

SCHOOL LEADERS SCOTLAND MANIFESTO FOR EDUCATION 2026



This **School Leaders Scotland Education Manifesto** sets out a clear and hopeful vision for Scotland's future, where every child and young person can thrive in an education system that is equitable, ambitious, and effectively resourced. Education is our most powerful lever for equity, social justice, economic growth, democratic participation, and social and civic wellbeing. Delivering high-quality education requires genuine trust in education professionals, appropriate and sustainable funding, and credible, innovative leadership across a connected system that anticipates and serves the diverse and dynamic needs of learners and their communities.

We call for courageous leadership and long-term commitment with a united voice from all parties to build a fairer, more democratic education system, where all learners and educators are valued and supported to flourish.

School Leaders Scotland urges all political parties to commit to:



School leaders across our country work tirelessly to provide the best possible educational experiences and outcomes for Scotland's young people. Despite their unwavering commitment, the pressures they face are increasingly complex and demanding. This manifesto presents a vision for how Scotland can strengthen its education system by empowering the people who lead it. Our proposals reflect the lived experience of school leaders: what is working, what must change, and what is essential to build a system that is fair, sustainable, and ambitious for all.

We believe that every part of the education system must work collaboratively to create the conditions in which schools, and the learners they serve, can thrive. Our priority is to ensure that those who lead Scotland's schools are empowered to focus on what matters most: delivering high quality learning and supporting the wellbeing and success of every child and young person.

This manifesto is the result of a comprehensive engagement exercise with our members, and therefore it truly reflects their hopes and aspirations. School Leaders Scotland has no political allegiance. Our single request is that the needs of Scotland's young people are at the forefront of all political decision-making about the future of education. We know that education has the power to transform lives and to do so effectively we must all work collaboratively and with unity of purpose. SLS has hope that the forthcoming Parliamentary elections will bring such unity, and the commitment required to drive purposeful, sustainable change. We look forward to working constructively with partners across the system to turn these commitments into meaningful action.



David Barnett

SLS General Secretary



Kirsty Ayed

SLS President

School Leaders Scotland urges all political parties to commit to:

- 1 STRENGTHEN, PROTECT AND SUSTAIN SCOTLAND'S EDUCATION WORKFORCE**
 - **Invest in and deliver a national workforce recruitment and retention strategy** that addresses shortages, and geographical, socio-economic, cultural and racialised barriers to recruitment, retention and promotion.
 - **Retain staff** through reduced class contact time, a manageable workload, fair and proportionate job-sizing, and explicit steps to reduce the combined impact of local and national bureaucracy.
 - **Empower headteachers** with appropriate autonomy to appoint the qualified professionals that most meet the needs of their unique contexts.
 - **Recognise the emotional toil of the significant responsibilities placed upon school leaders** and provide statutory wellbeing support for all School Leaders.
 - **Tackle teacher and leader shortages through competitive pay and conditions and high-quality national professional learning**, that motivates and supports them to thrive and stay in the profession.
 - **Strengthen teacher and leadership recruitment to and retention in rural and island contexts** via support for placements, housing, travel and university partnerships.

- 2 RESOLVE SCOTLAND'S EDUCATION FUNDING CRISIS: DELIVER FAIR AND EQUITABLE RESOURCING FOR ALL SCHOOLS**
 - **Provide significant and sustainable investment in Additional Support for Learning**, including specialist teachers, support staff and protected time to address the complexity and scale of Additional Support Needs (ASN)
 - **Rebuild and resource the ASN and wider support system** by funding specialist provision, restoring the role of multi agency services and redressing any assumption that schools alone will meet escalating needs.
 - **Address the barriers to education created by poverty and discrimination** to ensure educators are equipped with the resources to challenge inequity and support the full diversity of learner identities, pathways and aspirations.
 - **Guarantee equitable funding across local authorities**, through recognition that equal opportunity requires equitable (not uniform) resourcing, and deliver proportionate investment for rural, island and Gaelic Medium Education contexts.

