

The Educational Institute of Scotland

A Combined Campaign Against Education Cuts

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the beginning of the Session (9 September 2011) the Executive Committee considered the range of issues which were facing the EIS and which would require to be addressed during the course of the year. These included:
 - (a) Pensions
 - (b) The McCormac Review of Teacher Employment
 - (c) Curriculum for Excellence
 - (d) Teachers' Conditions of Service
 - (e) Cuts in Public Spending
- 1.2 The Executive Committee decided that immediate priority should be given to the pensions dispute and to the EIS response to the report of the McCormac Review. It was also decided that other campaigning work would be considered afresh following the first months of the new school session. However, in a sense, all of the major issues facing us arise as a consequence of the financial crisis of 2008 and the economic recession which followed.
- 1.3 The first day of coordinated industrial action in the pensions dispute has now taken place on Wednesday 30 November 2011 and we await further developments in the Central TUC/UK Government talks and the Scheme Specific Negotiations. In relation to the McCormac Review, the Special General Meeting, which took place on Saturday 12 November 2011, formed the policy foundations which will guide the Salaries Committee and the SNCT negotiators over the months to come. As far as Curriculum for Excellence is concerned, the Education Committee has considered the terms of a boycott of CfE which was agreed at the 2011 Annual General Meeting and this will be considered by the Executive Committee in the first instance.

2. The Campaign Against Cuts in Public Spending

- 2.1 As indicated above, the overarching Campaign Against Cuts in Local Authority Education Spending, touches directly on the other work being carried out just now (particularly in relation to Pensions and McCormac) and it is perhaps worth restating the principal aims of the campaign and the means by which the EIS has, thus far, prosecuted this area of activity.
- 2.2 The AGM in 2010 approved a paper entitled "EIS Campaign Against Cuts in Local Authority Education Spending" which has been "badged" for public consumption as "Why Must Our Children Pay – Invest In Their Education". This campaign in support of Scottish Education adopted a number of key messages as follows:

- (a) the need to invest in education for the long term;
- (b) education for all;
- (c) education as part of the solution to the economic crisis;
- (d) avoid cuts to education budgets;
- (e) don't make future generation pay for others' mistakes;
- (f) the ongoing need for quality education provision;
- (g) the role of education in a future economic recovery.

2.3 Among the activities which have previously been utilised in relation to the campaign against cuts have been the following:

- (a) political lobbying
- (b) publicity
- (c) collection and collation of information
- (d) petitions
- (e) letter writing
- (f) organisation of national/local/school bases events
- (g) securing wide support from a range of organisations
- (h) national rally and demonstration
- (i) class size campaign
- (j) the use of industrial action.

2.4 In the short to medium term the EIS should continue to devote resources to the following campaigning activities covering the broad "anti-cuts" campaign:

- (a) industrial action and associated internal and external publicity related to the dispute over pensions;
- (b) publicity related to the negotiations over the report of the McCormac Review of Teacher Employment in line with SGM decisions;
- (c) activity related to a possible boycott of future Curriculum for Excellence developments;
- (d) continuation of the collection and collation of data from individual Local Authorities regarding the effects of the cuts on education budgets;
- (e) generating effective publicity across the "anti-cuts" agenda using the following means:
 - (i) the preparation of briefing materials;
 - (ii) press/media releases;
 - (iii) SEJ coverage;
 - (iv) the use of the EIS Website and other electronic means of communication;
 - (v) placed articles in a range of other publications;
 - (vi) production of leaflets, pamphlets, booklets etc.;
 - (vii) advertising material;
 - (viii) recruitment literature;
 - (ix) petition(s);

- (x) letter writing campaigns (newspapers, MSPs act);
 - (xi) organisation of national/local hustings;
 - (xii) meetings/debates etc.;
 - (xiii) political lobbying.
- (f) Industrial action can be utilised in line with the policy paper (agreed in 2010) entitled "Industrial Action and the EIS Campaign Against Local Authority Education Budget Cuts". In addition, a further paper on the use of a "Work to Contract" subsequently was agreed by Council. However, before proceeding to initiate industrial action, a valid trade dispute must exist between the EIS and the relevant employer(s) and all of the statutory provisions regarding the authorisation of and the calling of industrial action must be complied with.

