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Over to you: New President Margaret Smith takes over the helm from Pat Flanagan



AGM Sights & Sounds: Talented pupils to the fore



New Fellows honoured: EIS bestows Fellowship awards for services to education

SQA, NIF & Workload dominate AGM

It was a welcome return to Dundee's Caird Hall, following an absence of several years, for delegates to the 170th EIS Annual General Meeting. The dominant issues in debate this year were the ongoing imposition of excessive assessment demands by the SQA, the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework including proposed national Standardised Assessments, and the continuing severe workload demands being placed on teachers in all sectors. The appearance, on Saturday, of the new Cabinet Secretary for Education sparked considerable media interest and provided AGM delegates with the opportunity to make their views known to the Scottish Government – an opportunity of which members took full advantage. In this special edition of the SEJ, you can read more about some of the key issues from this year's AGM. For more coverage, including a full round-up of all Motions and video of key AGM debates, visit www.eis.org.uk/EISAGM16

NIF Literacy and Numeracy Assessments



"If Literacy and numeracy is the responsibility of all, who judges when pupils are ready to sit the tests"

Andy Harvey

South Lanarkshire delegate, Andy Harvey, gained AGM support for a Motion instructing Council to seek clarification on whose responsibility it will be to administer new national assessments in Literacy and Numeracy as outlined in NIF. Mr Harvey asserted that the Scottish Government and others hold a perception that schools represent a "kind of Xanadu" in which "Pupils will sit down at computers and do the tests and then they'll mark themselves." He posed a number of questions: if literacy and numeracy is the responsibility of all, who judges when pupils are ready to sit the tests; who gathers and collates the data; if IT-based, where will all the computers come from and will they work? The Motion was carried overwhelmingly.

Motions

National Standardised Assessments



"National tests would not be helpful in addressing poverty or closing the attainment gap"

Andrew O'Halloran

Dumfries and Galloway delegate Andrew O'Halloran successfully moved a Motion calling for a ballot on boycott of national assessments in the event that the Scottish Government imposes a system of such testing that is unacceptable to the EIS. Mr O'Halloran argued that "national tests would not be helpful in addressing poverty or closing the attainment gap." He suggested that in the context of growing workload "relentless testing and measuring" would be extremely unhelpful and the likely re-emergence of a league tables approach would be detrimental to many schools. Aileen Barrie (North Lanarkshire) who seconded the Motion stressed that teachers are not opposed to testing. "We do it regularly...when pupils are ready...using an appropriate test." Education Convener Susan Quinn reiterated assurances that the EIS would "Make an absolute stand against any suggestion of testing that puts whole cohorts of children though them at the same time," and argued that such practice as is occurring within many local authorities presently, needs to be challenged locally. The Motion gained the overwhelming support of AGM delegates.

National Improvement Framework (NIF)



Highlighted the need to raise the question of associated workload at both local and national level

Susan Quinn

Education Convener Susan Quinn (Glasgow) moved a Motion on behalf of Council calling for the matter of workload in relation to moderation of Literacy and Numeracy in the context of implementation of NIF to be raised with national and local government, and Education Scotland. Ms Quinn, while acknowledging the value attributed to teacher professional judgement within recently issued Education Scotland advice, highlighted the need to raise the question of associated workload at both local and national level. Time for teachers to engage in professional dialogue and collaboration on assessment, she argued, is essential to ensure that a situation does not emerge "where everything rides on one wee test and teachers don't work together." Sonia Kordiak, (Midlothian) seconded the Motion, emphasising the need for the provision of cover to release teachers to engage in moderation activity involving observation of peers. Megan McCrossan (North Lanarkshire), welcoming the emphasis on teacher professional judgment within NIF and expressing criticism of the use of assessment for the purposes of data-gathering, urged conference support of the Motion before it was carried unopposed.

NIF Workload Implications of National Assessments



Assessments would generate significant additional work

Jennifer Gaffney

Jennifer Gaffney (South Lanarkshire) successfully gained support from AGM for a Motion calling upon Council to investigate and report on the potential workload impact of the introduction of national standardised assessments for P1, P4, P7 and S3 pupils. Ms Gaffney argued that the assessments would generate significant additional work in the form of preparation, booking of ICT resources, administration and supervision of assessments, marking and providing feedback to parents and pupils. Joan Lennon, (South Lanarkshire) seconded the Motion, stressing that the interpretation of NIF at local authority level would lead to increased stress and workload. "To accommodate NIF," she said, "hours have to be squeezed into Working Time Agreements...they want hours and they're coming to get them." Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire) reiterated the thrust of EIS policy in opposition to national standardised assessment and the testing of whole cohorts of children under such a regime.

NIF Implementation



"The devil will be in the detail of implementation"

Sonia Kordiak

Susan Quinn (Glasgow) successfully proposed a Motion on behalf of Council calling for monitoring of the implementation of the National Improvement Framework, and for Council to raise any emerging issues with workload, resources or professional learning with national and/or local government and partner organisations as appropriate, and to advise Local Associations accordingly. The Motion was seconded by Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian) who underlined the necessity of careful monitoring: "The devil will be in the detail of implementation, at local level particularly."