- 3 DELIVER COURAGEOUS, COMPREHENSIVE AND COHERENT REFORM OF SCOTLAND'S CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS**
 - **Align all aspects of curriculum, assessment and qualifications reform in one coherent national approach**, addressing ambiguity, fragmentation and conflicting agendas across the various educational bodies informing our system.
 - **Engage authentically with the profession to strategically plan and resource education reform**, ensuring the system's future is credible, deliverable, and sustainable.
 - **Move away from exam dominated attainment data and compliance driven inspection judgements** to broader, more meaningful measures of school success that value context, inclusion, creativity, innovation and diverse learner achievement.
 - **Invest in a modern, connected education system**, that supports confident and ethical use of digital and AI technologies.

- 4 REBUILD TRUST, AUTONOMY AND PROFESSIONAL RESPECT IN SCOTLAND'S EDUCATION SYSTEM**
 - **Put learners at the centre of system improvement** by committing to long term national priorities that transcend short term political cycles.
 - **Trust school leaders to make context based professional decisions** within a national framework that genuinely empowers the profession and values educators' lived experience and professional expertise.
 - **Provide consistent and equitable support from all local authorities and national agencies**, addressing variability in provision and in accountability processes across the country.
 - **Ensure proportionate, strategically planned consultation with decisive action** that delivers on promises and empowers school leaders to build on system strengths.
 - **Reset the public narrative on education** by celebrating the professionalism, creativity and impact of educators, and by working with professional associations and the media to highlight the successes of our young people, our schools and our education system.

Tha **Manifesto Foghlaim Stiùirichean Sgoile na h-Alba** a' mìneachadh sealladh soilleir agus dòchasach airson àm ri teachd na h-Alba, far am faod gach pàiste agus neach òg soirbheachadh ann an siostam foghlaim a tha cothromach, àrd-amasach, agus le goireasan èifeachdach. 'S e foghlam an inneal as cumhachdaiche againn airson co-ionannachd, ceartas sòisealta, fàs eaconamach, com-pàirteachadh deamocratach, agus sunnd sòisealta is catharra. Tha lìbhrigeadh foghlaim àrd-inbhe ag iarraidh earbsa fhìor ann am proifeiseantaich foghlaim, maoinachadh iomchaidh agus seasmhach, agus ceannardas earbsach, ùr-ghnàthach thar siostam ceangailte a bhios a' ro-innse agus a' frithealadh feumalachdan eadar-mheasgte agus fiùghantach luchd-ionnsachaidh agus an coimhearsnachdan.

Tha sinn ag iarraidh ceannardas misneachail agus dealas fad-ùine le guth aonaichte bho gach pàrtaidh gus siostam foghlaim nas cothromaiche, nas deamocrataiche a thogail, far a bheil luach agus taic aig gach neach-ionnsachaidh agus neach-foghlaim gus soirbheachadh.

Tha Stiùirichean Sgoile na h-Alba a' brosnachadh gach pàrtaidh poilitigeach gealltainn a dhèanamh ri:



Bidh stiùirichean sgoile air feadh na dùthcha againn ag obair gun sgur gus na h-eòlasan foghlaim agus na toraidhean as fheàrr a thoirt do dhaoine òga na h-Alba. A dh'aindeoin an dealas gun teagamh, tha na cuideaman a tha romhpa a' sìor fhàs iom-fhillte agus dùbhlanaich. Tha am manifesto seo a' taisbeanadh lèirsinn air mar as urrainn do dh'Alba an siostam foghlaim aice a neartachadh le bhith a' toirt cumhachd do na daoine a tha ga stiùireadh. Tha na molaidhean againn a' nochdadh eòlas beò stiùirichean sgoile: dè tha ag obair, dè a dh' fheumas atharrachadh, agus dè a tha riatanach gus siostam a thogail a tha cothromach, seasmhach agus àrd-amasach dha na h-uile.

Tha sinn a' creidsinn gum feum a h-uile pàirt den t-siostam foghlaim obrachadh còmhla gus na suidheachaidhean a chruthachadh anns am faod sgoiltean, agus na luchd-ionnsachaidh a tha iad a' frithealadh, soirbheachadh. Is e ar prìomhachas dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil cumhachd aig an fheadhainn a tha a' stiùireadh sgoiltean na h-Alba fòcas a chuir air na rudan as cudromaiche: ionnsachadh àrd-inbhe a libhrigeadh agus sunnd agus soirbheachas gach pàiste is neach òg a chumail suas.

