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The Scottish Educational Journal



Alison Thornton succeeds Nicola Fisher as EIS President

Support Rallies for Pay Campaign at the 2018 EIS AGM

This year's AGM, held at Dundee's Caird Hall from 7-9 June, had a major focus on the ongoing Value Education, Value Teachers campaign and the 10% pay claim for 2018. President Nicola Fisher and General Secretary Larry Flanagan both spoke on the campaign in their AGM addresses, while Motion after Motion and speaker after speaker also focused on the issue of improving teachers' pay. In this special edition of the SEJ, we report on all the news, views, debates and decisions from the AGM – both pay and non-pay related. Further coverage of the AGM, including information on all resolutions and video highlights of key events, is available at www.eis.org.uk

PAY CAMPAIGN RALLY

At lunchtime on Saturday, AGM delegates poured out from the Caird Hall into Dundee City Square to join teachers from across the country in a national rally in support of the Value Education, Value Teachers campaign.

The trademark bright yellow banners, placards and T-shirts that represent the campaign provided a colourful boost to the event, while an array of speakers and singers encouraged the assembled crowd to step up local campaigning in support of the 10% pay claim.

Outgoing President Nicola Fisher opened the event, and led the crowd on a number of chants urging employers to pay teachers their worth. Speakers included incoming President Alison Thornton, incoming Salaries Convener Des Morris, Megan McCrossan (North Lanarkshire) and Adela Mansur (Edinburgh) and General Secretary Larry Flanagan. A musical highlight was provided by Andrea Bradley (EIS Assistant Secretary, Education & Equality) and Ali Roy (EIS Communications Coordinator) who performed a specially written song urging the Scottish Government to "Pay us our 10%," which proved such a hit with the assembled crowd that an impromptu encore was demanded at the end of the rally. See www.eis.org.uk for all the highlights.



Motions

AGM Steps up the Pressure in Pay Campaign



"Building towards strike readiness must be an important focus at this stage of the campaign"
Susan Quinn

Delegates sent a strong message to local authorities and the Scottish Government, and raised the stakes in the Pay Campaign, by debating and passing a number of Motions calling for the delivery of the 10% pay claim.

Susan Quinn (Glasgow) moved a Motion on behalf of Council and Edinburgh Local Association commending the work carried out so far in the Value Education, Value Teachers pay campaign and instructing Council to continue to build the campaign to ensure a state of 'strike readiness' and

a potential ballot of members in the next session.

Ms Quinn said, "This Motion looks to build on the early momentum in our campaign, and we need to make sure the messages are still out there loud and clear. We need to intensify and escalate the campaign if need be. Building towards strike readiness must be an important focus at this stage of the campaign."

Seconding the Motion, Alison Murphy (Edinburgh) said, "We need a coordinated approach at local and national level to support our campaign."

Irvine Tait (Shetland) added, "We need to arm our activists and our Reps with good material and good information to allow them to support the campaign at a local level."

Melodie Schaschke (Glasgow) then successfully moved for the EIS to negotiate

on the 10% pay claim without any detriment to working conditions, and not accepting any pay offer of less than 10% without first balloting members on the terms of the offer.

Ms Schaschke said, "There are dangers in pay packages and pay deals - we need a pay rise, not a package that risks our working conditions. No dodgy packages please – we want what we deserve, a 10% pay rise."

Anne Gillespie (Glasgow) seconded the Motion, saying, "The 35 hour week is a far away dream. Our pay has been cut by up to 24% in real terms while workload has soared. As a start in addressing that, we need a 10% pay rise – but, to be clear, we are not going to be trading our conditions for our pay increase."

Helen Connor, outgoing Salaries Convener, speaking at her final AGM before retirement, said "We have been very clear

This edition of the SEJ gives a flavour of debate at the AGM, and is not a verbatim report. It is not possible to report all Motions or speeches for reasons of space. For full details on all Motions passed, please visit www.eis.org.uk. Additional coverage is available via @eisunion Twitter feed using hashtag #EISAGM18

throughout negotiations that our conditions of service will never again be up for grabs. This is a pay claim, it is not a call for a pay and conditions package."

Helen's successor, incoming Salaries Convener Des Morris, then successfully called for the EIS to move to a ballot of members on industrial action, up to and including strike action, in the event that no satisfactory settlement is reached via the SNCT.



Highlighting his personal experience of pay erosion as a teacher at the top of the main grade scale, Mr Morris said, "I dug out my old pay slips to get the facts on teachers' pay. In 2010, my take-home pay was £2020 a month. As of May 2018, my take-home pay is £2108 a month. That's an increase of £88 a month over an 8 year period. This represents an increase in my take-home pay of 4.3% over 8 years."

"Over that same period, my national insurance contributions increased from £222 to £280 a month – an increase of 26% over that period."

"Over broadly the same period, inflation rose by 31.6%. And, to cap it all, my pension contributions rose from £182 to £294 a month – an increase of 61% on the 2010 figure."

"These massive increases in deductions from our salaries, coupled with sub-inflationary or no pay rises over the period, have combined to produce a real terms cut of almost 25% in the take-home pay of teachers."

Mick Dolan (West Dunbartonshire), seconding the Motion, said, "The myth that there is no money for pay needs to be exploded. Now is the time for teachers to fight back."

The possibility of targeted strike action was the subject of a successful Motion from South Lanarkshire Local Association. Moving, Andy Harvey (South Lanarkshire)

said, "We will get one single chance at this – and we need to win. The prospect of targeted, selective strike action needs to be part of our arsenal."

Combatting Excessive Workload



"All advice on reducing workload seem to have been ignored by local authorities and school managers"
Kenny Fella

Renfrewshire Local Association and Council were successful in a Motion calling for the EIS to campaign on tackling excessive workload and raising the profile of existing commitments to tackle this issue.

Moving, Kenny Fella (Renfrewshire) cited the recently published EIS survey of members on workload which indicated that 85% of teachers had seen a workload increase over the past year. "All advice on reducing workload seem to have been ignored by local authorities and school managers," said Mr Fella.

Seconding the Motion, Susan Slater (Moray), speaking on behalf of EIS Council, said, "Five years on from the promises to cut workload, the situation has got worse."

Admin Cuts and Workload



"We know what our duties are, but we may need some guidance identifying what our duties aren't."
Olivia Crook

A Motion from East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire Local Associations, calling for the AGM and Council to investigate and report on increased workload for class teachers as a result of cuts to support and admin staff won the overwhelming support of AGM. Moving the Motion, Olivia Crook (East Renfrewshire) said, "We know what our duties are, but we may need some guidance identifying what our duties aren't." Seconding the Motion James McIntyre (East Dunbartonshire) said, "A lot of time is being wasted on tasks teachers don't need to do and as a result the kids in the classroom are suffering because we don't have the time for them."