Consistency of Support for N5 and Higher Assignments



"We need to create a level playing-field for all children undertaking national qualifications"

Jayne Rowe

A Motion calling on the EIS to work with all relevant bodies to ensure consistency of approach in relation to the delivery of and support provided for internal assessments at N5 and Higher was successfully moved by Jayne Rowe (Glasgow). Ms Rowe argued that more needed to be done to ensure equality of provision for all pupils undertaking these qualifications. She said that currently the experiences of young people across local authorities in this regard are "poles apart." Examples included variance in application of rules around access to notes during internal assessment, the amount of feedback given in preparation for reassessment and the number of opportunities given for reassessment.

Unit Reassessment

Sparking one of the most vigorous debates of the AGM, Mark Fleming (South Lanarkshire) moved a Motion seeking AGM reaffirmation that in general, students undertaking national qualifications should be allowed only one opportunity to resist an assessment. Mr Fleming argued that providing multiple opportunities for reassessment compromises the integrity of the assessments and he stressed the importance of adherence to SQA

guidelines in this respect. Amongst those opposing the Motion, John Dennis (Dumfries and Galloway) argued that the Motion represented misplacement of focus in addressing SQA generated workload; EIS efforts, in the context of possible industrial action following completion of the ballot process, should be focused on removing unit assessment and non-cooperation with SQA processes, he asserted. In summing up the debate, Mark Fleming urged delegates to vote on the basis of the situation as it exists now rather than that which might emerge post-ballot. So tight was the voting that a count was required, the result of which was narrow defeat of the Motion.

1 + 2 Languages



"There is significant variation across local authorities in terms of quality, quantity and access to training"

Des Morris

Des Morris (East Renfrewshire) was successful in gaining AGM support for a Motion instructing the EIS to call for the provision of suitable training for all primary teachers in the delivery of the Scottish Government's 1 + 2 Language Learning Policy. Mr Morris argued that while the aspiration of the policy is good, the level of resource directed towards training is not, with there being significant variation across local authorities in terms of quality, quantity and access to training. "Scottish Government better think long and hard about how the policy is going to be delivered," said Mr Morris in concluding his speech.

Nursery Education

"Nursery teachers don't close the gap, they can stop it," stressed Colin Finlay (Falkirk) in successfully moving a Motion calling on Council to review and revise EIS policy on nursery education to reflect the needs of Early Level learning and teaching within the 3-18 curriculum. Mr Finlay pointed to the 29% decline in the number of nursery teachers over a ten year period in the context of only a 4% reduction in the number of nursery pupils. "Nursery teachers are now on the endangered list; in Falkirk they are almost extinct," he said, urging support for the Motion.

Budget Cuts & Raising Attainment



"It is paradoxical to suggest that workload can be reduced at a time of increasing expectations"

Mike Paul

Mike Paul (Aberdeen) was successful in gaining the support of AGM delegates for a Motion calling on Council to investigate and report on the ways in which education authorities will mitigate the demands on teachers to continually improve Scottish education and close the attainment gap in the context of cuts to school budgets. "It is paradoxical to suggest that workload can be reduced at a time of increasing expectations of teachers and reducing budgets," he argued. Mary Matheson (Aberdeen) seconded, underlining the impact of increased demands and dwindling resources on teachers on the front-line: "stress... exhaustion... absence... resignation." "Teachers are not the enemy," she stressed, "austerity is."

Fair Pay for Assessment



"In some subjects, teachers mark assessments and are paid while in others they are not"

John Paul Tonner

John Paul Tonner, on behalf of Renfrewshire Local Association, gained the support of AGM delegates for a Motion instructing Council to campaign for the reinstatement of remuneration for those teachers in subjects where internal assessment constitutes part of the final external grade. Making literary allusion to George Orwell's 'Animal Farm', Mr Tonner highlighted the disparity where in some subjects, teachers mark assessments and are paid while in others they are not. Within such a context, "All teachers are equal," he quipped, "but some are more equal than others."

HGIOS 4

Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian) successfully proposed a Motion calling on Council to issue advice to members on how the stated expectations within the Family Learning Quality Indicator within HGIOS 4 can be achieved within teachers' contractual hours.

AGM

SQA and teacher workload



“Root and branch reform is required”

Michael Aiton

This Motion, instructing Council to investigate and report on the role of SQA as a driver of increased workload for teachers in Scotland, was proposed by Michael Aiton (South Lanarkshire). Mr Aiton stated that the Motion sat in a context of an increasingly entrenched SQA position, whereby despite their own research showing the impact of current assessment practices on students, little progress is being made on reducing workload and the associated stresses. He concluded that “root and branch reform is required.” Gavin Cunningham (South Lanarkshire), seconded the Motion, raising concerns about teacher health and wellbeing, and excessive pressures. Jim Pringle (Edinburgh) spoke in support, also referencing teacher stress and work-related ill-health, which can cause “torment.” He said that “the SQA sucks the life out of teaching.” Conference agreed with the Motion and it was passed overwhelmingly.

SQA documentation



Printing costs are shifting from their budgets to ours

John Black

John Black (Aberdeenshire) successfully moved a Motion instructing Council to recognise the impact on school and college budgets of SQA documentation being delivered solely in an electronic format and to raise this matter with SQA and the Scottish Government. Mr Black argued that school budgets have been under pressure for some years now, and that the expectation that schools would print the many and varied documents provided by SQA in association with new qualifications and unit assessments effectively meant “printing costs are shifting from their budgets to ours.”