S e toradh eacarsaich conaltraidh fharsaing leis na buill againn a tha sa mhanifesto seo, agus mar sin tha e dharribh a' nochdadh an dòchasan agus an aislingean. Chan eil dilseachd phoilitigeach aig Ceannardan Sgoile na h-Alba. 'S e an aon iarrtas againn gum bi feumalachdan òigridh na h-Alba aig fìor thoiseach a h-uile co-dhùnadh poilitigeach mu àm ri teachd foghlaim. Tha fios againn gu bheil cumhachd aig foghlam beatha atharrachadh agus gus sin a dhèanamh gu h-èifeachdach feumaidh sinn uile obrachadh còmhla agus le aonachd adhbhair. Tha SLS an dòchas gun toir na taghaidhean Pàrlamaideach a tha ri thighinn an aonachd sin, agus an dealas a tha a dhìth gus atharrachadh seasmhach, adhbharach a bhrosnachadh. Tha sinn a' coimhead air adhart ri bhith ag obair gu cuideachail le com-pàirtichean air feadh an t-siostaim gus na geallaidhean sin a thionndadh gu gnìomh brìoghmhor.

Tha Ceannardan Sgoile Alba a' brosnachadh a h-uile pàrtaidh poilitigeach gealltainn a dhèanamh ri:

- 1 NEARTAICH, DÌON AGUS CÙM SUAS LUCHD-OBACH FOGHLAIM NA H-ALBA**
- Tasgadh a dhèanamh ann an ro-innleachd nàiseanta airson fastadh is gleidheadh luchd-obrach, agus a libhrigeadh, a bhios a' dèiligeadh ri gainnead, agus cnapan-starra cruinn-eòlasach, sòisio-eaconamach, cultarail agus cinnidh a thaobh fastadh, gleidheadh agus àrdachadh.
 - Luchd-obrach a chumail tro ùine conaltraidh nas lugha sa chlas, obair-obrach a ghabhas riaghladh, meud obrach cothromach is co-rèireach, agus ceumannan soilleir gus buaidh còmhla bìurocrasaidh ionadail is nàiseanta a lughdachadh.
 - Ceannardan-sgoile a chumhachdachadh le fèin-riaghladh iomchaidh gus na proifeiseantaich teisteanasach a tha a' freagairt air feumalachdan an co-theacsan sònraichte aca fhastadh.
 - Saothair tòcail nan dleasan mòra a tha air stiùirichean sgoile aithneachadh agus taic sunnd reachdail a thoirt do gach Ceannard Sgoile.
 - Gainnead thidsearan is stiùirichean a làimhseachadh tro phàigheadh is cumhaichean farpaiseach agus ionnsachadh proifeasanta nàiseanta àrd-inbhe, a bhrosnaicheas agus a tha gan taic gus soirbheachadh agus fuireach san dreuchd.
 - Fastadh is gleidheadh thidsearan is stiùirichean a neartachadh ann an co-theacsan dùthchail is eileanach tro thaic do chur-an-dreuchd, taigheadas, siubhal agus com-pàirteachasan oilthigh.