Teacher Shortages



Highlighted the difficulties of recruitment in remote parts of Scotland.
Irvine Tait

A Motion calling on Council to investigate and report on the level of teacher number shortages across all sectors including supply teachers and the critical level of shortage in certain subject/geographical areas was successfully moved by Mike Smith (Midlothian). Speaking in support of the Motion Irvine Tait (Shetland) also asked that Council are made aware of the difficulties of recruiting in very remote parts of Scotland and the tactics Councils employ to try get around this. The Motion was passed unopposed.

Career Progression



"We need to provide alternative career aspirations for teachers and create proper teacher leadership roles."
Jayne Rowe

Glasgow's Jayne Rowe proposed a Motion seeking to negotiate with other sides of the SNCT to establish additional career progression pathways for Scotland's teachers beyond the top of the main grade scale. "We need to provide alternative career aspirations for teachers and create proper teacher leadership roles." The Motion was seconded by Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire) and successfully carried.



Future of National 4



Gordon Black moved a Motion instructing Council to campaign for a change in the way that N4 is assessed.
Gordon Black

One of the longest debates at the AGM centred on the future of the National 4 qualification. Gordon Black of Dundee Local Association moved a Motion instructing Council to campaign for a change in the way that N4 is assessed, moving N4 to the same model of assessment as N5. While welcoming the growing diversity of qualifications offered by the SQA, he pointed to the reality of tight staffing and budgets, leading to most pupils sitting N4 or N5 in S4, which, he argued, was grounds for bringing N4 assessment in line with N5. Mr Black argued that the lesser level of demand, the absence of differentiated grading, the absence of a final exam, weak progression from N4 to N5, and forced bi and multi-level classes, were all strong justification for remodelling National 4 assessment. Falkirk's Colin Finlay seconded the Motion in spite of his long-held view that exams were not the best means of assessing the learning of all candidates. Mr Finlay said that he was keen, however, to reflect the views of Falkirk members that N4 is not valued by students, parents or employers because it contains 'no assessment'. Also supporting the Motion were John Swinburne (Edinburgh), who argued that the N4 qualification was "discriminatory as a form of assessment"; David Baxter (Dundee), who argued that "N4 is the poor relation of N5" and a generator of workload for teachers; Pamela Manley (Angus), who asserted that students of N4 are "second class citizens"; Irvine Tait (Shetland) who expressed frustration at the current system and compared multi-level teaching to "trying to ride two horses at the same time"; and John Welsh (Renfrewshire), who said that students do not see the qualification as being the same as N5. Strong opposition to the Motion was voiced by Education Vice Convener,



Sonia Kordiak

Sonia Kordiak, who argued that in her experience of teaching in an area of high deprivation, the qualification is valued by pupils, parents and teachers. She urged delegates to consider the views of students as researched by the SQA, that they did "not need an exam to motivate" them; and stressed the importance of "getting it right for every child" by having "qualifications for every child." Also speaking in opposition were Allan Crosbie (Edinburgh) who asserted the need for reform that would ensure "effective bridging between N4 and N5 that allows space for deep learning" but not in the terms expressed in the Motion; Mike Paul (Aberdeenshire), who argued that exam-based assessment is 'detrimental' to the attainment of children from poorer backgrounds and that it would be "nonsensical to advocate for extending exams further"; East Dunbartonshire's Andrene Bamford who was clear that N4 courses are more accessible to young people experiencing adverse circumstances than exam-based qualifications;

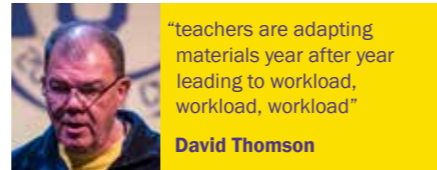


Andrene Bamford

Eddie Burns (South Lanarkshire) who cautioned against further curricular reform and stressed the important role of teachers in valuing the whole suite of qualifications designed to accommodate the needs of a wide range of learners; and Education Convener, Susan Quinn who, while recognising that there are issues with N4 and the qualifications more widely, which are being addressed at national level, stated that she had "no wish to jump to the nuclear option of putting an exam into the qualification." Clearly able to see the complexity of the issue, AGM voted in favour of a remit to Council, called from the floor by Ricky Cullen (North Lanarkshire).



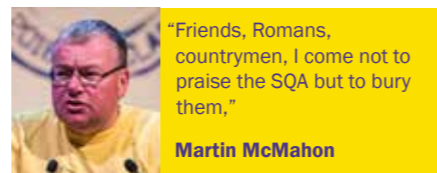
NQ Workload Reduction and Exemplification



"teachers are adapting materials year after year leading to workload, workload, workload"
David Thomson

Renfrewshire Local Association delegate, John Paul Tonner successfully moved a Motion calling upon Council to engage with the SQA with a view to reducing the workload implications resulting from recent course changes to National Qualifications; and instructing Council to lobby the SQA to release more sample question papers at Higher level. Mr Tonner outlined the many frustrations associated with the commencement of new Higher courses amidst vagueness and lack of clarity about SQA assessment and the struggle of teachers to respond adequately to changes within the context of the 35-hour working week. The SQA, he said, "have got form on this", having done exactly the same with the introduction of changes to National 5 last session. In concluding his speech, Mr Tonner made a plea to the SQA: "Throw us a bone, please." David Thomson (Renfrewshire) seconded the Motion, highlighting the previous false promise of lift-off-the-shelf courses for teachers to use. Instead, he said, Teachers are adapting materials year after year "leading to workload, workload, workload." The Motion was passed successfully.

Notice of SQA Changes to National Qualifications

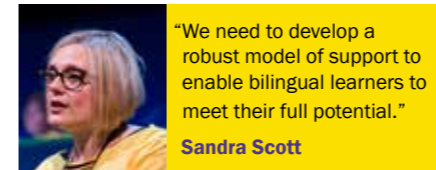


"Friends, Romans, countrymen, I come not to praise the SQA but to bury them."
Martin McMahon

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, I come not to praise the SQA but to bury them," the opening words of a speech by North Lanarkshire delegate Martin McMahon who won the full support of delegates for a Motion calling for Council to demand that the SQA implements a policy of publishing proposed changes to National Qualifications with at least one year of consultation and actual changes at least one year before the beginning of the academic year of their implementation. "Confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation," Mr McMahon said, "The SQA haven't recognised as criticism

but adopted as their mission statement." He asserted that they have failed to listen to teachers, and in spite of not being the employer of teachers and not part of SNCT, are the main driver of workload in Secondary schools. Colin Glover, also of North Lanarkshire seconded the Motion, underscoring the huge workload implications of the SQA changes. He called for adequate notice of any changes to the qualifications, and straightforward jargon-free documents that allow teachers to deliver courses with confidence.