Inclusion

Sonia Kordiak, (Midlothian), successfully moved an amended Motion calling for investigation and report on the consequences, as perceived by teachers in nursery, primary and secondary, of current inclusion practices on the welfare and learning of the majority of children. Ms Kordiak argued that in light of cuts to

educational psychology and pupil counselling services, behaviour support teacher and learning assistant numbers, specialised resources and special provision placements, teachers believe that they “are not providing equality of opportunity for all in the classroom and question if opportunity is being provided for any.”

Social inclusion



“Fewer schools, fewer teachers, bigger classes”

Carolyn Ritchie

This Motion called for Council to campaign for sufficient support in terms of finances and training in order to sustain and improve social inclusion. Moving this Motion on behalf of Glasgow Local Association, Carolyn Ritchie reported on the number of special schools in Scotland, which had declined from 158 in 2011 to 144 in 2015. She noted that there were also fewer primary schools (2039, down from 2081), fewer teachers (50,717, down from 51,368), 61 fewer early learning centres, and more pupils per teacher (13.7). She summed this up as “fewer schools, fewer teachers, bigger classes”, which she argued, alongside cuts in Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision, and increases in the number of children with ASN (from 98,523 in 2011 to 153,190 in 2015, or around 1 in 5 children in mainstream) was extremely challenging for teachers. She noted the “evolving concept” of ASN which now incorporates social, emotional, economic and health issues, which can all overlap, and the wide range of indicators for additional support. AGM delegates voted in support of the Motion.

Presumption to Mainstreaming



“Young people with additional support needs who are left without adequate support in mainstream schools”

Frances Carey

Flipping the question of what success looks like to ask what distress looks like, Frances Carey (Glasgow) answered her own question. “To me, it looks like presumption to mainstreaming with inadequate resources,” and the accompanying stress, anxiety, isolation and lack of engagement in learning for the children and young people with additional support needs who are left without adequate support in mainstream

schools. Ms Carey successfully moved a Motion calling for investigation, report and campaigning on the implications of presumption to mainstreaming for funding, resources, workload, staff health and wellbeing and the effectiveness of provision for children with additional support needs under ASL legislation.

Equalities training for teachers



“The speed with which our society is changing has not been matched with training”

Charlotte Ahmed

This Motion, requesting that the EIS survey provision of equalities training for teachers in Scotland, with a view to assessing the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of the training, was proposed by Charlotte Ahmed (Glasgow), on behalf of Glasgow Local Association. She argued that employers have been letting equality slip down the agenda, and that once there had been a wide range of CPD opportunities covering all aspects of equality but that this was no longer the case. Ms Ahmed said “the speed with which our society is changing has not been matched with training” and raised concerns that “employers are not keeping up their side of the bargain.” Conference agreed with the Motion and it was passed overwhelmingly.

Disruptive and aggressive behaviour



“The current climate of inclusion and mainstreaming has put more pressure on teachers to put up with bad behaviour”

Susan Talboys

Susan Talboys (Aberdeen) successfully proposed a Motion on behalf of Aberdeen and Midlothian Local Associations, calling for Council to campaign for the rights of pupils and staff to experienced education in an environment free from disruptive and aggressive behaviour, for an increase in specialist provision for pupils demonstrating violent and aggressive behaviour or other specific needs, and for written recognition from local authorities and the Scottish Government that teachers have the right to do their job free from abuse and threats.

Standing up for Scottish Education



President's
Speech

Pat Flanagan, delivering his final speech as EIS President, told AGM that teaching professionals must forge constructive relationships with local and national government, and others, to support Scottish education.

Addressing delegates in the Caird Hall, the President said, "We should celebrate the shared commitment of Scottish society that education is a societal good and is, and should remain, a public service under democratic control. That common ground allows for a shared commitment to closing the attainment gap and addressing other national priorities by working in partnership."

Building on our strengths

"Of course inequalities and poverty is a wider societal issue that cannot be solved by schools alone but as a profession we know that schools can and do make a difference. A key message to political parties and representatives is to work with the profession to build on strengths. We can deliver improvements by the profession working in partnership with employers, Scottish Government and other education bodies. There are no quick fixes, however, and a top down 'improvement agenda' will fail to engage the commitment, energy and dedication of the profession and will not work. Improvement will only be achieved by a sustained and shared long term commitment with the active participation and leadership of the profession."

Attainment

"Of course, the best way to 'close the attainment gap' is to stop it opening up in the first place. In his recent speech in Parliament John Swinney highlighted the crucial importance early years and childcare and committed to 'an insistence on educational input to close the attainment gap before it begins to have a profound impact. The newly elected Scottish Government has committed to investing £750M over 5 years in an Attainment Fund. This is of course welcome but does not tell the full story."

"The Local Government Benchmarking reports that the total education spend by Local Authorities over the last 5 years has, in real terms, been cut by £300m despite an increase of 20,000 in primary pupils and 10,000 early year places."

