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education trade union

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EIS Scottish Parliament Manifesto
For an Education Led Recovery

May 2021





Introduction

Education has been at the centre of political discourse in Scotland for some time, with most political parties expressing commitment to improving the life chances of Scotland’s pupils and students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Unfortunately, unanimity has spread little beyond that broad objective and Scotland’s teachers and lecturers have felt that Education has more often been a political football than the subject of a shared national ambition.



The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare some of the deep inequalities in our society but, also, the absolutely essential role that schools and educational establishments play in the nurturing and development of our children; in supporting the well-being and resilience of young people and students; and in the provision of pathways for achievement and attainment for all.

In calling for an education led recovery from the impact of the pandemic, the EIS demands from all political parties, commitments to concrete policies and the necessary investment which will restore and build upon the solid foundations of Scotland’s Education system and support progress to a fairer, more equitable and more just Scotland.



Larry Flanagan
EIS General Secretary

Key Demand

The EIS calls for a progressive expansion of the teaching workforce to enable:

Class size reduction to support education recovery – with an ultimate target of 20 maximum

A reduction in maximum class contact time to match OECD norms – with a target of 20 hours

An end to zero-hours supply lists.

Early Years

“Early years is the bedrock of any education system.”

The EIS calls for:

- Statutory public sector provision of Nursery education and guaranteed minimum access to qualified teachers for all 3-5 year olds within Early Years provision
- Further embedding of a play-based pedagogy in Nursery and in the early years of Primary.

Schools

“Comprehensive education is a societal good, working towards improvement of the “common weal.”

The EIS calls for:

- A significant increase in the numbers of employed teachers to support education recovery
- Decisive action to tackle excessive teacher workload
- For the centrality of teacher agency in an empowered school system
- De-cluttering of the BGE curriculum in Primary
- Reform of the SQA to ensure greater transparency and accountability to those for whom the body exists, and of Senior Phase assessment in the interests of greater equity
- Increased education spending and investment by local and central governments.



ASN

“With almost a third of pupils having additional support needs our current arrangements are struggling to cope.”

The EIS calls for:

- Proper resourcing to fill the gap between the promise of ASL legislation and the reality of ASN provision
- Ring fenced funding to support the “presumption of mainstreaming”
- Increased specialist staffing in both ASN settings and mainstream to better meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs.

Instrumental Music

“Free instrumental music provision used to be a showcase aspect of our schools; increasingly it is a case of who pays, plays!”

The EIS calls for:

- Free instrumental music tuition for all pupils who wish to learn an instrument
- Increased numbers of IMT staff to enable free provision - an end to staffing cuts in IMT services
- Legislative change to enable full GTCS registration of Instrumental Music Teachers.

Tackling the Impact of Poverty and Challenging Inequity

“The EIS is strongly committed to a fairer, more just Scotland and believes the journey towards that begins in our Education system.”

The EIS calls for:

- Investment in education for equity, particularly in the context of Covid-19 and the impact that it has had on the learning of the most disadvantaged young people
- Universal provision of free school meals (including over holiday periods) for all Nursery and school-aged children
- Provision of additional resources to support UNCRC adoption in relation to education delivery and a human rights-based approach for the benefit of all within education - children, young people and staff
- Prioritisation of equality in terms of creating safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory environments for all staff and students regardless of any protected characteristics or socio-economic disadvantage
- Redoubling of efforts towards racial and ethnic diversification of the teaching profession
- Practical support for teachers to deliver pro-equality, equitable, anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic education.

Valuing Teachers

“The pandemic has shown how critical teachers and lecturers are to our young people. There is a real need, however, for support to be improved and for teacher well-being to be a priority area for both Government and employers.”

The EIS calls for:

- Increased support for health and well-being of all those working in education, including specific support for mental health
- Investment in improved health and safety measures and contingency planning during the Covid-19 pandemic and post-pandemic
- Continued restoration of teachers' pay.



Quality and Accessible Further & Higher Education

“Further and Higher Education are part of our comprehensive education service for the benefit of individuals and wider society. They will be critical to an education led recovery.”

The EIS calls for:

- Improved public funding of universities and colleges
- Designation of all FE colleges in Scotland as public bodies and opposition to any privatisation of Further Education
- Inclusion of all Further Education Colleges in national collective bargaining
- Improved democratic accountability and scrutiny for college governing bodies, including trade union representation
- Legislative change to enable GTCS registration of all staff teaching in colleges
- Expansion of national collective bargaining in Higher Education to include a Scotland specific context
- An end to the casualisation of the Higher Education workforce
- Race and disability equal pay audits to be made mandatory in universities and colleges.

Social Justice

“Whilst education is important, it must exist within a fair, supportive and inclusive society, supported by effective public services, that allows all citizens to thrive and those who can, be employed in work that is safe, fair and fulfilling.”

The EIS calls for:

- A system of progressive taxation, wealth taxes and fiscal strategies in place in order to adequately resource public services
- Devolution to the Scottish Parliament of:
 - Employment Law
 - Industrial Relations Legislation
 - Health and Safety at Work.



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