Bi-lingual Learners



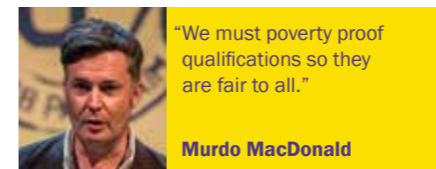
"We need to develop a robust model of support to enable bilingual learners to meet their full potential."
Sandra Scott

Sandra Scott (Edinburgh) successfully moved a Motion instructing Council to ascertain the numbers of pupils in each local authority in Scotland who are developing bi-lingual learners and seek information about the number of EAL teachers and bi-lingual support assistants within these authorities.

Ms Scott spoke about her work to promote a positive model of bi-lingualism and "leave behind the deficit model of the past." Savage cuts to funding were noted as important context, and Ms Scott concluded that, "Bilingual learners are an asset to our schools, and if EAL provision is not properly resourced we all lose out."

The Motion was seconded by Sonia Kordiak (Edinburgh), who explained its rationale and stated that, from anecdotal evidence, it seems that most local authorities are not meeting their obligations under Additional Support for Learning legislation.

Alternative Assessment Arrangements/Poverty-Proofing SQA Qualifications



"We must poverty proof qualifications so they are fair to all."
Murdo MacDonald

A Motion calling for Council to undertake a review of SQA Alternative Assessment Arrangements and work with SQA on poverty-proofing its qualifications was moved by Glasgow delegate Murdo

MacDonald. Mr MacDonald argued that "the current system is not balanced," which contributes to the attainment gap, stating, "We must poverty proof qualifications so they are fair to all." The seconder, Daniel Auldjo (Stirling), argued that, "Alternative Assessment Arrangements should reduce barriers." The Motion received the support of Conference.

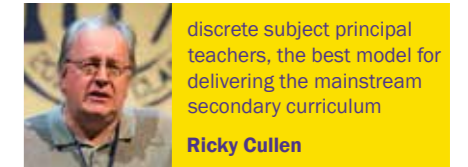
Allocation of Teaching Hours to National 5 and Higher Courses



"learners are not having 160 hours of sound learning"
Mary Kiddie

Colin Finlay of Falkirk Local Association successfully moved a Motion calling on Council to investigate and report on the delivery by Secondary schools, of the SQA's notional 160 hours of class contact time for National 5 and Higher courses, and to highlight any discrepancies. Mr Finlay suggested that schools in few local authorities were working to the 160 hours per course figure, this putting pressure on both students and staff. Mary Kiddie (Angus) seconded the Motion pointing to the 'common occurrence' of bi and multi-level teaching, amounting to "four courses, one class, one teacher" in which "learners were not having 160 hours of sound learning."

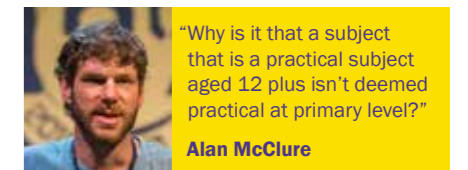
Subject Principal Teachers



discrete subject principal teachers, the best model for delivering the mainstream secondary curriculum
Ricky Cullen

North Lanarkshire delegate Ricky Cullen proposed a successful Motion instructing Council to campaign for discrete subject principal teachers as the best model for delivering the mainstream secondary curriculum. The Motion was seconded by Gordon Black (Dundee) who said, "We firmly believe that a faculty system is not the way forward."

What is a 'Practical' Class?



"Why is it that a subject that is a practical subject aged 12 plus isn't deemed practical at primary level?"
Alan McClure

Alan McClure (Dumfries & Galloway) was successful in gaining AGM support for two Motions relating to the definition of practical classes. "Why is it that a subject that is a practical subject aged 12 plus isn't deemed practical at primary level?", said Mr McClure. Speaking in support of the Motion, Derek Ross said, "I am supporting this Motion and I support EIS policy and 20's plenty. We have a policy on that, and we should be campaigning for every teacher in the land in nursery, primary and secondary that 20 is plenty."

AGM REJECTS CHANGE TO GENERAL SECRETARY APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

Considerable debate was prompted on a proposed rule change related to the appointment process for future General Secretaries of the Institute.

The Mover of the proposed change, Penny Gower (EIS-FELA), called for future appointments to be made following a ballot of all members and for terms of office to be limited to 5 years before another election should be held, with the incumbent General Secretary eligible for re-election.

Ms Gower argued that the change would bring the EIS in line with other trade unions, and increase member engagement in the union. Others speaking in support included John Kelly (EIS-FELA), Jayne Rowe (Glasgow), and Irvine Tait (Shetland).

Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire), speaking against the proposal, argued that the election process would turn the General Secretary position into a political post and risk the status of the EIS as a member-led rather than official-led union. She was supported by a number of speakers including Sonia Kordiak (Edinburgh), Mark Fleming (South Lanarkshire) and Bill Ramsay (Incoming Vice-President).

Following a lengthy debate, the proposed Rule Change was defeated on a show of hands within the hall.

Presidential Address



Outgoing EIS President Nicola Fisher used her AGM address to highlight a wide range of issues – from the dangers of data, through poverty, mental health, teacher workload, recruitment and retention and the Value Education, Value Teachers campaign.

Introduction

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to address you today as President of the EIS, and it is a particular pleasure to do so from the stage of the Caird Hall here in Dundee.

For it was on this very stage, that my mum made her dance debut at the age of 3. This was a dance career which went on to include a Cossack Dance, a Sailor's Hornpipe and a routine dressed as Little Red Riding Hood.

However, you will be relieved to hear I do not intend to re-enact any of these. Although who knows where the mood might take me.

Local Association Visits and Thank You

One of the best parts of being EIS President is of course the visits to the Local Associations and their schools. And as I travelled the length and breadth of the country on a fabulous EIS safari, I found that many of the same issues and themes arose time and again.

I would very much like to thank all the LAs who invited me to visit them and to visit their schools in both my Vice Presidential and my Presidential years.

I would like to thank everyone in the Glasgow Local Association for all their help and support and encouragement.

Collection of Data

As I said earlier, there have been common themes and issues emerging from my LA visits and one of these is a pressing concern about data.

Concern about the collection of data, about the use and purpose of that data, about the importance given to that data over qualitative and formative assessment, about the workload attached to it, about the stress attached to it and so on.

And this growing obsession with data runs contrary to the ethos of CfE. As indeed does the introduction of standardised assessment. I'm sure we've all been aware of the recent outcry over the experience of P1 sitting the SNSAs. Reports of wee 4 and 5 year olds crying. Saying to their teachers "I'm not very good, am I?" This is heart-breaking stuff.

How is that experience affecting how those tiny people are feeling about school? About themselves? What damage is being done there?

The EIS has been concerned about the SNSAs for all stages and not just P1 all the way through. Because let's be honest, they weren't brought in for educational reasons.

Flawed data, collected in dubious circumstances has too often been used in the past as a stick with which to beat schools.

