



Ref: AB/LM
22 November 2024
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John Swinney
First Minister

Shona Robison
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

By email only: firstminister@gov.scot
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Dear Mr Swinney and Ms Robison

I hope that this finds you both well.

I write on behalf of the EIS and its almost 65000 members ahead of next week's Draft Budget to urge you to honour your 2021 Manifesto promises in respect of the employment of an additional 3500 teachers and the reduction of teacher class contact time to a maximum of 21 hours per week.

As you know, these promises were made to the Scottish electorate, tens of thousands of whom are EIS members, and hundreds of thousands of whom are parents of the children and young people that our members teach, care for and nurture in our schools, amidst increasingly difficult conditions and significant resource constriction and constraint.

As you also will know, teacher numbers have fallen in Scotland over the past two years, this posing a real threat to the quality of education provision in Scotland, and in a growing number of instances, to the safeguarding of health and safety in our schools. Very concerningly, violence and aggression by young people is on the rise and the health and safety of our members, predominantly women, is increasingly being put at risk due to insufficient staffing levels.

Against this backdrop, EIS Local Association Secretaries report that some Councils are planning further cuts to teacher numbers by stealth. As you will be aware from the very wide associated publicity and political attention, Glasgow City Council has cut 172

teacher posts this year, with almost 300 more teaching posts to disappear over the next two years.

As matters stand, a profound dichotomy exists in Scottish school education. Teachers work, on average, more than 11 hours per week extra unpaid because their hours of class contact and the class sizes they teach are amongst the highest in the OECD, and there are simply not enough teachers employed within the system to do all of the work that requires to be done; at the same time, though, thousands of teachers in Scotland experience precarity of employment, unable to obtain job security, sometimes for years on end.

To resolve this unfair and unsustainable dichotomy of overwork and under-employment within the teaching profession, and thereby improve the quality of the learning experience for our students, and enable stronger protection of the health and safety of all in our schools, Scottish education needs more teachers.

I am sure that the terms of the relevant SNP 2021 Manifesto promises, that rightly recognise the value of teachers, the need for more to be employed and the need to reduce class contact time, will not have been forgotten by the Scottish Government or the other political parties (all of which promised a minimum of 3000 additional teachers during this parliamentary term), whose support you may be seeking for the forthcoming budget to pass:

'We owe a debt of gratitude to our teachers, who had to adapt overnight in the most difficult of times. We have increased the number of teachers by almost two and a half thousand since the start of the last Parliament but will go further.

We will build up the resilience of our education system, giving teachers more time out of the classroom to prepare for lessons, undertake professional development and tackle the challenges of closing the attainment gap.

We will recruit at least 3,500 additional teachers and classroom assistants and reduce teachers' daily contact time by an hour and a half per week to give them the time they need to lift standards.

And, because teachers know the educational needs of pupils best, we will intensify our approach to empowering the teaching profession and ensuring that the decisions that affect the education of our children and young people are taken closest to them."

The EIS believes that the 2025-26 Draft Scottish Budget is realistically the last opportunity for the Scottish Government, via the Scottish Parliament, to allocate sufficient funds to facilitate the recruitment of the promised number of teachers this parliamentary term, also essential to deliver the promised tangible reduction in teacher workload through class contact reduction.

The EIS and its members recognise that parliamentary business involves difficult decisions that often involve prioritising different areas. However, the commitments promised above were explicit and without equivocation. The EIS believes that they are binding on the Scottish Government and on any political party that might agree to support the 2025 Draft Budget.

On behalf of the EIS and its members, I therefore urge you to honour the commitments that the SNP made when elected to government in 2021.

The EIS and its members call upon you to use some of the additional £5billion of additional funding recently allocated to the Scottish Parliament by the UK Government (which itself has increased spending on learning and teaching in schools by £2.3billion next year, including the recruitment of 6500 additional teachers) and/or to increase tax on wealth and property as necessary, in order to deliver on the important Manifesto promises made to the Scottish electorate to invest in quality education for our young people and in the teaching profession, by increasing teacher numbers and reducing class contact time to a 21-hour maximum.

I would be happy to discuss any aspect of this letter further should that be helpful to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Bradley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Bradley
EIS General Secretary