

Workload advice still active!

Whilst it is welcome that the EIS secured an agreement on the removal of unit assessments at National 5 and 6, the campaign advice aimed at reducing workload in the course of this year remains in place, both for the Senior Phase and for the BGE.

The purpose of this advice is to enact the contractual position of a 35-hour week; to maximise the benefits of the gains made last year through the suspension of random unit verification and the creation of unit thresholds; and, further, to make WTAs fit for purpose as a tool to control excessive workload.

Specifically, members and branches are advised to continue to:

- **Apply holistic assessment approaches** to National 5 and 6 unit assessments, as random verification remains suspended
- **Seek the removal** of over-elaborate internal verification processes
- **Challenge and reject** any new workload demands arising from SQA changes or new work streams not in the school's improvement plan
- **Audit and review** WTAs against the actual demands made on teachers' time, applying the terms of the **35-hour week contract: maximum teaching commitment of 22.5 hours; minimum preparation and correction time of 7.5 hours (1/3rd of teaching hours); and a balance of 5 hours per week for all other duties covered in the school Working Time Agreement.**

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Tackling Bureaucracy

The Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, has made clear his intention to address excessive teacher workload – allowing teachers to concentrate on what makes a difference to pupils’ learning. The EIS welcomes this commitment and is keen to work with the Cabinet Secretary to realise in practice the promise contained within the policy rhetoric.

The key messages contained in the start of term statement issued by Education Scotland are not new – they essentially reiterate the main points of the Tackling Bureaucracy reports. However, the clear commitment from John Swinney perhaps creates an opportunity to press home more successfully the changes required to make a difference.

The EIS would reiterate the key messages issued on planning, assessment and reporting and would urge members to say a collective “No” when practice in your school conflicts with these actions.

Implementing the SNCT Agreement on Workload

At the most recent SNCT (Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers) a report was submitted showing that in 22 LNCTs some steps had been taken to enact the national agreement on controlling workload, specifically reviewing some local authority demands on schools and auditing the use of school WTAs.

Progress is possible, therefore, but school branches need to table specific challenges to establishment practices creating excessive workload!

Collective grievances should be considered where schools are failing to address workload concerns and such failures should be reported to the Local Association Secretary for raising at the LNCT (Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers).

Key points

- Everything in your School Improvement Plan should have an identified time and staffing resource attached to it – **if it can't be done within a 35-hour week; it can't be done**
- The national agreement indicates that every school’s improvement plan should have a work stream aimed at controlling workload – **if your SIP doesn't, demand that it should**
- The Cabinet Secretary for Education has said he is committed to reducing excessive teacher workload, freeing up teachers to focus on what is important - teaching and learning. We should take him at his word and **challenge at every level the drivers of excessive workload: paper trails; excessive auditing; clunky IT systems; over-elaborate planning and reporting; bureaucracy in all its forms.**

Act Now - Act Together Take Control of Workload