

Tackle Excessive Workload Now!

The Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, has made clear his intention to “declutter” the primary curriculum and to address excessive teacher workload – allowing teachers to concentrate on what makes a difference to pupils’ learning.

The EIS welcomes this commitment and is keen to work with the Cabinet Secretary to realise in practice the promise contained within the policy rhetoric.

The key messages contained in the start of term statement issued by Education Scotland are not new – they essentially reiterate the main points of the Tackling Bureaucracy reports. However, the clear commitment from John Swinney perhaps creates an opportunity to press home more successfully the changes required to make a difference.

The EIS is reiterating these key messages (bullet points overleaf) and urging members to say a collective “No” when practice in your school conflicts with these clear directions.

Support will be provided by the Institute through a variety of approaches to any group of members wishing to act on this advice: speakers at branch meetings; LA secretary support; collective grievances; direct representation to local directorates; issues tabled at LNCTs; contact with HMIE and Education Scotland; advice on school action plans and Working Time Agreements.

Contract - Members are reminded that you have a contractual 35-hour week which breaks down into:

- A maximum teaching commitment of 22.5 hours
- A minimum preparation and correction time of 7.5 hours (1/3rd of teaching duties)
- A maximum of 5 hours for collegiate activity covered in your **school Working Time Agreement – which needs to have been negotiated, agreed to and signed by both the SMT and the EIS branch.**

Everything in the School Improvement Plan needs to have been quantified in terms of staffing and time and this should match to agreed allocation of time in the WTA.

Action: If this is not the case in your school, contact your Local Association secretary for support and assistance. NB: The SNCT (Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers) agreement on workload indicates that every school’s improvement plan should have a work stream aimed at tackling bureaucracy – if your SIP doesn’t, demand that it should.

Key Messages – What to Avoid

Planning

- Avoid writing overly-detailed plans for the year ahead which limit your flexibility to respond to children's and young people's needs, interests and progression
- Do not spend excessive time completing detailed daily or weekly planning templates or writing detailed evaluations of plans
- Do not plan for individual Es and Os or spend excessive time writing detailed descriptions of learning activities
- Do not 'tick off' all of the Es and Os separately.

EIS advice – do not submit detailed written plans to senior managers for approval – the Tackling Bureaucracy Report makes clear that planning is for your benefit and to support learning and teaching – it is not an accountability tool. Professional dialogue should be the medium employed in collegiate schools. If your planning regime does not accord with the points above, contact your Local Association Secretary for advice.

Assessment and Reporting

- Avoid spending time on assessment activities which do not help to identify children's and young people's next steps in learning
- Avoid duplication and keeping evidence of every detail within the Benchmark
- Avoid spending too much time collecting a wide range of evidence for moderation purposes
- Do not track and record progress against individual Es and Os
- Do not track progress and achievement using the terms 'developing, consolidating, secure'
- Do not over-assess learners or assess the same content repeatedly in different ways
- Do not create large portfolios of evidence
- Do not spend time writing long reports for parents which describe lots of classwork or use professional jargon.

Action - If the assessment and reporting regime in your school does not accord with the points above, contact your Local Association Secretary for advice.

Act Now - Act Together

Take Control of Workload