"For this financial year COSLA reports a £350m cut in cash terms in the allocation to local government. The central point is clear; the additional attainment money is topping up a bucket which is heavily leaking due to cuts at local authority level."

Strength through unity

"The TU bill seeks to place further obstacles in the way of representing members and of promoting a quality and equitable education system. But these must and will be overcome. Although the campaign against the bill has had some success it has now received Royal assent and so presents a challenge to us."

"Indeed during the course of the year we have demonstrated that we can organise and build effective action. I refer to the highly successful action by EIS-FELA which was not only a victory for our EIS FELA members and for the EIS but was a victory for the wider TU Movement."

"In a sector disproportionately hit by the cuts, the members and leadership in FELA won a stunning victory in this first negotiation following a return to National Bargaining. After 11 months of little or no progress, the first of a planned 32 days of strike action led to urgent talks and a highly satisfactory outcome for EIS-FELA members."

"A further success has been the 13 week campaign by West Dumbartonshire LA, including 6 strike days, against proposed cuts in education spend largely through reductions in promoted posts and Facultisation. The successful outcome, with a new curricular model based on subject PTs, has been a hard won victory with members showing a high level of determination."

"The key lesson of these two very successful actions is the importance of active and organised branches supported by strong associations and the national body working together."

This is a short excerpt of the President's AGM address. The full text can be viewed at: www.eis.org.uk/EISAGM16

Indiscipline problems in schools



"The amount of teachers doing CPL on discipline and classroom management is huge"

Jayne Rowe

Glasgow delegate Jayne Rowe proposed a Motion on behalf of Glasgow Local Association calling on Council to investigate indiscipline problems in schools and to share relevant data with the Scottish Government, local authorities and parent organisations. Ms Rowe informed conference of her own experiences of verbal abuse and items being thrown in her classroom, which had worsened over her 20 year career, and said "the amount of teachers doing CPL on discipline and classroom management is huge - we need to find out the scale of this." Glasgow delegate Kenny Mitchell seconded the Motion, speaking about the ways in which pupil use of social media can exacerbate indiscipline. The Motion was passed overwhelmingly.

Area Officer support for Local Associations

David Baxter (Dundee) successfully called for the EIS to investigate and report on the number of Area Officers within the Institute. Mr Baxter told delegates, “We receive a Rolls-Royce level of service from our Area Officers and other employees of the EIS. They are doing an excellent job, and I want to add more so that they can offer an even better service to Local Associations and members.”

Flexible working arrangements

Caroline Yates (West Dunbartonshire) successfully moved this Motion on behalf of Council, which called for Council to conduct a gendered analysis of flexible working arrangements for teachers and lecturers throughout Scotland and report on the findings.

Professional Update

This Motion called for Council to produce resources to support members in the Professional Update and PRD processes. Moving this Motion, Andy Harvey (South Lanarkshire) spoke about a “rising tide of concern from teachers” about how to engage with the Professional Update process, and mentioned in particular those on family leave or sick leave who are unable to access PRD. AGM delegates voted in support of the Motion.

Privatising education?

Susan Quinn (Education Convener and Glasgow LA Secretary) was successful in calling for the EIS to investigate whether there is increasing use of private funding for the provision of education in the state sector.

Increasing student member involvement

Alison Murphy (Edinburgh) was successful in proposing a Motion calling for an investigation and report on the involvement of student members in Local Associations, and the potential introduction of appropriate constitutional changes to provide student members with representation on Council and at the AGM.

School print policies

The EIS will investigate and report upon the impact of school print policies on teacher workload and learner equality, as the result of a successful Motion from Andy Harvey (South Lanarkshire).

Representatives' Bulletin & Supporting Job-Share Reps

The EIS will provide Representatives with an electronic copy of the Reps Bulletin and post these Bulletins on the Representatives' page of the EIS website on the day of publication, following a successful Motion from Aberdeenshire Local Association. In a related Motion, Aberdeenshire Local Association also successfully called for the EIS to recognise that some schools have job share Representatives and to investigate and report on ways to update technology in order to best communicate with all Reps.

Supply cover and workload

The EIS will investigate and report on the impact on teachers' conditions and workload resulting from the lack of supply teachers, following a successful Motion proposed by David Thomson (Renfrewshire).

Working Time Agreements

Jim Lawson (Orkney) successfully called on the EIS to investigate how Working Time Agreements can be altered to better reflect and deal with the range of duties undertaken by staff in schools.

Undue Scrutiny of Teachers

The EIS will survey Local Associations to ascertain the extent to which schools and local authorities carry out exercises where pupils and parents are invited to rate or comment upon the service provided by individual teachers or groups of teachers, following a successful Motion from South Lanarkshire Local Association. Speaking in support of the Motion, Irene Campbell (Falkirk) said, “Alarm bells are ringing in regards to this. Let's not subject our members to X-Factor type scrutiny.”