This is the thin edge of the wedge. We seem to be present at the dawn of a new obsession with data, driven partly by the Pupil Equity Fund. By a desperation to prove that the Pupil Equity Fund has worked.

Our secondary schools are already blighted with league tables of exam results compiled every year by the media amongst others. This leads to enormous pressure being put on secondary colleagues to explain and justify their results.

I can only conclude that it is to create competition between schools to make us want to get better results. I have two messages for those who want to do this.

First, teachers already want to get better results for their pupils, but not because we want to compete with the school down the road but because we care about the children and young people in our classes and we want the best for them.

And second, stop trying to create competition between schools. Education is not the marketplace.

Resist the notion that the collections and use of data is vital. Resist the obsession with testing and exams. Think of the wonderful, rich learning which goes on in classrooms across the country. That's what matters.

Beware of the dangers written oh so succinctly by Michael Rosen in his poem

"The Data Have Landed."

First, they said they needed data about the children to find out what they're learning.

Then they said they needed data about the children to make sure they are learning.

Then the children only learnt what could be turned into data.

Then the children became data.

Mental Health

Another common issue which I heard from teachers is the growing mental health crisis in our schools. Teachers are reporting that they see more and more children and young people who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

Guidance and pastoral care teachers told me that they spend much more of their time, in some cases all of their time, trying to help pupils who are suffering from severe anxiety, from depression, who have suicidal thoughts, who are self-harming, who are being drawn into risky behaviours. And they feel that there is little or no help for them.

At one point this year, a government response was that all pupils have "access" to a mental health worker. "Access." What does that even mean?

The numbers of Educational Psychologists across the country have been cut and cut again. They cannot possibly provide mental health care to all the children and young people who need it.

When Educational Psychologists do come into a school, it is to provide advice on children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties or to provide a diagnosis of dyslexia or Autism Spectrum Disorder. The idea that they are there as a "mental health worker" for pupils to "access" is laughable.

Poverty

Poverty, and in particular the poverty related attainment gap, has been high on the agenda in terms of the national, political discourse for some time now. And teachers and schools are clear that they want to play their part in closing that gap.

We need to be clear that having people living in poverty is a choice which society makes and which successive governments at Westminster have certainly made. It does not happen by chance. It happens as a result of economic choices.

It happens as a result of choosing to spend billions on war and Weapons of Mass Destruction. It happens as a result of

allowing companies and the super-rich to avoid paying their taxes.

It happens as a result of benefits cuts, of a punitive sanctions regime, and of shameful policies such as the 2 child policy which tells children they are less worthy than their siblings simply because of an accident of birth.

Our society needs to make different choices if we are serious about tackling poverty because schools can't fix it by themselves.

Recruitment and Retention Crisis & Workload

I've heard a very interesting theory a number of times over the year as to why there's a recruitment and retention crisis. From more than one source, I have heard it said that maybe things wouldn't be so bad if only the unions didn't talk so much about how bad things are.

Isn't that brilliant? It makes me laugh every time I hear or read about it. So, the solution is not to fix the problems. It's that we should stop talking about them.

Never mind that what is being asked of teachers is not deliverable within the working week. Never mind that schools are struggling with years and years of cuts leaving us under-staffed and under-resourced. Never mind that the extension of the presumption of mainstreaming without proper funding has placed enormous pressure on already overstretched schools and staff. Never mind all that. It will be fine as long as we just don't talk about it.

Well, with the research from Bath Spa University indicating that 40% of Scottish Teachers would leave in the next 18 months, if they could, I think we need to talk about it.

Teachers have had enough of doing more WITH less and more FOR less. And when other countries and other careers pay more, is it any wonder that teachers are voting with their feet?

And I have been doing a lot of bitter muttering when I read the Scottish Government response to the lack of teachers that "teacher numbers have risen by 500."

Well I hate to point out the obvious, but school rolls have risen. There are more children so of course more teachers were employed. If there had been 500 more teachers for the same number of children, that would be an improvement. As it is, we are running to stand still.

Value Education Value Teachers

A restorative pay rise is crucial to solving the recruitment and retention crisis. We estimate that our pay has fallen in real terms by 20-24%. Don't let anyone tell you 10% is too much. Especially when we are expected to fix everything.

There is rarely an ill in society which doesn't become the teachers' job to fix.

In a way, this is testament to the faith people have in the transformative power of education. However, it does make you wonder why we are not paid a salary which is truly commensurate with our value to society. Because let us be clear; education is the glue which holds society together.

The skills and knowledge to go out and play a positive role in society are learned in nurseries and primaries and secondaries and colleges and universities across the land. We are the only profession inextricably linked to all other jobs, all other workers, all other careers.

If you value a health service, then you need to value education. If you value a system of justice, then you need to value education. If you value the emergency services, then you need to value education. And if you value education, then you quite urgently need to value teachers. Because none of it is happening without us.



This is an edited version of the President's speech. Please visit www.eis.org.uk to read the full text or to view a recording of the entire speech.



Kiri Tunks

Welcome Guests

Guest speaker Kiri Tunks (NEU), speaking on behalf of invited kindred guests, drew comparisons between the current situation in Scotland and England, highlighting the many strengths of Scottish Education and emphasizing the many things that have been protected in Scotland – qualified teachers in all schools; schools under local authority stewardship; appropriate democratic accountability for education – through the strength of the EIS as a trade union. She also highlighted the risks of initiatives already introduced in England, such as free schools and academies and the damage they had already done to education south of the border.

Carbon Footprint

The EIS will develop a strategy to reduce its Carbon Footprint, following a successful Motion from David Baxter (Dundee). Mr Baxter said, “There are sensible changes that we can explore and report back on as we look to reduce the Institute’s carbon footprint. We must be proactive and forward-thinking.”

Fossil Fuels

Outgoing President Nicola Fisher, speaking on behalf of Council, successfully moved a Motion calling for AGM to instruct Council to develop a strategy for staged disinvestment from fossil fuels. Nicola spoke of the increase in green flag schools and argued that the EIS holding these investments was “counterintuitive” to the pupils in these schools. Speaking in support of the Motion Sineag Blane (Western Isles) said, “Choosing the fuels to invest in should be equally ethically driven.”

False Allegations

A Motion instructing Council to investigate and report on the increasing incidences of false allegations against teaching professionals was passed by an overwhelming majority. Shauna Richardson (Glasgow) moved the Motion stating

that, “The GTCS predicts the number of instances will continue to rise by 10% per annum until 2020.”

Leave for Holy Days

Sandra Scott (Edinburgh) successfully moved a Motion calling on Council to raise with the SNCT the need for teachers who are members of faiths other than Christianity to be given a number of days paid leave for their faiths’ Holy Days. Ms Scott stated as teachers, “It is our duty to be proactive in regards to inequality instead of reacting to individual instances.”

