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To: All headteachers in Scottish public schools

Copy to: Directors of Education in Scottish local authorities
Heads of schools of education at Scottish universities
Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Scotland
Chief Executive, Education Scotland

14 December 2011

Dear colleagues

In January 2011 Graham Donaldson published the report from his review of teacher education, [Teaching Scotland's Future](#). It sets out a compelling vision, based on the clear evidence that improving the quality of teaching, through improved professional learning across teachers' careers, is essential in the continuing drive to improve Scottish education. In fact there is good evidence for claiming that no single thing that we can do to improve quality will make a bigger difference. That is why we are writing to every headteacher in Scotland – we want to update you about the work we are doing and set out what we believe you also need to be doing now, working with your colleagues.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has set up a National Partnership Group for Teaching Scotland's Future, which we jointly co-chair. Our job is to co-ordinate the implementation of many of the main recommendations in Teaching Scotland's Future, bringing together the expertise and capacity of local authorities, universities, Scottish Government and other national partners, including the GTCS and Education Scotland.

Together we want to achieve the following outcomes:

- Career-long professional learning focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for learners.
- Effective approaches to professional learning fostering, and sustained by, a culture of professional and collegiate responsibility.
- Professional learning making best use of available resources and the full range of available expertise, through effective partnership working at every level.

In order to achieve these, we will work over the coming months to develop the detailed thinking that needs to underpin the implementation of Graham Donaldson's recommendations. Some of the most important changes we will be seeking to implement will be:

- More rigorous selection to the early phase of teacher education
- A new model for the early phase of teacher education, building one coherent experience through initial teacher education and induction.
- Replacement of BEd degrees with degrees combining professional studies with in-depth academic study beyond education.



- Enhanced career-long professional learning, at Masters level, centred on self-evaluation and outcomes for children.
- Systematic identification of priority areas for continuing professional development
- Development of a clear, progressive and cohesive educational leadership framework.

Much of that work will be undertaken by sub-groups of the National Partnership Group, between now and next June. We recognise that some of those changes will take time, and that there will be a need for support as part of their implementation. However there are recommendations that you and your colleagues don't need to wait to start to implement – **you can and should be starting now to:**

- Continue to shift the balance of CPD activities from set-piece events to more local, team-based approaches which centre on self-evaluation and professional collaboration (recommendation 33).
- Plan and evaluate CPD more directly on its intended impact on learners (recommendation 34).


You may already be considering how you can do so. If not, you can start that process by working with colleagues in your establishment and more widely to consider the following questions:

- **How effectively do we support colleagues in the early phase of teacher education (from initial teacher education through to the end of the induction year) and what benefit do we get from this process?**
- **How effectively do we make use of coaching and mentoring in professional learning?**
- **How consistently do we link the planning and evaluation of professional learning to improvements in teaching and learning?**
- **Is that link a core focus of our professional review and development (or equivalent)?**
- **Is the balance of the professional learning that we undertake shifting so that it is more collaborative and team-based, centred around self-evaluation and achieving an effective balance between tailored individual development and school improvement?**
- **Is our professional learning of sufficiently high standard – always challenging and stretching us professionally?**
- **Do we actively seek out and use evidence and engage wider capacity for improvement from others – other schools and learning providers, colleagues in local authorities, universities and Education Scotland?**

We will continue to use a number of routes to provide information and opportunities to engage as we take forward this important work. You can contribute to the discussion via our page on the Engage for Education website (www.engageforeducation.org/teachingscotlandsfuture) and shortly through a dedicated area on Glow which you can find by visiting our own webpages (www.NPGTeacherEducation.org). You can also email us at NPGTeacherEducation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

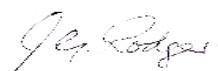
We would be very pleased to hear your views on Teaching Scotland's Future, the work we are taking forward and how you are working in your establishment to improve professional learning and enhance the difference that it can make to your learners.

Yours faithfully,



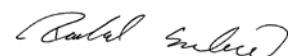
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