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To Teachers and Practitioners across Scotland

7 November 2017

Dear Colleague

Today I have launched a consultation on the content of a new Education Bill which will empower you and the schools in which you work. The reforms which the Bill will bring about recognise the deep sense of professional responsibility to do the very best for the children in your care which I know that you feel. They will enable decisions about the education of those children to be taken by the people who know that child best – their parents, their teachers, their school and their community.

The Bill will give teachers and headteachers more power over decisions about learning and teaching, freeing you to make a real difference to the lives of children and young people. The Bill's key aims are to:

- Establish a Headteachers' Charter to define their responsibilities as leaders of learning in schools and set out the support they can expect.
- Provide the legislative underpinning for the establishment of Regional Improvement Collaboratives.
- Improve parental and community engagement in school life and learning.
- Strengthen the voice of children and young people, promoting and supporting pupil participation.
- Establish an Education Workforce Council to take on the responsibilities of the General Teaching Council for Scotland and the Community Learning and Development Standards Council and to register other education professionals.

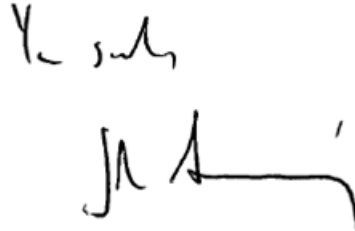
The consultation will seek views on detailed policy proposals for these issues and will run until 30 January 2018. Responses will inform the drafting of the Education Bill which will be introduced to Parliament during the current parliamentary year.

A full version of the consultation paper can be found here:

<https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/education-scotland-bill/>

In addition to these reforms, schools and teachers will be supported by enhanced career and development opportunities, including leadership, specialist and improvement roles; high quality support and improvement services from Regional Improvement Collaboratives who will provide tailored, specific support based on what your school needs; and educational support services from local authorities.

I look forward to hearing your views on these proposals and to working with you to create an education system better able to give every child the best start in life and to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Swinney', with a stylized, cursive script.

JOHN SWINNEY