Video Premieres

Two new videos were given their premiere at the EIS AGM. The first was a new Recruitment film, highlighting the important work that the EIS carries out on behalf of members with first-hand testimony from members on the wide-ranging benefits of being an EIS member. The video was commissioned by the EIS and produced by Screen Education Edinburgh. The second was a short film entitled “School Costs”, which has been co-funded by the EIS and Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) Scotland. Directed by Iain Henderson, winner of the BAFTA Scotland New Talent Award 2015, ‘School Costs’ highlights the struggle of families on low incomes to meet the costs associated with their children attending school. ‘School Costs’ complements the EIS’s recently published ‘Face Up to Child Poverty’ booklet and CPAG’s ‘Cost of the School Day Report’, both highlighting how poverty affects a child’s day to day experience of school, and their educational achievements in both the short and long term. For further information, or to view the films, visit www.eis.org.uk



Thanks from the NUT

New FEIS Christine Blower, General Secretary of the NUT, replies on behalf of new Fellows. Ms Blower spoke of the very high regard in which the EIS is held in international teacher trade unionism.

SAVE THE DATE
Friday 7th October 2016

HT & DHT
Network

Headteachers' & Deputy Headteachers'
EIS Conference 2016
Edinburgh

For further information please contact:
Sonia Leal: sleal@eis.org.uk

Fringe Events

A number of Fringe events were held during the Friday lunchtime of AGM. These included: a session dealing with what the implementation of the 'Prevent Duty' will mean for teaching professionals, students and establishments; an equality fringe hosted by the EIS LGBT Network on how best to support transgender learners; an EIS Representatives' Showcase highlighting the positive work that all EIS Reps carry out on behalf of members; and a Meet the General Secretary session which offered delegates new (and not so new) the chance to discuss EIS priorities with the General Secretary.



New Fellows of the Institute honoured



New Fellows of the Institute: **1 Catherine Grant**, Fife Local Association Secretary **2 Mairi Raeburn**, Teacher, South Ayrshire Council
3 Julie Ferguson, EIS Orkney Local Association Treasurer **4 Veronica Rankin**, EIS National Officer for Education & Equality (retired)
5 Gillian Carlin-Kulwicki, Headteacher, Bellhaven Nursery School **6 Christine Blower**, General Secretary, NUT
7 Teresa Connolly, Early Years Teacher, Crosshouse Primary School
8 Larry Flanagan, EIS General Secretary **9 Pat Flanagan**, EIS President **10 Norma Anne Watson**, Convener of the Board of Examiners

Emergency Motion – PPP / PFI



“Consider legal action against Edinburgh Schools Partnership if the situation is not resolved”

John Swinburne

The recent PPP/PFI crisis in Edinburgh schools prompted an Emergency Motion to AGM, from EIS Council. The Motion, which was moved by John Swinburne (Edinburgh), seconded by Alison Thornton (Edinburgh) and supported by a broad range of speakers including Susan Quinn (Glasgow), Alison Murphy (Edinburgh) and Bill Ramsay (South Lanarkshire) called on the AGM to note with concern the continuing problems in some Edinburgh schools related to unsafe and unsatisfactory construction standards. The Motion also calls on the Scottish Government to work closely with City of Edinburgh Council to bring pressure to bear on the Edinburgh Schools Partnership to continue to address these concerns as a matter of urgency. The Motion also recognised that the issues raised around PFI/PPP/SFT go beyond a single project, authority or sector.

Strike Ballot on Workload



“Almost as soon as one initiative is introduced in a school, a box is ticked and then the next initiative is introduced”

Charlotte Ahmed

Charlotte Ahmed (Glasgow) was successful in calling for a ballot on industrial action, including strike action, over the lack of progress in cutting the workload of teachers. “Almost as soon as one initiative is introduced in a school, a box is ticked and then the next initiative is introduced. All of this has a profound impact on teacher workload and stress”, said Ms Ahmed. Seconding the Motion, Carolyn Ritchie (Glasgow) said, “It is time to up the ante and take action on workload.” The Motion won the approval of AGM by a large majority.

Restorative Pay



“If we work together we can achieve success”

Tom Tracey

The EIS will launch a publicity campaign to prepare for a restorative pay claim to be made for teachers to

restore wages to pre – 2008 levels, as the result of a successful Motion from Glasgow Local Association. Charlotte Ahmed said, “Increased workload and increased class sizes should be at the forefront of a restorative pay claim campaign.” Speaking in support, Salaries Convener Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) said, “The publicity campaign must start now. If we work together we can achieve success.”

Pension Contributions & Bandings

A Motion from East Renfrewshire Local Association calling for the EIS to campaign for a review of The Scottish Teachers’ Pension Scheme and The Scottish Teachers’ Superannuation Scheme contribution rate salary bands was remitted to EIS Council for further consideration. Proposer Des Morris (East Renfrewshire) said, “Increased pension contributions are hitting those at the top of the main grade scale the most. We cannot have SNCT and SPPA decisions removed from each other.” However, Salaries Convener Tom Tracey raised a note of caution, saying that, while the thinking behind the Motion was sound, it could have some unintended consequences for teachers on lower salaries with lower tiered contribution rates. A remit was then agreed to allow for more time for the issues to be explored by EIS Council.

Pension Age Negotiations



“COSLA has dragged its feet over these specific negotiations.”

Des Morris

Des Morris (East Renfrewshire) successfully called for the EIS to set a deadline of the end of December 2016 for a satisfactory outcome to the present negotiations on early retirement for those conscripted from NPA 60 to NPA 65-68 and, if no satisfactory outcome is forthcoming, to ballot members for industrial action Mr Morris said, “COSLA has dragged its feet over these specific negotiations. Can we please now flex our muscles on this issue?” Speaking in support, Salaries Convener Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) said, “We are now in a situation where no further excuses can be made.”