Fertility Treatment

A Motion proposed by Alan Gardiner (North Lanarkshire) called for fertility treatment to be included in Leave of Absence of Teachers’ policies and as an option for requests for leave on HR and Payroll systems. Seconding the Motion, Lorraine McBride (North Lanarkshire) stressed that, “Teachers considering this path have already had to jump over so many hurdles.” The Motion was unanimously carried.

Social Media Abuse

An East Dunbartonshire Motion instructing Council to provide clear guidance on the management of situations where teachers are targeted on social media was passed by an overwhelming majority. Moving the Motion, Andrene Bamford (East Dunbartonshire) highlighted the need for advice for members, “Are we protected by the law in any way?”

Risk Assessments & Workload

Aberdeen’s Susan Talboys successfully moved a Motion calling upon Council to issue guidance on the responsibilities of teachers in carrying out risk assessments. Carol Thorpe of Aberdeen City seconded the Motion and said to delegates, “This is a massive workload issue. We need clear guidance on who is responsible and who is accountable.”

Susan Talboys

New Fellows Reply

Gillian Hamilton FEIS, former Chief Executive of the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) and now Strategic Director with responsibility for Professional Learning and Leadership at Education Scotland, delivering the reply on behalf of all the new Fellows of the Institute said, “The EIS has a passion and commitment to professional learning for teachers, and to the partnership working between the EIS and other organisations that is key to supporting the CPD agenda.”



Gillian Hamilton

Protecting Instrumental Music

A Motion calling for AGM to instruct Council to campaign for the retention of Instrumental Tuition Services for school pupils in Local Authorities was moved by Fiona Gray (Midlothian). Ms Gray spoke passionately of the impact instrumental music has had on her life and asked, “Are we really going to allow instrumental music tuition to wither and die?” Mark Traynor highlighted the EIS Campaign to invest in instrumental music and stated the Motion simply “reaffirms EIS policy that Instrumental Music lessons should be free.” Speaking in support of the Motion first time speaker Julie Smith (Angus) said, “Helping others have the experiences I have had is wonderful but not without its challenges. Due to cut backs I now cover 14 schools a week.” Following a show of hands, the Motion passed with an overwhelming majority. Further highlighting the value of free instrumental music lessons, AGM enjoyed performances from young Dundee musicians (pictured right), arranged via the city’s Instrumental Music Service.



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 2018 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.



New Fellows of the Institute honoured



New Fellows of the Institute: 1 Susan Smith, 2 Alison Palmer, 3 Diane Smithyman, 4 Michael Dunn, 5 Alison Davidson, 6 Charlie Lennon, 7 Ronnie Mathieson, 8 Gillian Hamilton, 9 Susan Talboys, 10 Sonia Kordiak, 11 Margaret Smith, 12 Norma Anne Watson, Convener of the Board of Examiners, 13 Nicola Fisher, EIS President, 14 Larry Flanagan, EIS General Secretary

General Secretary's Report

Larry Flanagan used his annual speech to update AGM on the work of the EIS over the past year, and to outline the challenges ahead – including the continuing struggle to improve teachers' pay.



Organisational Matters

We have welcomed new delegates to AGM every year, and again this year we have 58 new first-time delegates. You are very welcome and I hope you don't hesitate to take to the microphones and have your say.

In terms of staffing, we have now just appointed our fifth EIS Organiser post. Our Organisers will, I believe, show their value in terms of the pay campaign, acting as a catalyst for member engagement.

An Organising agenda, however, isn't primarily about staffing resource; it's about members being involved and active – that's our ambition.

The backbone of that engagement remains with our Rep network. I want to express our thanks to the thousands of Reps across the country who are the EIS to their members in schools and colleges. Our membership has grown by nearly 1,200 over this past year. Reps are the key contact and reason for that.

We held our first national Reps' conference this year which was very successful and we will be building on that. Organisationally – we are in rude health.

Education Issues

We are now a few weeks away from the publication of what feels like "yet another" Education Bill.

I am not convinced that legislation is the way forward. International advisors have constantly said that what is required is cultural rather than structural change.

There has been a lot of discussion and negotiation around what may or may not be in the Bill. The EIS has been very clear that what matters in Scottish Education is what happens in the classroom. That's where the teaching and learning takes place, where the socialisation happens, where personal growth is encouraged, and

relationships are formed.

It's what teachers do that makes the difference. Any paper reform which isn't supported by teachers is doomed to fail.

We need to say clearly to Scottish Government, to Nicola Sturgeon and to John Swinney, that legislative change that fails to impact positively on teaching and learning in the classroom is simply playing politics.

We should say this to all the political parties and political leaders at every level of Government - we are tired of being a political football.

Health and Wellbeing

The results of our recent Health and Wellbeing survey say it all: teachers are scunnered.

58% wouldn't recommend teaching as a profession. This figure has grown from 44% over the space of five years.

"legislative change that fails to impact positively on teaching and learning in the classroom is simply playing politics"

85% indicate that workload has increased in the past year despite the promises made to address our concerns.

The OECD has highlighted the link between high levels of teacher self-efficacy and improved academic outcomes for students, and stated explicitly that PISA showed the most successful education systems are those where society values teachers.

Values teachers – we should turn that into a slogan.

If we wish to deliver on pupils' health and wellbeing, and we certainly need to do that in a society where poverty is increasing and we have heard already about the negative impact on children's lives, then there needs to be a focus on teacher health and wellbeing.

We know that Scotland's teachers

are over worked and stressed. And not only Scottish Government but also our employers, COSLA, need to take cognisance of that fact and seek to address it.

Teachers need control over their working lives, not to be controlled by bureaucratic line management practices from the last century.

Wasn't it hugely ironic that a consultation sub-titled "Empowering Teachers" had sections in it about a Headteacher Charter, pupil voice, parental voice, Regional Improvement Collaboratives - yet not a word about teacher agency, about collegiate practice or about democratic schools.

And to top it off, it proposed to "empower" teachers by removing the right for teachers to elect a teacher majority on its professional standards Council, the GTCS, replacing it with a Government appointed Board of a new Education Workforce Council.

We will be bitterly disappointed if that ill-conceived proposal finds its way into the draft Bill and if it does we will continue to oppose it. Hands off our GTCS.

Our other red-lines were set out clearly. We are not having the SNCT and LNCTs side-lined in any way.

We are not having Headteachers turned into HR Managers.

We are not having another layer of management bureaucracy created by Regional Improvement Collaboratives.

We are the third leg of the tripod, Mr Swinney, without us the structure topples over.

Gail Gorman, the new Chief Exec of Education Scotland, spoke at our recent Education Conference and I think it was fair to say that she was well received as she outlined a new way of working at Education Scotland, seeking to offer more direct support to schools through the Regional Improvement Collaboratives' enhanced CPD opportunities.

We are happy to engage with that agenda and we support the notion of

leading from the middle, leading from the classroom, but we are a little wary, a little sceptical.

