Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
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To Teachers and Practitioners
across Scotland

29 August 2016

Dear Colleague

When I was appointed Education Secretary, I said I would promote the strength of Scottish education and listen to pupils, teachers and parents about how we could work together to improve it. I have been doing that since my appointment.

My central objective is to ensure we maximise the precious time teachers have to teach young people; that is how we will deliver further success in Scottish education. I accept in the last few years, that time has become cluttered by a plethora of guidance and advice that, however well intentioned has led to increased workload, confusion and duplication. I am determined to tackle that problem.

In addition, I am acutely aware that secondary teachers are particularly concerned about workload relating to the national qualifications. I will be taking early action to address this.

The attached note from HM Chief Inspector of Education is being sent to every teacher in Scotland to give absolute clarity about what is and what is not required of you. It is intended to place you in a position to know without doubt what you should and should not be asked to do. It is clear and simple and is the definitive piece of guidance which you should use.

I hope it will help you to make judgments about what needs to be done and what does not. It is perhaps best summed up by the comments of one teacher to me: "Don't do anything unless it is relevant to the learner's journey".

I am absolutely committed to liberating the teaching profession from unnecessary bureaucracy to enable it to do what it does best – teach. I will be taking further steps to reinforce this approach in the period ahead. This is the start of the 'new narrative' on Curriculum for Excellence that the OECD review (December 2015) recommended we develop; a curriculum which enables every young person in Scotland to achieve their potential through the highest quality of learning and teaching.

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