Impact of Named Person Legislation



“The black hole of teachers’ contractual rights in regards to the named person must be questioned.”

David Baxter

Following a successful Motion proposed by David Baxter (Dundee), the EIS will investigate and report on the workload, contractual and legal implications arising from the role of the Named Person and how this role can be achieved within a 35 hour Working Week and 195-day Working Year. Mr Baxter said, “The black hole of teachers’ contractual rights in regards to the named person must be questioned. We need to be vigilant that EIS members are not taken advantage of.”

Teacher shortages



“Staff are at breaking point”

Samreen Shah

This Motion was proposed by Samreen Shah (Glasgow), who spoke about her experiences of dealing with teacher shortages, the impacts on pupils’ learning and the impact on teacher stress levels. She spoke of the ways in which schools are responding, including by using SMT to cover classes and collapsing classes, and said, “Staff are at breaking point and pupils are not achieving their full potential.” She affirmed the need for more BME teachers to be recruited into the profession as one way of addressing the shortage, noting that BME people make up 4% of the Scottish population but only 1.4% of the primary teaching profession and 1.9% of secondary teachers. The Motion received universal support from AGM delegates.

Attainment Challenge should not mask cuts



“Additional resources cannot be abused to compensate for cuts to core education budgets”

Ricky Cullen

Ricky Cullen (North Lanarkshire) successfully called for the EIS to seek to ensure that any additional resources from the Scottish Government to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge “cannot be abused to compensate for

cuts to core education budgets.”
 Seconding the Motion, Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire) said, “We welcome the investment from the Scottish Attainment Fund, but there must be very clear tracking of how this money is being spent – otherwise it will just be used to ameliorate the cuts elsewhere.”

Opposing Support Staff Cuts



“Classroom assistants provide invaluable support to class teachers – particularly with regard to ASN provision”
Megan McCrossan

A Motion from North Lanarkshire and Dumfries & Galloway Local Associations, calling for the EIS to strongly oppose any cuts to support staff and to advise members not to undertake any work previously done by support staff, won the overwhelming support of AGM. Speaking in support of the Motion, Megan McCrossan (North Lanarkshire) said, “Classroom assistants provide invaluable support to class teachers – particularly with regard to ASN provision.” First-time AGM speaker Lucy Lukacz (Edinburgh) added, “I know that I couldn’t do my job without the assistance of our vital support staff.”

SfL Teachers and Cover



“We must protect the professionalism of our Support for Learning teachers and their role”
Phill Pearce

Edinburgh Local Association delegate Phill Pearce, successfully proposed a Motion seeking AGM reaffirmation of its commitment to the key role that Support for Learning teachers have in primary schools, and to commit to highlighting our opposition to the increasing use of Support for Learning teachers as supply cover. Urging delegates to support the Motion, Mr Pearce said, “We must protect the professionalism of our Support for Learning teachers and their role.”

Maximum Contact Time

Ricky Cullen (North Lanarkshire) successfully called for the EIS to seek to ensure that employers and establishment managers do not ask teaching staff to breach their contractual maximum pupil contact time within the working week. Mr Cullen said that Support for Learning teachers are being used to cover the gaps due to vacancies.

General Secretary’s Speech

Teachers must Stand Together to Reject Excessive Assessment Burden

EIS General Secretary Larry Flanagan, used his AGM address to urge Scotland’s teachers to stand together to reject the overburdening of pupils and teachers with excessive assessment. Speaking to delegates at Dundee’s Caird Hall, Mr Flanagan said, “The August 2014 first reflections report acknowledged the need to identify and remove the duplication in unit and external assessment – nearly two years later we are still waiting.” “The SQA says it can’t move any quicker – the truth is ‘Yes, it can’. We know the SQA can move faster. Do they need a crisis to take the matter seriously?”

Will NIF stand the test?

Mr Flanagan warned that the introduction of the new National Improvement Framework, and new National Standardised Assessments, must support learning and teaching in schools and not be used to promote a target-setting, league-table approach to measuring pupil progress. He said, “There is nothing inherently wrong with the NIF – but the litmus test will be what actions flow from analysis of the data. It could be potentially positive if it leads to increased investment; or potentially negative if it narrows the focus to an obsession with targets. “We have been there before – we are not going back again. Data rich education systems are fine; data driven systems are not.”

Austerity and Poverty

Mr Flanagan also addressed the impact of poverty on young people’s educational experience, saying “There appears to be a near universal ambition around addressing the impact of poverty on educational achievement. “I’m going to suggest that we start to use that formulation rather than ‘closing the attainment gap’ which might suggest that it’s all about what schools do when in reality, it’s even more about the existence of poverty, child poverty, in 21st century Scotland. “A 1% drop in numeracy attainment, at some levels, identified in this year’s SSLN was almost wholly located in the 30% pupils from the most deprived backgrounds.



The single biggest collective variable in those children’s lives – increased poverty because of Osborne’s benefit cuts.”
 “Austerity has its victims – deepening levels of child poverty create even higher hurdles.”