I think the fact that we had over 200 members registered for a Saturday Education conference to hear Pasi Sahlberg, and a fully subscribed Professional Learning conference with Carol Campbell, is indicative of how seriously the EIS takes the professional agenda.

We're happy to engage in a partnership approach around professional learning but it must be of equal partners.

Pay Campaign

I will begin by paraphrasing the late great Dale Winton, "We're in it to win it."

The campaign was determined here at AGM last year, built on the experiences of EIS-FELA and West Dunbartonshire.

We recognised that we had to build support in a very practical and thorough fashion.

I think we are getting our message out to the public, our campaign billboards have been highly visible.

In particular, I think we have got members engaged. 10% is the claim and I think members know our ambition.

What about previous pay claims? The truth is the whole trade union movement has been on the back foot for a decade.

Safeguarding jobs has been a priority. We secured an agreement in 2011 about protecting teacher numbers, one positive aspect of that deal, and by and large it has held good.

The Scottish Government has had to strong-arm local authorities in to abiding by the safeguard. To give him his due, John Swinney as Finance Minister, effectively ring-fenced the money for teacher numbers.

However, Scottish Government has made a big play this year about teacher numbers rising, as they have by an overall figure of about 600.

The truth, however, is that around 800 teaching posts, counted in the census, are funded by Pupil Equity Funding which was supposed to be about additionality.

If you take those out, the headline figure has actually dropped at a time when pupil rolls are rising, hence the virtual standstill in the pupil teacher ratio.

Which leads us to the recruitment and retention challenge at the heart of our Ten for 10 campaign.

We have failed this year to fill the vacant places on ITE courses, not just in STEM subjects but others such as Home Economics and even for English courses.

Why? Because graduates can earn more in less stressful jobs, with better career progression opportunities.

This isn't campaign rhetoric; it is hard cold fact.

And at the other end of recruitment, we have the retention challenge. A record spike in teachers aged 44-55 are exiting the profession. Why? Well it's no coincidence that this is the first group of teachers who have been conscripted from Normal Pensions Age 60 to 67/68, and they are just saying No.



If the recruitment and retention challenge isn't faced up to, and our pay campaign is predicated on facing up to it, we will read more stories about undergraduates being pulled in to support Maths classes and letters being sent home to parents asking for help in staffing classrooms.

So, Scottish Government and Cosla, if you think 10% is unaffordable – consider the alternative.

You know 10% only takes us up to the average teacher salary in the OECD. The Scottish Government loves the OECD – love us!

10% only takes us up to the average graduate earnings after five years.

And, of course, 10% takes us at the top of the main grade to parity with FE lecturers. I'm sure they won't mind us utilising their slogan of equal pay for equal work.

It took six days of strike action for EIS-FELA to win its dispute – remember that.

We need to keep building the campaign and building the pressure.

It is not enough to have the arguments – we have those already.

It is not enough to have the moral high ground - we already occupy that.

It is not enough to hear sympathetic noises - welcome though that is.

That means persuading members, one by one if necessary, to put an X in the Yes box when the question is asked. The Scottish Government will only concede our claim if they understand our threat of strike action is a real one.

This is our best chance in a decade to demonstrate the power of the EIS as a trade union.

A collective voice for the profession and of the profession.

Teachers are looking for a landmark settlement from this campaign and we expect the Scottish Government to meet our demands.

Teachers have delivered over and over again, despite the constant change, despite the ever-increasing workload and despite the impact of austerity on reducing teaching resources and undermining services such as Instrumental Music Tuition – it is time for Scottish Government to do the same, and deliver for us.

If you value Education, then show that you value teachers as well.

We cannot afford to lose this fight.

So, let us renew our efforts and our focus to deliver the victory that Scottish teachers desire and most certainly deserve.

In it to win it, colleagues.



This is an edited version of the General Secretary's speech. Please visit www.eis.org.uk to read the full text or to view a recording of the entire speech.

Review and Monitoring of Standardised Testing



trying to make sense of SNSA was 'like trying to play pool with a rope'.

Allan Crosbie

With comic aplomb, Allan Crosbie (Edinburgh) led a debate which resulted in unanimous support for a Motion instructing Council to carry out a review and ongoing monitoring of SNSAs across local authorities, towards ensuring that whole cohorts are not tested at once, that SNSA results are not used inappropriately, and the cessation of all other forms of standardised assessment. Drawing humorous comparison, Mr Crosbie asserted that trying to make sense of SNSA was "like trying to play pool with a rope." From rope to string, Mr Crosbie entertained AGM with a joke featuring three bits of string going into a pub, attempting to disguise their true selves, in a bid to be served. On a serious note, though maintaining the comparison, Mr Crosbie was in no doubt of the futility of SNSAs, "The Scottish Government cannot disguise the threadbare reality that SNSAs are educationally meaningless, a bugbear of teachers and pupils alike, and a complete waste of time and money." Midlothian delegate, Mike Smith seconded the Motion, expressing concern also over how SNSA-generated data would be used and over the widespread testing of whole cohorts at once, contrary to the Scottish Government issued advice. Also speaking in support was Education Convener, Susan Quinn who assured delegates that members' concerns such as those around the setting of S1 pupils using SNSA data, would be taken directly to Scottish Government.

Pupil Equity Fund



"We need to get it right for every child, and every teacher"

John Paul Tonner

John Paul Tonner (Renfrewshire) was successful in a call for the EIS to investigate and report on the impact of the Pupil Equity Fund on teacher workload. "We need to get it right for every child, and every teacher," he said.

Data in Scottish Education



Satirised the Scottish Government's voracious appetite for data

Diane Smithyman

Education Convener, Susan Quinn successfully moved a Motion on behalf of Council addressing the 'hot topic' of data collection and analysis, as increasingly encouraged by the Scottish Government. The Motion instructed Council to produce guidance for members on data-handling; to reaffirm and publicly highlight the importance of an holistic approach to the education of children and young people, in addition to the purpose and role of assessment and of teacher-led formative assessment as a generator of valuable learner-centred data; and to monitor the workload impact of new developments in digital data collection and analysis. Ms Quinn issued caution against approaches tending to 'silos of data' rather than focus on 'the whole child'. She was clear that Scottish education "can't be in the position that SNSAs become the god of assessment in our schools- they don't know the children, they can't be the be all and end all of our assessment approaches." Diane Smithyman (Western Isles) seconded the Motion. Quoting American engineer and statistician W Edwards Deming, "In God we trust; all others must bring data." Ms Smithyman satirised the Scottish Government's voracious appetite for data. While acknowledging that teachers need data, and that it is 'not bad per se', she outlined how the demand for data to provide hard evidence of need in relation to Support for Learning provision has taken over what should be her key role of supporting pupils and staff; how data can be manipulated for almost any purpose, thus undermining teacher professional judgement; and how the underlying ethos which underpins the current emphasis on data collection, is doing the profession a disservice by reducing a young person to raw data.



