



09 February 2016

Angela Constance
Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
Midlothian
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Dear Angela

Thank you for meeting the SSTA delegation on Thursday 28 January and discussing a number of issues that are important to our members.

Teacher Workload

The SSTA welcomed the decision to establish the 'Assessment and National Qualification' working group and the priority for an interim report in March 2016. The SSTA has established a working group to identify the demands of the different subject and different qualification levels and would use this information in these discussions.

ICT support systems

We highlighted the frustration experienced by teachers in the use of ICT systems that were intended to support teachers but were a common source of additional workload. The different systems, the lack of suitable equipment and lack of training were major issues for us. We urged you to seek a common system for all local authorities that supported teachers and allowed them to focus on teaching and learning.

Tackling Bureaucracy Reports

We shared with you the results of the recent SSTA members survey that indicated that only 6% of members said that the reports had brought about a reduction in workload with 88% saying that the reports had had 'no impact'. We urged you to seek any evidence that had shown any reduction in workload following the reports and identify areas that 'should not be done' to assist the next round of 'Working Time Agreement' negotiations. We also asked that the Government identify its priority (possibly from the National Improvement Framework) to be included in the School Improvement Plan so that time could be allocated in the Working Time Agreements.

Teacher Shortage

The SSTA welcomed the establishment of the Strategic Board for Teacher Education that would oversee teacher professionalism, school leadership and teachers recruitment. We also welcomed the opportunity for SSTA to be part of the workforce planning working group. We emphasised the importance of a career path and reductions in teacher workload as factors in teacher retention measures. We also highlighted the difference in salary between experienced classroom teachers in Scotland and England and Wales that will not help the teacher shortage situation.

Supply Teachers

The SSTA understands that the SNCT report on supply teachers is due for publication but we could not understate the importance of a good supply teacher service and the advantages of a national register. This register should maximise the availability of supply teachers and lessen the burden of teachers in schools. We saw it as essential that local authorities worked together to produce a common system that was fair to all supply teachers and recognise their importance to the education service

Yours sincerely



SEAMUS SEARSON
General Secretary