Restructuring Education?

“It is fairly clear that the last thing Scottish Education needs at the present time is reorganisation. This would be a huge distraction and frankly a waste of resources and I caution the new Cabinet Secretary against such a move. We don’t need a political side-show when we have major issues to address. That is not to say that there shouldn’t be some consideration of how schools are supported. In terms of local authorities the EIS has long held the view that local accountability is important and local authorities help fulfil that function. Much of the tension between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities is largely budgetary driven. I think we are entitled to ask the question, ‘Where is the added value from council control?’ – and I think we deserve an answer to that question. It is regrettable that COSLA’s main education platform over the past period has been its desire to cut teacher numbers. Protecting teacher numbers is an example of the Scottish Government directing Education spending in a way we were totally supportive of. Notwithstanding some of our concerns around COSLA, the EIS view, I think, is that it would be essential that Councils remain as the employers, that the SNCT and LNCTs remain as the negotiating frameworks. They have lost those frameworks in England and we don’t want to follow suit. That is not to say that there isn’t space for looking at the dynamics of how schools are supported effectively. Additional funding direct to schools would be welcome. In fact we advocated it at various points during the development of CfE and if it helps ring-fence education spending that is a bonus.”

This is a short excerpt of the General Secretary’s AGM speech. The full text can be viewed at: www.eis.org.uk/EISAGM16



Deputy First Minister Addresses AGM

The Deputy First Minister and recently appointed Cabinet Secretary for Education, John Swinney, delivered a speech to AGM delegates during the Saturday morning session at AGM.

Mr Swinney spoke of the Scottish Government's desire to engage in constructive dialogue with the teaching profession, through the EIS, to address the important issues facing Scottish education.

The Cabinet Secretary conceded that teacher workload had to be tackled, and pledged to work with the profession to deliver tangible in the near future. Mr Swinney also addressed key issues such as SQA assessment and verification requirements, and the roll-out of the National Improvement Framework including the Scottish Government's plans for the introduction of a national system of Standardised Assessments.

Following Mr Swinney's speech, delegates had the opportunity to engage in a Question & Answer session with the Cabinet Secretary.

Questions covered topics such as the SQA and over-assessment (Steven Caniffi, East Renfrewshire), the implications of the Named Person legislation (Margaret Johnston, Fife), specific steps to be taken to reduce teacher workload (Nicola Dasgupta, East Ayrshire), teachers in Early Years education (Neil Duncan, Aberdeen), Standardised Testing & teacher

professional judgement (Mary Matheson, Aberdeen), supporting and resourcing GIRFEC initiatives (Eilidh Porrelli, Scottish Borders), and shortage of teachers and supply cover (Elaine Fleming, Angus).

Commenting following the Cabinet Secretary's speech, EIS General Secretary Larry Flanagan said, "The EIS is encouraged by the Cabinet Secretary's commitment to engaging with the teaching profession."

"Clearly, we will not agree on every issue. Delegates in the hall made clear their very real concerns over the Scottish Government's plans for national Standardised Assessments within the National Improvement Framework, and Mr Swinney was left in no doubt that any return to a target-setting, league table approach to education would be fiercely resisted by teachers."

"However, his general comments on the need to tackle excessive workload and cut bureaucracy as a means to freeing up teacher time were well received within the hall."

"The EIS will have continued dialogue with the Cabinet Secretary on key issues, particularly the current SQA-related workload pressures and the roll-out of the National Improvement Framework."

You can view an archive video of the Cabinet Secretary's speech and Q&A session at www.eis.org.uk/EISAGM16

Decluttering the Curriculum



"Driving learners over the edge"

Nicola Fisher

In the company of the Cabinet Secretary for Education, incoming Vice-President Nicola Fisher moved a Motion calling on Council to campaign for the long-promised decluttering of the Primary curriculum. Citing a litany of demands on primary curriculum Ms Fisher ended one such list, "Determined to Succeed... Determined to drive learners over the edge." She asserted that the cramming of the curriculum with so many subjects and initiatives while ensuring "depth of learning... tailoring learning for every child in classes of 33 and closing the poverty gap is laughable." Applause from AGM delegates signalled their agreement. Carolyn Ritchie (Glasgow) seconded the Motion, arguing that "CfE tried to be all things to all people" and that now we need to "find out what we as educators think is needed and how much time should be given to it." Des Kenny (Glasgow) gave further support to the Motion stressing that nothing is ever taken out of the curriculum to make way for new additions, with the result that Primary teachers have become "jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none." The Motion was carried with full support from AGM.

Solidarity with refugees



Calls for the UK Government to accept more refugees including unaccompanied children

Bill Ramsay

Equality Convener Bill Ramsay (South Lanarkshire) proposed a Motion on behalf of Council and EIS-FELA calling for the EIS to continue to display solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees, by continuing collaboration with partner organisations, supporting calls for the UK Government to accept more refugees including unaccompanied children, campaigning for adequate EAL and pastoral care provision, and lobbying for support for refugee teachers to access the profession. Mr Ramsay spoke about the need to work to combat dangerous and harmful attitudes to refugees, and said "we need to find ways to engage the teaching talent that is going untapped." He concluded that "if we want to live in a country we think of as civilised we must take forward this Motion." The Motion was seconded by Vice-President Elect Nicola Fisher (Glasgow), who said, "We have a duty as human beings to

help.” Donny Gluckstein (EIS-FELA) gave support to the Motion, arguing that, “It is very important that we show solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers.” Conference concurred with the need to act and voted in favour of the Motion.

