

# A 2020 Vision for Education in Scotland



A · D · E · S  
Association of Directors of Education in Scotland

“challenge the  
status quo”

“work collectively to  
secure improvements  
for Scotland’s  
children”



The **Association of Directors of Education in Scotland** (ADES) is committed to developing a world class system for education in Scotland.

- We will maximise the potential of all young people, giving them the best possible start in life, nurturing their talents and supporting them to become active and participative citizens.
- We will raise educational attainment and achievement for all, and actively advocate and intervene on behalf of those children from disadvantaged circumstances.
- Building on our successes, we will have a dynamic sector-leading curriculum which gives young people educational and vocational advantage.
- Teachers, educators, and leaders of the very highest quality, working with local communities will be key to delivering our vision.
- In so doing we will see Scotland’s international comparator standings for education improving on a global stage which requires a young workforce and young citizens of the highest calibre.

Promoting achievement  
Tackling inequalities  
Securing improvement

# Our 2020 Learner Journey shall:

Promoting achievement • Tackling inequalities • Securing improvement

**“a high priority must be placed on professional learning for all”**

# Improving our System



- provide all learners with well-planned experiences which develop their individual talents, enable them to achieve of their best, to learn in safe and dynamic environments, and to attain the highest possible standards
- ensure that high and improving standards of literacy and numeracy are key outcomes and core requirements for all learners appropriate to their age, stage and potential
- promote educational achievement, high attainment outcomes, and encourage opportunities to develop the health and well-being of young Scots
- ensure the highest quality learning and teaching for each and every learner
- involve parents, carers and young people in local and national agenda setting
- include a range of academic, vocational and entrepreneurial opportunities and service to local communities preparing learners for a diverse and dynamic world
- be planned and delivered by teachers and other educators of the highest standard working in and across schools, nurseries, colleges and universities, serving their local communities and in partnership with businesses
- require agencies to work in partnership and using GIRFEC principles, intervene to keep children safe
- be supported by world class learning through technology solutions.



**“Our guiding principle must be ‘getting it right for every child’ driven by our shared moral purpose to improve outcomes for all and reduce inequity”**

Scotland has much to be proud of in the services we provide for children and young people and the current range of policy initiatives have much to offer individuals, families and communities. Our system for policy development, largely based on consensus as opposed to statute, has provided us with an excellent platform to go from “good to great”.

However, we cannot be complacent. There is an unacceptable gap in the performance of those young people from the most challenging social circumstances, and a consequential underachievement of their potential. This, set against a background of significant resource challenge across all public sector agencies and variances of performance across and within schools, suggests that a new, more agile model of system led improvement is required for Scottish education.

For this to happen it is essential to have high quality data alongside professional dialogue, intelligent accountabilities, inspiring well-qualified teachers and educators and committed leadership at all levels in a culture of continuous improvement.

However, ADES feels that Scotland lacks a National Performance Framework which breaks through the current barriers in the system, integrates local and national improvement agencies and focuses on agreed outcome measures. It must allow for local innovation and be far more effective and efficient than current practices.

There is strong evidence internationally of the essential features of successful whole system reform. We should draw on this evidence and apply it to Scotland’s own unique context, for example, successes in Ontario and London.

“We know that change is never easy, and realizing goals set out in Achieving Excellence will require the continued commitment of all partners. However, the evidence of the past decade demonstrates that our education system is capable of making real, positive change.”

“The London story is above all about the power of purposeful leadership at every level of the system.”

<sup>1</sup> *Achieving Excellence – A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*

<sup>2</sup> *Lessons from London Schools: Investigating the Success*

# Why do we need to do this?

**ADES** is an independent self-funded association whose primary function is to advocate, influence and engage on behalf of children and young people in Scotland with their education and well-being as our focus. With this in mind we feel the time is right to



promote a debate on key policy dimensions in education. This will have the needs of children firmly at the centre but also have the future needs of Scotland in mind.

There are some undeniable pressures on the system at present including unprecedented public sector spending reductions which will require greater effectiveness and efficiency, an ongoing debate on public sector reform, and, critically, a need to ensure that all children and young people have opportunities to achieve of their best no matter where they live.

ADES is in a unique position to capture the impacts of such pressures and wishes to promote a debate on a range of factors that influence opportunities for learners in Scotland. The financial challenges facing councils are such that ADES is witnessing variances in the present learner journey in different parts of Scotland.

In recent evidence to The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, in response to their call for comment on “strengthening local democracy”, ADES said:

“The commission should examine whether current arrangements serve local democracy best in terms of efficiency and equity; or whether there is too much variance and inconsistency to guarantee that each child in Scotland has an equally good chance of getting the best education possible regardless of where they live.”

## Our next steps

We want to have wide ranging discussions with key stakeholders and influencers about our 2020 vision. These will include other professional associations, trade unions and national agencies in Scottish education including in children’s services. We will prepare thought pieces and policy papers which flesh out the detail of our recommendations.

ADES is uniquely placed to lead this debate due to the independent and professional nature of our association. Ultimately it is a debate about what our children and young people need and deserve from the system but also it is a debate about Scotland’s future economic and social prosperity.