Homework Apps



"Does technology support us, or do we support it?"

Andrew O'Halloran

The EIS will conduct a scoping exercise into the use of homework apps across Scotland following a Motion put to AGM by John Paul Tonner (Renfrewshire), who told delegates that a new generation of apps is "infecting our schools with the virus of neo-liberalism." Mr Tonner asked delegates to consider the purpose of homework. Is it to show what a great teacher you are? He called for the EIS to investigate the impacts of such apps on the terms and conditions of classroom teachers and to produce clear, pre-emptive guidance to support teachers in staying a step ahead of app technology. Andrew O'Halloran (Dumfries and Galloway) supported the Motion by reminding delegates of the numerous problems caused by data collection already faced by the profession, asking: "Does technology support us, or do we support it?"

Targeting of PEF



Raised questions about the allocation of PEF money on the basis of Free School Meals uptake.

Nigel MacDonald

A Motion instructing Council to investigate and report on the use of Pupil Equity Fund money to establish whether it is successfully targeted at raising the attainment of pupils from the most deprived families was successfully moved by Nigel MacDonald (Renfrewshire) who raised a number of questions about the allocation of PEF money on the basis of the imperfect measure of Free School Meals uptake, and the reliance on the professional judgement of Headteachers in identifying children who will be the focus of interventions. Carolyn Ritchie, of Glasgow LA, stressed the need for the EIS to "independently interrogate the data to determine the effectiveness of PEF," being in no doubt that the Scottish Government evaluation will be positive and PEF "claimed as a success."

Planning, Assessment and Workload



"the dangers of generating data, and time spent on assessment and planning, remain a serious concern."

Jim Glen

A Motion calling for an investigation and report into current models of forward planning and assessment practices was moved by Jim Glen (Midlothian), who recalled a 2015 agreement on planning at LNCT which included two points: that forward planning support professional dialogue, and that it be at a level of detail that works best for pupils. Mr Glen noted that since then, Scottish Government has provided more guidance on planning and reporting to parents, and while it is hard to find fault with the ethos underpinning the guidance, the dangers of generating data, and time spent on assessment and planning, remain a serious concern. The Motion was seconded by Mike Smith (Midlothian) who pointed out that good examples of useful planning and assessment practice do exist – and we need to adopt them. Delegates were united in their support and the Motion was carried.

High Quality CLPL Delivered by the Union



TU Act makes it essential to engage positively with members.

Jodi Barclay

Jodi Barclay (Dundee) moved an amended Motion commending the EIS in delivering high quality CLPL and instructing Council to devise a strategy to increase such opportunities and to report on the requisite resources with a view to the EIS becoming a main provider of CLPL for Scottish teachers. As a lead provider of CLPL it would additionally have more links to its members, and Ms Barclay reminded delegates that the TU Act makes it essential to engage positively with members. Allan Crosbie (Edinburgh) seconded this Motion, telling AGM that EIS CLPL opportunities are of the best quality

'outstanding' - and credibility with members is a product of this. Mr Crosbie went on to say that the EIS building capacity to become a main provider of CLPL is in all our interests, but especially so among young members, with whom we wish to engage around trade union values.

Additional Support Needs



Increase the level of additional support in mainstream classrooms to improve the learning and teaching for all

Jillian Gillespie

Jillian Gillespie (Fife) successfully proposed a Motion which instructed Council to investigate and report on the impact on teaching and learning when there are multiple children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) in a mainstream classroom, and use these findings to lobby the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to increase the level of additional support in mainstream classrooms to improve the learning and teaching for all.

Support for Learning



"Teachers are being asked to Get it Right for Every Child in classes of 30 or more, with little or no support."

Michelle White

Michelle White (Dundee) successfully moved for the EIS to campaign for statutory provision of Support for Learning and Additional Support Needs teachers. "Teachers are being asked to Get it Right for Every Child in classes of 30 or more, with little or no support." Seconding the Motion, John Chalmers (Falkirk) said, "It is the children who deserve support who are suffering the most."

Non-contact Time



Campaign for an increase in non-contact time allocated to teachers

Ian Scott

AGM delegates were united in their support for a Motion moved by Ian Scott (North

Lanarkshire), which sought to campaign for an increase in non-contact time allocated to teachers in order to meet the demands of increased workload pressures. The Motion was seconded by Kenny Fella (Renfrewshire) and supported further by David Baxter (Dundee) who stated that, "This is the key to solving excessive workload."

Primary Non-contact



Report on the operation of non-contact time in Primary schools

Helen Connor

Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire) successfully moved a Motion instructing Council to report on the operation of non-contact time in Primary schools and thereafter issue advice to all primary teachers. Jayne Rowe (Glasgow) seconded the Motion and it was further supported by Susan Quinn (Glasgow) who highlighted the importance of getting this message "out loud and clear to all members and management."

Education for Young People Recovering from Long-term Illness



"Is it a postcode lottery as to the service young people receive as they recover from a long-term illness?"

Margaret Smith

Delegates agreed to mandate Council to investigate and report on education provision for children and young people recovering at home from long-term illness, or serious injury and subsequent treatment, following discussion of a Motion moved by Ex-President Margaret Smith on behalf of Falkirk Local Association. Ms Smith spoke of a child who had received very little support from school during a long absence, and the need to get it right for children like this. She asked delegates, "Is it a postcode lottery as to the service young people receive as they recover from a long-term illness?" and argued this was why an investigation was needed. The Motion was formally seconded by Margaret Rideout (Falkirk).

Israel/Palestine Teaching Resources



"a resource on the issue, now languishes somewhere rather than being used in schools"
Andrew Fullwood

Glasgow and Council delegate Andrew Fullwood convinced the vast majority of conference delegates that the EIS should offer advice and encouragement to teachers and lecturers who develop and use learning materials that present a balanced understanding of the Israel/Palestine topic and should promote the wider use of suitable materials. Mr Fullwood highlighted that a resource on the issue, fully developed and quality assured by a partnership of local authorities, Education Scotland and the EIS, now 'languishes somewhere' rather than being used in schools because of direct lobbying to the Deputy First Minister. Seconding the Motion, Neil Anderson (Glasgow and Council) urged delegates to support the Motion "for the sake of truth and accuracy" in the face of misrepresentation of the conflict by mainstream media.

Professional Judgement



"reporting of attainment levels should be based solely on the professional judgement of teachers"
Saffron Thain

Orkney delegate Saffron Thain successfully called upon the EIS to publicly reiterate that the reporting of attainment levels should be based solely on the professional judgement of teachers. Ms Thain told conference that her reason for standing up at AGM came out of the experience of teachers being asked to 'look again' at levels they'd given children at Early, First and Second levels, having been told that pupils' levels were "not where they should be." Jo Hill (Orkney), seconding this Motion, contended that if attainment levels are allowed to be modified or upscaled, this invalidates the position of teachers everywhere, by suggesting that "children are doing alright and that we are too," when this is not a fair reflection.

