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education trade union

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Standing Up for **Scottish Education**

2016 Scottish Parliament Election - Manifesto for Education



www.eis.org.uk

Standing Up for **Scottish Education**

- **Close the attainment gap**
- **Give children a sound start in Nurseries**
- **Promote our Primaries**
- **Support our Secondaries**
- **Value Further and Higher Education**
- **Support Scotland's Teachers**
- **Promote social justice**
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- **Stand up for Scottish Education**

Politicians Should Listen to Teachers

May 5th is an opportunity to hold politicians to account as to how the Scottish Education System is valued and resourced. In this manifesto the EIS, Scotland's largest and most influential education union, sets out what we believe the priorities should be to ensure a positive future for Scottish Education, for Scotland's young people, and for learners of all ages.



We call on all political parties to recognise and respect the educational expertise that our members represent and to acknowledge our commitment to sound learning and to the best interests of pupils and students. Accordingly we ask that politicians listen, respect, and engage with the concerns and policy issues we raise.

Scottish Education is a high performing system with significant strengths. Although challenges remain we need to build on what we are doing well, not abandon the progress we have made, if we are to overcome the barriers that still face too many learners.

That will mean an increased commitment to resource Education effectively, to support learners and their families, and to deliver additional investment in Scotland's teachers and lecturers.

Education is too important to be left to politicians alone so we invite parents, teachers, and young people to join the debate by using this manifesto to start the discussion, to ask questions, and to ensure that Education is centre stage in this key election.

Larry Flanagan

Larry Flanagan
General Secretary

Close the attainment gap

Education in Scotland is seen as a societal good – it supports the concept of a “common weal”- a concern for community and for social justice.

Accordingly, the EIS believes that equality of opportunity, fairness to all and equity of access and provision must be essential aspects of Scottish Education.

The impact of poverty and deprivation in limiting pupil achievement and attainment is well evidenced and tackling this disadvantage is an absolute priority for the EIS (and should be for politicians, also). It underpins all the key policies in this manifesto.

Clearly, action is required outside of schools to tackle the scourge of poverty in society but schools can and do make a difference, where they are supported. Resources and funding to reduce the attainment gap are essential.

We would argue that investing in the classroom, where teaching and learning take place, is the most effective strategy to adopt.

Actions:

- **Increase resources targeted at tackling social deprivation**
- **Reduce class sizes to support more individualised learning**
- **Expand free school meals to all primary pupils**
- **Ensure initiatives such as GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) are fully resourced.**



Give children a sound start in Nurseries

Disadvantage sets in early. By the time children begin formal schooling a significant gap already exists, in terms of their learning, between children from poorer and more affluent backgrounds. One key element in addressing this must be to ensure that all children have access to quality nursery education, as part of a comprehensive and publicly funded pre-5 service. In particular, the benefit of ensuring meaningful interaction with a GTCS registered teacher has been evidenced clearly.

CfE is predicated on a 3-18 curriculum. We believe that pre-school children should have guaranteed access to a teacher during all stages of their early learning.

“There has been a 29% reduction in the number of GTCS-registered teachers employed in Early Learning and Childcare Centres over the last 10 years.”

Actions:

- **Create a legal entitlement to a child’s right to nursery education**
- **Ensure that all children have high quality interaction with a GTCS registered teacher**
- **Ring fence resources for nursery education and pre-5 services.**



Make time for teaching

Promote our Primaries

Primary teachers are multi-specialists, dealing with all aspects of a very broad curriculum. Curriculum for Excellence promised a decluttering of that curriculum to allow more space and time for teaching and learning but this is not the experience of our members. Tackling workload and bureaucracy is essential if teachers are to be “freed-up” to teach.

Recently there has been a major debate around the new National Improvement Framework and within that the role of standardised assessment. The EIS remains firmly opposed to national testing and will not accept the return of a target setting, league table approach which has been shown to entrench disadvantage. We firmly believe that all assessment must be linked to teaching and learning.

In particular we would argue that approaches such as testing whole cohorts at given times of the year is counter-productive and is more likely to entrench rather than close the attainment gap.

Actions:

- **De-clutter the primary curriculum to reduce bureaucracy and allow more time for learning**
- **Reject national testing**
- **Say “No” to the return of league tables**
- **Ensure that all assessment supports teaching and learning**
- **Support parental involvement in children’s education.**



Make time for teaching

Support our Secondaries

Secondary schools have been swamped by workload and assessment pressures, generated primarily by the new SQA Qualification framework. The laudable aims of CfE reform – creating more time for teaching; maintaining breadth across the senior phase including space for vocational education; and supporting deeper learning – have all been marginalised in the implementation process. Urgent action is required to ensure the early principles of CfE are realised, to guarantee all young people full access to qualifications.