Reasonable adjustments



63% of people facing discrimination don't know their rights

Julie Ferguson

Orkney delegate Julie Ferguson successfully proposed a Motion on behalf of Orkney Local Association calling on Council to investigate the types of ‘reasonable adjustments’ which have been requested from local authorities, and the results of those; and issue guidance to members on legal aspects of requesting ‘reasonable adjustments’. Ms Ferguson informed conference that 63% of people facing discrimination don't know their rights, one of which is to reasonable adjustments which would enable people with disabilities to work. Ms Ferguson said “In the current economic climate there are cuts everywhere so it's harder to get reasonable adjustments” and noted that “people who want to be teachers and who are teachers are in danger of being pushed out of work.”

Welcome Pack



“Let's counteract the negative vision coming from so much of the media”

Neil Anderson

Neil Anderson (Glasgow) successfully moved this Motion, proposed by Glasgow Local Association, to request that the EIS produce a ‘Welcome Pack’ to be given to young people newly arrived in Scotland, advising them of their rights as pupils in a Scottish school, College or University and presents a positive and welcoming picture of Scotland as a nation. He said, “Let us as a profession welcome people to Scotland. Let's ensure that young people arriving in Scotland know our vision and let's counteract the negative vision coming from so much of the media.” The Motion received the unanimous backing of AGM delegates.

Instrumental Music Teachers



“Campaign for instrumental music to be regarded as part of the core curriculum”

John Welsh

John Welsh (Renfrewshire) successfully moved this Motion which called for Council to recognise the importance of Instrumental Music Teachers in delivering National Qualifications in Music, and to campaign for instrumental music to be regarded as part of the core curriculum. Mark Traynor (West Lothian) lent his support to the Motion, noting that “as a discretionary service, instrumental music is always under threat.” Richard Knowles (Edinburgh) also spoke in support, highlighting the excellent work of the EIS IMT Network, and noting that IMTs reach thousands of pupils despite being allocated only 0.01% of the overall education budget, making them very good value for money. Conference overwhelmingly agreed to support the Motion.

Supporting newly appointed staff

The EIS will investigate and report on the support given by Local Authorities to newly appointed teaching staff including newly promoted staff, following a successful Motion from Donna Cooper (Aberdeenshire). Ms Cooper said, “There is a lack of support from Local Authorities for recently promoted and newly promoted staff.” Seconding the Motion Alan Morrison (Aberdeenshire) said, “How much support do newly appointed teachers get? It's patchy at best.”

Opposing the Motion (though in reality just wanting to give his now traditional light-hearted Doric AGM speech) John ‘Jocky’ Black (Aberdeenshire) said, “It doesnae tak muckle to wak about watchin' ither fowk workin.” ‘Jocky’ won many laughs, and warm applause for his intervention, but ‘lost’ the debate, with the Motion carrying by an overwhelming majority.

Older women in the workplace



“We need to gather information about any barriers to positive working lives that older women might be experiencing”

Mary Matheson

Mary Matheson (Aberdeen) moved a Motion on behalf of Council, instructing Council to consult with older women (those aged 50-64, as defined by the STUC and the Scottish Commission on Older Women Report) members on issues affecting them at work and prepare specific guidance on supporting older women in the workplace. Ms Matheson said “we need to gather information about any barriers to positive working lives that older women might

be experiencing.” Conference agreed that this consultation and guidance was necessary and supported the Motion.

Effects of the Into Headship Qualification



“We've got a shortage and we're putting a barrier in the way”

Derek Thompson

Derek Thompson (Aberdeenshire) successfully moved this Motion, instructing Council to investigate and report on the potential effects of the requirement that all newly appointed Headteachers from session 2018/19 must have completed the ‘Into Headship’ qualification. He noted the pressures facing Headteachers, from local authorities, Education Scotland, QIOs, and parents, and said that in this context we were making it more difficult for people to become Headteachers, arguing that “we've got a shortage and we're putting a barrier in the way.”

Opposing Trident



“Why can't we use that money on things like education, health and social care?”

Des Kenny

The EIS will produce publicity materials and organise events to support the campaign against the renewal of the Trident missile system, following a successful Motion from Des Kenny (Glasgow). “Public service funding is being cut, and we hear there is no money, yet the government has the ability to renew Trident. A recent estimate for the renewal cost was £182 Billion. Why can't we use that money on things like education, health and social care?” Seconding the Motion, new EIS Vice-President Nicola Fisher (Glasgow) said, “We have long-standing opposition to Trident. Many trade unions are opposed to Trident, but successive governments just haven't listened.” The Motion won overwhelming support of the AGM.

Thanks

Thanks to all delegates, Caird Hall staff, hotel and restaurant staff in Dundee, and to all EIS employees involved in the organisation of the 2016 AGM. See you in Perth next year!

We hope that you have enjoyed this special AGM edition of the SEJ - all the best for the summer and enjoy your break.



AGM

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