

The National Discussion
A Summary

“What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in future and how do we make that a reality”

National Discussion Public Engagement Statistics

Let's Talk Scottish Education

We came to you

Events and discussions took place in every part of Scotland, from Shetland to the Borders, led by schools, community groups and third sector organisations – reaching more than

38,000 people.



You shared



We received feedback in a host of different ways – including **drawings, mindmaps and videos**

You answered

+5600 responses

You got together

Over 20 group responses were submitted



You joined **26,000 pupils and students** attended online assemblies



You gave us your time
More than **80 people** attended a series of online public events



You joined the discussions on

More than **6,000 posts** on Twitter about the National Discussion using the hashtag #TalkScottishEducation

More than **10 million social media users** have seen the hashtag



- Main Message
- Vision Statement
- Guiding Values
- Call to Action – Educating our Future

“All learners in Scotland matter”

Vision Statement for the Future of Scottish Education: All Learners in Scotland Matter Children and young people are at the heart of education in Scotland.

The Scottish education system values collaborative partnerships that engage all learners, the people who work within and with the education system, parents, and carers to ensure that all learners in Scotland matter.

All learners are supported in inclusive learning environments which are safe, welcoming, caring, and proactively address any barriers to learning and inequities that exist or arise.

Education in Scotland nurtures the unique talents of all learners ensuring their achievement, progress, and well-being.

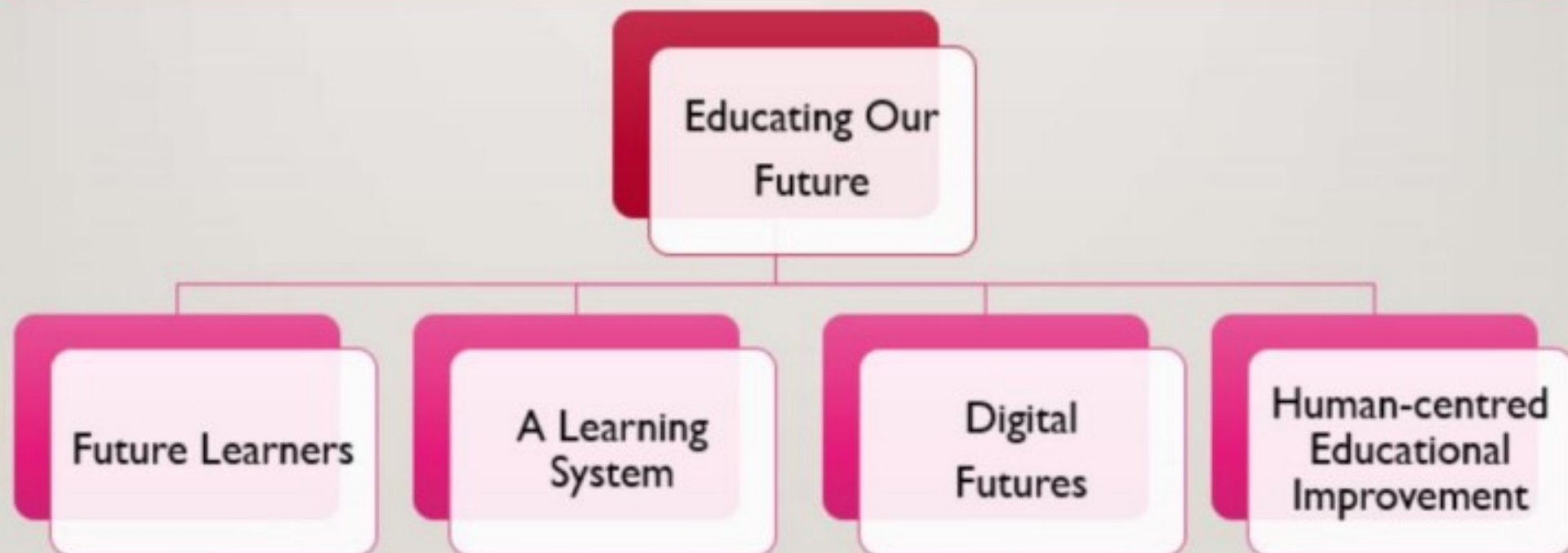
Each child and young person in Scotland has high-quality learning experiences which respect their rights and represents the diversity of who they are and the communities they live in.

Each child and young person experiences great teaching, resources, and support for joyful learning that builds their confidence and equips them to be successful and to contribute in their life, work, and world, so they know how much they matter.

All Learners in Scotland Matter: Guiding Values

- **Ambitious** – The Scottish education system will be ambitious by having high expectations for all learners and enabling each child and young person to develop and achieve their ambitions.
- **Inclusive** – The Scottish education system will value, respect, recognise, and represent the diversity of all children and young people, and provide equitable educational experiences and opportunities for all learners.
- **Supportive** – A hallmark of the Scottish education system will be to engage each child, young person, and adult meaningfully and appropriately in an education process that provides the necessary supports for all learners to progress, achieve, and realise their personal ambitions.

C2A HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY



In summary, key themes concerning learning were:

- Literacy and numeracy continue to be fundamental for learners combined with a broad-based education with every child and young person having access to subject choices and skills development that reflect their interests and personal ambitions and will equip them in their lives, work, and world.
- Cultivating joy and the love of learning where learning takes place in a range of settings and approaches, including the importance of play and outdoor learning for all ages.
- The need for a shift from progression based on age and stage of schooling to flexible pathways and supported transitions to meet the developmental needs and interests of children and young school throughout their early years and school experiences.