- 2 FUASGLADH ÈIGINN MAOINEACHAIDH FOGHLAIM NA H-ALBA: GOIREASAN COTHROMACH IS COTHROMACH A LIBHRIGEADH DO GACH SGOIL**
- Tasgadh mòr is seasmhach a thoirt seachad ann an Taic a Bharrachd airson Ionnsachadh, a' gabhail a-steach tidsearan speisealta, luchd-taic agus ùine fo dhìon gus dèiligeadh ri iom-fhillteachd agus sgèile Feumalachdan Taic a Bharrachd (ASN).
 - Ath-thogail agus goireasan a thoirt don ASN agus don t-siostam taic nas fharsainge le bhith a' maoinachadh solar speisealta, ag ath-nuadhachadh dreuchd sheirbheisean ioma-bhuidhne agus a' ceartachadh barail sam bith gum bi sgoiltean leotha fhèin a' coinneachadh ri feumalachdan a tha a' sìor fhàs.
 - A' dèiligeadh ris na cnapan-starra a thaobh foghlaim a chruthaich bochdainn agus leth-bhreith gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil na goireasan aig luchd-foghlaim gus dùbhlann a thoirt do neo-ionannachd agus taic a thoirt do iomadachd iomlan dearbh-aithne, shlighean agus miannan luchd-ionnsachaidh.
 - Maoineachadh cothromach a ghealltainn thar ùghdarrasan ionadail, tro bhith ag aithneachadh gu bheil feum air goireasan cothromach (chan e aonfhoirmeil) airson cothrom co-ionann, agus tasgadh co-rèireach a libhrigeadh airson co-theacsan Foghlaim dùthchail, eileanach agus tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig.

- 3 ATH-LEASACHADH MISNEACHAIL, COILEANTA AGUS CO-LEANAILTEACH A THOIRT GU BUIL AIR CURRAICEALAM, MEASADH AGUS TEISTEANASAN NA H-ALBA**
- A h-uile taobh de ath-leasachadh churraicealaim, measadh agus teisteanasan a cho-thaobhadh ann an aon dòigh-obrach nàiseanta cho-leanailteach, a' dèiligeadh ri mì-chinnt, roinneadh agus clàran-gnothaich connspaideach thar nan diofar bhuidhnean foghlaim a tha a' toirt buaidh air an t-siostam againn.
 - Ceangal frinneach a dhèanamh leis a' phroifeasan gus ath-leasachadh foghlaim a dhealbhadh agus a ghoireachadh gu ro-innleachdail, a' dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil àm ri teachd an t-siostaim creidsinneach, libhrigeadh, agus seasmhach.
 - Gluais air falbh bho dhàta coileanadh a tha fo smachd dheuchainnean agus breithneachaidhean sgrùdaidh a tha air an stiùireadh le gèilleadh gu tomhasan nas fharsainge, nas brìghmhoire de shoirbheachas sgoile a chuireas luach air co-theacs, in-gabhail, cruthachalachd, ùr-ghnàthachadh agus coileanadh eadar-mheasgte luchd-ionnsachaidh.
 - Tasgadh ann an siostam foghlaim ùr-nodha, ceangailte, a tha a' toirt taic do chleachdadh misneachail agus beusach de theicneòlasan didseatach agus AI.

- 4 ATH-THOG EARBSA, NEO-EISIMEILEACHD AGUS SPÈIS PROIFEASANTA ANN AN SIOSTAM FOGHLAIM NA H-ALBA**
- Cuir luchd-ionnsachaidh aig cridhe leasachadh an t-siostaim le bhith a' gealltainn prìomhachasan nàiseanta fad-ùine a tha a' dol thairis air cearcallan poilitigeach gearr-ùine.
 - Earbsa a bhith agad ann an stiùirichean sgoile gus co-dhùnaidhean proifeasanta stèidhichte air co-theacs a dhèanamh taobh a-staigh frèam nàiseanta a bheir cumhachd dha-rìribh don dreuchd agus a chuireas luach air eòlas beò agus eòlas proifeasanta luchd-foghlaim.
 - Thoir seachad taic cunbhalach agus cothromach bho na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail agus buidhnean nàiseanta uile, a' dèiligeadh ri caochlaideachd ann an solar agus ann am pròiseasan cunntachalachd air feadh na dùthcha.
 - Dèanamh cinnteach à co-chomhairleachadh co-rèireach, air a dhealbhadh gu ro-innleachdail le gnìomh cinnteach a choileanas geallaidhean agus a bheir cumhachd do stiùirichean sgoile togail air neartan an t-siostaim.
 - Ath-shuidhich an aithris phoblach air foghlaim le bhith a' comharrachadh proifeiseantachd, cruthachalachd agus buaidh luchd-foghlaim, agus le bhith ag obair le comann proifeasanta agus na meadhanan gus soirbheasan ar daoine òga, ar sgoiltean agus ar siostam foghlaim a shoilleireachadh.