

Report of the Education Committee

In a year that promised even more stress within Scotland's schools, the Committee has met four times. In June, October and March several of us met Dr Janet Brown, Chief Executive of SQA and other senior officials. In January we met with Education Scotland where the National Improvement Framework was explained, with a focus on the proposed criteria for achievement of a level. In December members were sent a survey to gauge workload and the levels of confidence in the new Higher and Advanced Higher courses. Members once again responded in considerable numbers. I would like to thank them and the office staff for their time and hard work providing the Committee and the General Secretary with real information to discuss and put to the Government.

Many topics have been discussed at the Committee meetings, including:

- Stress levels for staff and pupils.
- The reality of introducing new qualifications while trying to manage workload.
- Expectations on Guidance staff and the 'Named Person' issue.
- The consequences of the loss of Pupil Support auxiliaries and Learning Support teachers on learning and teaching and workload in the classroom.
- Insurance for non-specialists taking pupils out of school.
- Possible changes to the qualifications to improve work/life balance.

Our meetings with SQA covered many aspects of assessment. We have pressed for a decision on payment for Nat 5 internal assessment of assignments and Added Value Units where this meant that 100% of the assessment was marked internally.

Our introduction to the National Improvement Framework (NIF) was a glimpse of the future. This focuses on the Broad General Education. It will have major consequences for schools, teaching and learning. I am sure it will be a large topic of conversation for the foreseeable future.

The strength of the Education Committee depends on the diversity of its membership. If you feel that you have the skills and abilities to contribute to the work of the Committee, we are always looking to welcome new members.

Coming out on a Saturday after a long hard week in school is a big ask. I would like to thank all the members of the group, especially our new members for their contributions and commitment. Last but not least, I would like to express thanks to Iain Glennie, Professional Officer, who has been a tower of strength, support and knowledge.

Ruth French (Convener)