Learning - Call to Action:

All learners should have equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities and experiences and flexible pathways linked to each learner's interests, needs, development, and ambitions. Cultivating joy and a love for lifelong learning is important. The expertise and judgement of the education profession, including deep curricular knowledge and access to curriculum-linked resources, working with support staff and specialists is vital to achieving high-quality learning.

In summary, responses to the National Discussion concerning inclusivity and diversity included:

- There needs to be early identification of children and young people's needs with provision of adequate supports and resources, including funding, staffing, and accessible buildings.
- Education needs to include learning about all forms of diversity, discrimination, and disadvantage for children and young people and for education workers and support staff, including attention to curriculum, teaching and learning resources, and to diversifying the workforce.
- Accessible buildings, safe, inclusive, and welcoming cultures, and free access to educational opportunities and experiences are vital to include, value and protect all children and young people.

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- Recognising that diversity of place, community connections and unique contexts, alongside ensuring equitable educational experiences, must continue to be a central feature of Scottish education.
 - Schools alone cannot address systemic and structural inequities and meet the needs of all children and young people, multi-agency, third sector and community working is required.

Inclusivity and Diversity – Call to Action:

There is a need to ensure adequate sustained funding to provide staffing and specialist resources to be able to achieve the commitment to inclusivity and meeting the individual needs of each learner, with a particular urgency for children and young people identified as having Additional Support Needs (ASN). Learning about and appreciating the diversity of people and places is important and needs to be reflected in curriculum, teaching and learning resources, and represented in the education workforce. Safe and inclusive cultures that nurture respectful relationships and address discrimination and harassment are imperative.

In summary, key responses concerning Health and Wellbeing were:

- The importance of a range of pastoral care, whole-school approaches to nurture, attention to mental health, and access to specialist resources and experts is needed.
- Safe, caring spaces and healthy relationships are fundamental, including addressing all forms of bullying, harassment, and violence.
- Attention to children and young people's physical health requires more opportunities for play, physical education and activities, and nutritious school meals for all.

Health and Wellbeing – Call to Action:

There is a continued need to proactively learn about and support mental, emotional, and physical health, and healthy relationships, and to provide whole-school approaches to nurture, safe learning spaces, and anti-bullying practices.

In summary, key responses concerning education professionals were recognition of:

- Centrality of the education workforce to the system and its importance in supporting learners and learning now and in the future.
- The pivotal need for high quality professional learning for professionals at all levels in the system.
- The need to diversity the workforce and address barriers to entry into a career in education and discriminatory practices affecting recruitment, promotion, and retention.
- Attention to staff wellbeing and working conditions are essential to respect and protect a high-quality education workforce.

Education Professionals – Call to Action:

The education workforce should be viewed holistically as a system-wide resource. The recognition, and reward, for the important work undertaken, by all in the workforce needs to be established and reflected in career opportunities and high-quality professional learning to support high-quality practice as a common entitlement for all. Attention to diversifying the workforce and to supporting staff wellbeing is needed.

In summary, the key findings concerning curriculum are:

- CfE in both its realisation and delivery is viewed as being unnecessarily variable. It is viewed as overly cluttered with too much content and potentially not the right content.
- The four capacities remain a real strength of the curriculum and should be retained.
- As part of the review of the curriculum the technical framework of the BGE (including the Experiences and Outcomes) needs to be re-visited to ensure it is still fit for purpose and aligns with emerging recommendations about the Senior Phase from the 'Hayward Review'.

Curriculum – Call to Action:

A regular curriculum review process should be established to ensure that the curriculum remains fit for purpose, reflects contemporary learner needs, and can be effectively delivered in ways to ensure that all learners in Scotland have high quality curricular linked learning experiences.

In summary, the responses concerning future assessments and qualifications identified:

- The need for a broader set of qualifications that affords learners, more opportunities to demonstrate a breadth of learning progress and achievements.
- Changes are needed to the current examination system to offer learners more opportunities and diverse pathways to success and recognition.
- The importance of continuous assessment and formative assessment, as well as external assessments, in providing feedback to support learners' progress.

Future Assessments and Qualifications –

Call to Action: A future education system should capitalise upon, and harness, the abilities, skills, and talents of all children and young people in Scotland. It should break down the academic/vocational divide, offer a broader set of assessment and qualification options, and formally recognise and reward the achievements of all learners.

In summary, the National Discussion responses concerning digital futures highlight:

- Investment in digital learning is a critical issue for the education system in Scotland. Without large-scale investment, over time, learners in Scotland will find themselves disadvantaged and disenfranchised, in a future world of work.
- Digital learning must be at the core of Scottish education so that all learners in Scotland have choice, opportunity, and security in their lives, both now and in the future.

Digital Futures – Call to Action:

Digital upskilling and digital transformation across the Scottish education system, at all levels, is an urgent priority for all learners in a future digital world. Attention to maximising the existing skills and infrastructure available to further build digital capacity is essential.

In summary, the National Discussion responses concerning the features of human-centred educational improvement valuing and listening to people involved in the Scottish education system needs to be a central feature of all decisions and actions.

Human-Centred Educational Improvement – Call to Action:

Human-centred educational improvement requires listening to children and young people's views and putting their needs at the heart of the Scottish education system, engaging parents/carers, families, and communities, and the education profession leading the way forward with professional expertise and judgement informing decisions and actions.