3. Ensuring the active Engagement of Members in the Combined Campaign

- 3.1 The EIS has successfully secured the active participation of a significant number of members both as part of the "Why Must Our Children Pay" campaign and the "Pensions" campaign. It is important, therefore, to ensure that this level of participation and engagement is maintained and, if possible, augmented. The combined campaign which is envisaged will involve a number of related strands each with different emphases applying at different times over the course of the next period.
- 3.2 The nature of the campaigning work over the next few months should, therefore, concentrate on the following issues:
- (a) activity related to the ongoing campaign on pensions;
 - (b) the local government elections with a particular emphasis on education cuts;
 - (c) Curriculum for Excellence and workload issues.
- 3.3 The Pensions Campaign

It may be the case that, following consultation with and lobbying of other public sector trades unions, further days of strike action will be called. Although there is no requirement on the EIS to ballot members again in relation to the dispute, it will be important to keep members informed of any progress made either at UK level talks between the TUC and Government Ministers or as part of "Scheme Specific" negotiations which are currently underway. Members should, however, be encouraged either to write to their MSPs and Westminster MPs on the basis of a "model letter" prepared centrally or to visit his/her MSP/MP at a local surgery to press the case for pensions justice for all public servants. In addition, consideration should also be given to a further lobby of Parliament (in consultation with both the

TUC and other public sector affiliates). The EIS has now written again to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth urging that he engage with the teaching unions with a view to addressing a number of issues related to the Teachers' Scheme at Scottish level.

3.4 The Scottish Local Government Elections

These elections on Thursday 3 May 2012 will provide further opportunities for campaigning work at both national, local and school levels within the Institute. Among the options which should be considered in relation to activity in the run-up to these elections are:

- (a) the production of an EIS Manifesto for Scottish Local Authority Education Services; (this could include sections dealing with: What Is Good about Scottish Education, Challenges we Face, Budget Cuts, Supporting Teachers, Curriculum for Excellence, Nursery Education, Additional Support Needs, EIS priorities);
- (b) Local Association organised "husting meetings" for the main education spokespersons from each of the parties contesting the election;
- (c) a limited public advertising campaign (within Electoral Commission guidelines) and internal communications to members encouraging them to vote;
- (d) encouraging members to write to or meet with candidates to ascertain their views on key education election issues (briefing material to be provided centrally);
- (e) the organisation of a national public debate involving the principal education spokespersons (Councillors and prospective Councillors) from each political party during week commencing 16th April 2012 if possible.

3.5 Curriculum for Excellence

The Education Committee has examined the possibility of a Curriculum for Excellence boycott as envisaged in the successful resolution from the 2011 Annual General Meeting. The strategy and tactics of any boycott campaign would have to be considered carefully in the context of the other campaigning work engaged in this paper. In addition, the work which has previously been carried out on addressing workload issues should be re-visited to ascertain whether some of the mechanisms developed previously could be utilised to address the serious workload burdens currently facing members.

4. Summary

- 4.1 That the Institute continues to give immediate priority to work associated with: the pensions dispute, the Local Government elections (3 May 2012) and Curriculum for Excellence and related workload issues.
- 4.2 That, as opportunities arise, work should be undertaken which would continue to highlight other problems within the education service which arise or have arisen as a consequence of cuts in education expenditure. This would include:
- (a) a restatement of the principal themes of the "Why Must Our Children pay" campaign;
 - (b) continuing to collect and collate information about the extent of the cuts from Local Authorities, Local Associations and individual members;
 - (c) generating publicity for both external and internal uses about the effect and extent of the cuts;
 - (d) consideration of the use of industrial action as a means of resisting the cuts in appropriate situations;
 - (e) further industrial action as part of the "Pensions Campaign";
 - (f) full engagement in the run-up to the Scottish Local Government elections on Thursday 3 May 2012;
 - (g) exploration of further mechanisms to address the workload burdens which currently face members across the country.
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