Across S1-S3, the Broad General Education faces many of the same issues as Primary schools: “paper chasing”, excessive tracking and assessment, workload pressure and increasing class sizes. The introduction of the National Improvement Framework will have implications for assessment in the first 3 years of Secondary education. This risks imposing a national testing system at this important stage, contrary to the central ethos of Curriculum for Excellence.

Actions:

- **Reduce the burden of SQA assessment and verification systems**
- **Reduce bureaucracy and prioritise making time for teaching**
- **Ensure that all pupils receive a minimum of 4 years secondary education**
- **Provide access to instrumental provision, free of charge, to all pupils in secondary education**
- **Create parity of esteem between vocational education and other Senior Phase pathways.**



Value Further and Higher Education

Scotland's colleges are a vital part of the public education system and should be funded and supported accordingly. We welcome the principle of a return to national collective bargaining in the FE sector but there needs to be greater political commitment to realising this in practice.

We also welcome moves to widen access to Higher Education and believe this needs to be intensified. Access to Higher Education should not be restricted by socio-economic circumstance but should be a realisable aspiration for all.



Actions:

- Increase College places for young people and adult returners
- Ensure that FE funding reflects its importance to Scottish Education and Scottish society
- Insist that a future Scottish Government supports equal pay across the FE sector
- Continue with a commitment to free university places for all Scottish students
- Increase financial support for students and replace Student Loans with a Student Grant Scheme, cancelling student loan debts
- Exercise zero tolerance of the use of zero hours contracts in both FE and HE
- Ensure that the widening access agenda is realised in practice.

Support Scotland's Teachers

The health and wellbeing of those working within Scottish Education is essential for its success. Recruitment of the teachers and lecturers of tomorrow will depend on how potential recruits perceive the teachers and lecturers of today to be valued and supported. Already worrying signs are emerging around potential teacher shortages.

Stress caused by excessive workload, poor management and pupil indiscipline is the greatest risk that teachers face to good health.

EIS commissioned research in 2014 highlighted the dissatisfaction with the level of workload experienced by members:

Scottish teachers work an average of 46.5 hours per week - an extra 33% above their contractual commitment.

78% of members said they were "very dissatisfied" with excessive workload.

Only 26% reported feeling "very well" within their job.

Only 1 in 3 said they would definitely recommend teaching as a good profession to join.

Actions:

- A sustained commitment to reducing class size to a maximum of 20 pupils would have a significant and positive impact on the education experience of our children and young people and help to reduce the workload of teachers
- A minimum national staffing standard should be introduced as a mechanism to reduce class sizes and ensure equity of provision across the country
- After years of austerity-driven wage restraint, teachers and lecturers need a fairer pay deal
- Time must be made available for meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers and lecturers.

Promote social justice

Scottish Education is predicated on promoting social justice and challenging inequalities – the GTCS standards for teaching explicitly state these aims in its statement of values.

We need to ensure that the way our schools and colleges operate reflects these worthy ambitions. In particular, at a time when the plight of refugees is prominent in public discourse we need to ensure that our Education system is prepared to welcome refugees and support refugee children.



Pics: Angela Catlin / www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Actions:

- Invest in English as an Additional Language service
- Welcome refugee children into our schools
- Support schools in their promotion of social justice and the rejection of all forms of discrimination
- Resource mainstream inclusion so that vulnerable young people are properly supported
- Implement “poverty-proofing” measures to ensure all young people have a fair chance to succeed in education.



Challenge the impact of austerity

The EIS primarily represents teachers and lecturers, but we recognise and value the roles of a broad range of other professionals and workers across the Education sector such as school librarians, classroom assistants and pre-5 workers. We believe that all funding for Education should be ring fenced by Scottish Government to protect it from the impact of UK led austerity cuts.

Actions:

- Ring fence Education service funding in a rejection of UK austerity cuts
- Address the under-funding and lack of resources for ASN provision in schools and Further Education as a priority.

Stand up for Scottish Education

Scotland has a strong and high performing education system. Whilst challenges clearly remain, politicians need to avoid creating a “narrative of failure” which does a disservice to the hard work of pupils and students and of their teachers and lecturers.

Actions:

- Scottish education and those who work in it need to be supported.
- Learner success needs to be celebrated
- Scotland’s comprehensive system needs to be defended, supported and enhanced
- Political parties need to develop policies which prioritise learning, equality and equity.



Standing Up for **Scottish Education**

**The EIS, representing over 80% of
Scotland's teachers and lecturers,
has been standing up for Scottish
Education since 1847.**

We will continue to do so.

**We believe that everyone needs
to do likewise.**