis.org.uk/Meetings_and_Events/STUC17.htm

If you have any queries, please contact Ashley in the Equality Department (agray@eis.org.uk).

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please distribute the enclosed insert in your establishment and let members know about the march and rally.

EIS Page Scholarship 2018/19

Application forms are now available for the 2018/19 Page Scholarship involving a research visit to America, offered by the EIS in association with the English-Speaking Union. Besides being EIS members, applicants must also have 5 years' teaching experience.

The Scholarship is awarded annually to a teacher/lecturer in a Scottish school/college and is intended to promote small-scale educational research and exchange of ideas between Britain and America. The successful Scholar travels to the USA to study a specific aspect of American education which interests her/him, and which is relevant to her/his own professional responsibilities here in Scotland.

The value of the EIS Page Scholarship is £2,400 which covers the cost of travel to and accommodation in, the USA. Throughout the visit, the Scholar is the guest of the American Branches of the English-Speaking Union.

The closing date for submission of applications to the EIS Education Department is Thursday 1 March 2018.

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please make relevant teachers in your establishment aware of this opportunity. Application forms should be addressed to the EIS Education Department at 46 Moray Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BH. For further information please contact Leigh Meechan (lmeechan@eis.org.uk). Look out, too, for an article from the 2016/17 Scholar in the December edition of the SEJ.

Pay Update

EIS negotiators report that progress is being made on the 2017/2018 pay negotiations and that it is hoped that agreement can be reached over the next few weeks. Currently, the Teachers' Side is awaiting a formal offer through the SNCT.

The pay offer being sought is on the basis of the same percentage increase for all teachers and associated professionals. Salaries Committee has begun already to formulate next year's pay claim, where the Institute plans to move into a campaign mode to secure a significant pay increase, following the announcement of the ending of the public sector pay cap.

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please make members aware of ongoing pay negotiations.

Potential Local Industrial Action

You may be aware that another trade union operating in Scotland, the NASUWT, recently announced its intention to stage local strike action in schools.

At present, only six schools in two local authority areas (Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire) have been named as sites of potential action.

LA Secretaries in these areas have briefed school branches on the potential action, and are advising members as required.

A leaflet is enclosed for your information, summarising the information that has been provided to members in Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire.

Action for Representatives:

Please share this information with members in your school.

EIS Learning Reps

Are you passionate about professional learning? Do you feel strongly about high quality learning experiences that meet your needs and those of your colleagues? If so, becoming an EIS Learning Rep could be an opportunity for you.

The primary role of the EIS Learning Rep is to engage with and support members on professional learning issues, as well as to take forward the professional learning agenda in the workplace.

The EIS offers initial training and ongoing support for this role. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Lesley Walker (lwalker@eis.org.uk) or visit http://www.eis.org.uk/Learning_Reps/LearningReps_Intro.htm

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please make members aware of the opportunity to become a Learning Rep.

EIS Action Research Grants 2018

The current cohort of EIS researchers met after the Professional Learning conference in September, and will report on an interesting and varied set of research topics in May 2018.

The EIS will again be offering research grants in 2018 with application information to be circulated in the new year.

Educational establishment-based action research is a simple set of techniques used to help improve teaching and learning. It is usually undertaken by the teacher or educator in their own classroom / setting. Action research involves:

- Identifying an issue (related to learning in your classroom / setting)
- Reviewing any relevant literature around the issue
- Planning a simple research strategy
- Gathering and analysing data
- Taking action based on your findings
- Sharing your findings.

If you would like to note interest or find out more, please visit <http://www.eis.org.uk/CPD/ActionResearchGrants.htm> or contact Lesley Walker (lwalker@eis.org.uk).

Action for Representatives and Branch Secretaries:

Please make members aware of the action research grants.