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| 21 February, 2014 |  |

**More support for teachers and schools**

**£5 million to help with delivery of new qualifications.**

Secondary school teachers across Scotland will get more time and support to deliver the new national qualifications, through a package worth £5 million.

Following discussions with teachers, teaching unions and other national organisations, Minister for Learning Dr Alasdair Allan has put in place a further package of support for secondary schools including:

* £4.75 million to local authorities to fund more time for teachers and schools to play their part in delivering the new national qualifications, including the new Highers
* An additional in-service day in session 2014/15 to help the continuing implementation of national qualifications, including the new Highers
* £250,000 for local authorities to deliver school level events to improve parents’ understanding of the new qualifications
* A modified approach to verification, based on evaluation of verification to date
* New “route-maps” through assessment for teachers.

Dr Allan said:

“Teachers and pupils across Scotland are making good progress as they work towards the new National Qualifications and prepare for Highers. I want to make sure that we do everything we can to support this work and that is why I am putting in place an additional package to help school and authority level preparations.

“This £5 million support will ensure that teachers get the time and space they need to come together to work through assessment procedures, as well as other aspects of the new qualifications. In doing so, teachers will be able to make use of new “route-maps” through assessment, developed by Education Scotland. More detailed information on these will be available for headteachers at the first of the four national leadership events, which start on Monday.

“'I also welcome the fact that SQA are today setting out how they will be modifying their approach to verification following their evaluation of verification to date, and in response to teacher feedback.

“Parents are a key part of their child’s learning and it is crucial that they understand the improvements being made to Scottish education and qualifications. We’ve already worked with the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) to produce a range of materials. I want to support their use with parents, and that is why I am also making funding available for school-level events to inform parents about the new qualifications.

“This Scottish Government is listening to teachers, parents and all others involved in this reform programme. Once again we are taking action to ensure our schools have all the support they need to make the new national qualifications a success.”

EIS General Secretary Larry Flanagan said:

"The EIS believes that this new support package is a positive development that will be very welcome in our secondary schools. Teachers are continuing to work extremely hard to assimilate new assessment requirements and to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for the first set of National exams in May.

“It is encouraging that the Scottish Government and the national education bodies are listening to teachers' concerns that the EIS raised relating to both workload and bureaucracy, and are taking steps to lighten the load and increase support for teachers and pupils. In particular, the new route maps to assessment and the modifications to the verification procedures for internal assessment are positive steps towards lightening the burden on both teachers and pupils, freeing up more time to focus on core learning and teaching and vital exam preparation."

Ken Cunningham, General Secretary of School Leaders Scotland added:

“SLS is delighted to see the government continuing to respond to Heads and teachers concerns. Schools are keen to get this right for all their students and support of this kind is essential to secure the confidence in the delivery of the courses and the new assessment arrangements.

“The key ingredients of additional time and supportive resources are welcome as is the continued recognition of the SQA that some administrative assessment burdens can be eased while maintaining standards and the integrity of the qualifications. We continue to have absolute confidence in all our staff helping our young people achieve the best they can.”

Iain Ellis, Chair of National Parent Forum of Scotland also said:

“The National Parent Forum of Scotland welcomes this additional support showing the continued commitment of Scottish Government to listen to parents and teachers and to ensuring that everything possible is put in place to help our young people taking the new qualifications do as well as they possibly can.

“We recognise that there is nothing more important than teachers who are prepared and able to help our children succeed and although we are reluctant to see our children’s education further disrupted by more additional in-service days, we accept that it may be necessary for one last time next year to ensure that teachers have more time to prepare to deliver the new Higher.

“We would urge schools to engage with their own Parent Council/Forums on their plans for use of this time and funding so that parents can understand how it will benefit their children.”

**Background**

The leadership events planned to run across Scotland in February and March for Head Teachers, Depute Heads and school management will explore options for building on the positive transformation that Curriculum for Excellence is bringing to education. The events which are being supported by ADES, SLS, NPFS and the SQA will have a focus on the senior phase of CfE and delivery of the new qualifications. Those attending the events will learn about new resources which streamline and simplify the various guidance available on delivering the new qualifications; from subject specific material to over-arching information on assessment and verification.

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