Children in Palestine



"These children are subject to human rights abuses on a daily basis."
Nicola Fisher

Outgoing President Nicola Fisher delivered a passionate and emotional speech to Conference regarding the continued occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the abuse of Palestinian human rights including the military detention of children. Seconding the Motion Sonia Kordiak (Edinburgh) said, "It's time that we as an international community make our concerns and objections to what is happening in Gaza known."

Regional Improvement Collaboratives



"RICs are supposed to look at what schools are doing and reflect that in what they offer to schools."
Sonia Kordiak

Susan Quinn (Glasgow), speaking on behalf of Council, moved a Motion instructing Council to monitor the development of Regional Improvement Collaboratives, focusing on the extent and quality of the pedagogical support being offered to schools, including fully resourced opportunities for professional collaboration within and across local authorities; the impact, if any, on School Improvement Plans and collegiate decision-making on their content; and the impact, if any, on teacher and Headteacher workload. Ms Quinn stated that the Motion aimed to make it clear that collaboratives' work should relate to learning and teaching, arguing that "We need to make sure that RICs are not a generator of workload and reflect what school priorities are." In seconding the Motion on behalf of Council, Sonia Kordiak (Edinburgh), argued that we have to monitor these new RICs, because "RICs are not supposed to impose their ideas; they are supposed to look at what schools are doing and reflect that in what they offer to schools."

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs of Pupils



"the poverty gap is growing and accounts for much of the rise in pupils' wellbeing needs"
Neil Anderson

Delegates voted in support of a Motion proposed by Neil Anderson (Glasgow), who argued the need for support for teachers in order to address the impact of the increasing number of pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues being accommodated within schools. Mr Anderson told AGM that the poverty gap is growing and accounts for much of the rise in pupils' wellbeing needs, with 24/7 social media an aggravating factor. He asked how we can best support our children and young people, acknowledging that the "days of sending them to pastoral care are gone." Lesley Corlett (Glasgow) seconded this Motion. "Teachers are expected to meet pupil needs, however complex they might become," she said.

Scottish Guardianship Service to Support the Integration of Refugees



"as a welcoming society, Scotland should have legislation to ensure this support"
Julie Irving

Julie Irving (Dumfries and Galloway) moved a Motion wholly supported by AGM calling on the EIS to campaign to have the Scottish Guardianship Service empowered by legislation to support the integration of newly arrived children to Scotland who have refugee status already in place. Ms Irving highlighted the vital importance of supporting refugee children who come to our country, underlining how, as a welcoming society, Scotland should have legislation to ensure this support. Andrew O'Halloran, also of Dumfries and Galloway seconding the Motion, drew attention to the reality of many under-18s arriving in Scotland without the support of their families as a consequence of conflicts that are raging in many parts of the world.

Rights of Refugee Children and Young People to Education



Call for Council to reaffirm the rights of unaccompanied refugee children and young people.
Bill Ramsay

Outgoing Equality Convener and incoming Vice President, Bill Ramsay successfully moved a Motion calling on Council to reaffirm the rights of unaccompanied refugee children and young people to education; to gather information on the gaps in educational provision for this group; and to lobby the Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council and local authorities for improved provision. In seconding the Motion, Glasgow delegate Carolyn Ritchie spoke from personal experience of teaching refugee children who have witnessed war, torture and killing, including of family members. She made clear that while refugee status entitles children to the same rights as any other, that children who are refugees 'need further consideration' because of the deep trauma that they have experienced. Fife delegate, Asif Chishti, spoke in support of the Motion highlighting the importance of teachers in encouraging the empathic instincts of children and young people towards asylum seeking and refugee children.

Protecting the GTCS



"The GTCS is one of the leading teacher regulatory bodies in the world"
John Rodgers

The EIS will campaign for the retention of the GTCS as an independent body, as the result of a successful Motion from East Renfrewshire and South Lanarkshire local associations. Moving the Motion, first-time AGM speaker John Rodgers (East Renfrewshire) said, "The GTCS is one of the leading teacher regulatory bodies in the world - its abolition and replacement would be a huge blow to our world-class reputation. Hands off our GTCS."

School Uniform



"School uniform is something of a totem in Scottish Education"
David Farmer

A Motion calling for the EIS to campaign for the ending of school uniforms and school dress codes was defeated, following significant debate. Moving the Motion, David Farmer (Fife) said, "School uniform is something of a totem in Scottish Education. But school uniform is a cyclical thing - it has not always been there." Opposing the Motion was Jean Miller (Glasgow), a primary Headteacher, who said, "Uniform takes away the competitive, expensive element of dressing for school. For young people from low-income families, uniform is a great leveler." Nick Cimini (EIS-ULA) was amongst those who spoke in support of the Motion, citing research that questions the value of school uniform in combating bullying or in raising attainment. However, speakers including Jayne Rowe (Glasgow), Caroline Yates (West Dunbartonshire) and Sonia Kordiak (Edinburgh) cited examples, including personal examples, of the positive impact of uniform in mitigating against poverty-related stigma in schools. The Motion was then overwhelmingly defeated following a show of hands in the hall.

Disability Equality



Promoting equality for disabled people in educational establishments.
Julie Ferguson

Orkney delegate Julie Ferguson gained the full support of AGM for a Motion calling for the EIS to reaffirm its commitment to promoting equality for disabled people in educational establishments, and develop a plan to encourage greater activism amongst disabled members. Ms Ferguson shared her personal experiences of disability but noted that only 0.5% of EIS members have a declared disability; she asked, "Where are the disabled teachers?"

Sexual Harassment in Education



"concerns about sexual harassment and misogyny aren't new"
Nicola Dasgupta

The EIS will review its advice on sexual harassment, and campaign to raise awareness of sexual harassment in schools and Further and Higher Education, following unanimous agreement on a Motion proposed by Nicola Dasgupta (East Ayrshire) on behalf of Council. Ms Dasgupta noted that "concerns about sexual harassment and misogyny aren't new", but that the 'Me Too' movement has "shone new light on an old issue."

Transgender and Non-binary Learners



Highlighting issues of wellbeing and attainment among transgender and non-binary learners.
Paula Dixon

The issues of wellbeing and attainment among transgender and non-binary learners were on the agenda at this year's AGM. Paula Dixon (EIS-FELA) successfully proposed a Motion committing the EIS to organising a training session for members on the issues facing these learners, and to disseminate advice.

Homework



"staff, parents and pupils are pulling their hair out over homework."
Carolyn Ritchie

AGM delegates were united in their support for a Motion moved by Carolyn Ritchie (Glasgow), instructing Council to report on recent research into the impact of homework on young people at all stages and develop guidance for members on homework, which takes account of poverty, home circumstances, and the mental and emotional health of learners and their families. Ms Ritchie argued that, "staff, parents and pupils are pulling their hair out over homework."

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