

EIS Dundee #StopFaculties Campaign Briefing



Overview

The EIS is currently in dispute with Dundee City Council over the introduction of the faculties model to eight secondary schools in the area. The plans would mean the removal of 110 principal teacher posts from schools and a restructure of departments.

The council wants to remove principal teachers and replace them with fewer teachers in a new position - 'faculty heads'. The council plans to phase out 37 promoted posts across the schools. If the changes were to go ahead, the council would band school departments together under "one faculty" e.g. geography could be matched with PE. This would remove the vital subject-specialist support that principal teachers provide to departments.

These changes were first proposed three years ago in February 2019 as an attempt to make savings from the education budget.

In 2019, the council agreed to a consultation with teachers to determine the level of support in schools for the faculties model, in line with the Scottish Government's school empowerment agenda. The EIS agreed to support any school to move to the faculties model where there was support among teachers. But no schools were found to be in support of the proposed changes.

There is no doubt that teachers oppose the faculties model. In a ballot earlier this year, 97% of secondary teachers opposed the proposed changes, and 96% said they didn't think the changes would raise pupil attainment. 72% of our secondary members participated in the vote.

In a more recent consultative ballot of EIS members, 88% of our secondary members voted for industrial action over the council's plans. 73% of our members participated in the ballot. In March, we notified Dundee City Council of our intention to move to a statutory ballot for strike action from 19th April.

We are ready to take action to defend our schools from this chaotic proposal. It's time for the council to listen to teachers and work with us to find a resolution.

Why we want to #StopFaculties

Lower attainment

We think every young person deserves a quality education and a qualified and experienced teacher. Dundee is one of the most deprived areas in Scotland. And one in five young people leave school without any qualification at National 5 level.

The best way to improve the attainment gap and make sure every young person has what they need to succeed at school is to put more resources into schools, not less. The council has admitted that, after ten years, these changes will mean an annual cut of £135,263 from the school budget. That's money that our schools desperately need to do the important work of improving the attainment gap.

Higher workload and work pressures

Principal teachers currently play a vital role in delivering subject specialist support to other teachers in their departments. Without principal teachers there to provide support and leadership to the department, workload will significantly increase for teachers. That means less time to offer extra one-to-one support and guidance to young people who need it most.

After the hard work and constant changes to ways of working during the last two years of the pandemic, we know that teachers in Dundee are at breaking point.

In a recent EIS survey, nearly a quarter of teachers in Dundee said they have had to seek professional help to manage stress at work, and nearly three quarters of teachers said that inadequate staffing levels were a major cause of additional workload. This chaotic restructure will only make things worse for teachers.

Fewer career opportunities

We want every teacher to have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and find great career opportunities in Dundee. But these changes will mean fewer development opportunities for classroom teachers and will only make the profession less attractive to newly qualified teachers.

Disempowered schools

Every teacher deserves a say in how their school is run. The council agreed to consult schools about this restructuring proposal but they didn't like what we had to say. Now, they're trying to impose a model that has been roundly rejected by our membership in three different ballots.

Secondary teachers are almost unanimously against the proposals. 96% don't think the changes will help raise attainment and 88% said they are willing to take industrial action to stop these changes from going ahead.

We're standing together to #StopFaculties. Will you support us?

We can pressure the council to withdraw these proposals, but it will take all of us getting involved. Will you step up to support teachers?

Teachers' Experiences

Class teacher and EIS rep in North Lanarkshire, a local authority with the faculties model:

"The effects of faculties are ongoing and need to be continually challenged. With waves of cuts, faculties have become bigger and more common. The workload implications are huge but often undocumented, as colleagues feel they need to just get on with it. To manage this, standards have inevitably slipped in other areas such as learning and teaching and colleagues' health and well-being.

"The concept of faculties devalues the teaching profession in an attempt to see teachers as managers instead of subject specialists and leaders in education. And we all know unpromoted staff end up doing the role of a principal teacher unpaid and without management time."

Principal teacher and EIS member in Dundee who has worked in other local authorities with the faculties model:

"I have worked the transition to faculty from subject principal teacher twice in my career (both times as an unpromoted staff member) and seen the carnage it has left behind; indeed, the reason I chose to relocate my family to Dundee was because it offered career progression.

"Whilst some subjects e.g. maths, English, guidance and a lucky few others are preserved from having to change, other subjects are forced to compete against each other into combined faculties. This is simply not fair.

"Faculties leave a legacy of mistrust, poor morale and division amongst staff. Faculties are pure divide and conquer."

Class teacher and EIS rep in Dundee:

"Budget savings are not savings, they are cuts. You can't do more with less, you can do less with less. The constant threat of faculties and the incredible negative atmosphere it creates is the thing I dislike the most about my job. It seems only a handful of higher ups want them, and everyone else is opposed. Why don't they listen to the staff?"

Interested in supporting our campaign?

Get in touch with Amy Moran, EIS Organiser, at amoran@eis.org.uk

