VALUE EDUCATION
VALUE EDUCATORS

Shaping education for our communities and the pupils we serve.
The pandemic has proved just how valuable schools are to children, young people and society.

During the last year, education staff have created innovative ways to support learning, keep students connected and nurture those who need extra care.

It’s reminded us how much school contributes to the lives of young people and how much rests on the professional skills of you, our education staff, and the relationships you build with your pupils.

**VALUE EDUCATION**

But the pandemic has caused huge damage to children and young people’s learning and tested the current education system to the limit. Moving beyond the pandemic things need to change. That is why the NEU is launching **Value Education** – a drive to empower members to reclaim their professionalism and campaign on issues of importance to the profession: funding, assessment, accountability, and child poverty.

Throughout the pandemic teachers, leaders and support staff have been on the front line – teaching children remotely, safeguarding and caring for them.

But England’s education system is weakened because our teachers are leaving the profession increasingly early – one in four within two years of starting the job, nearly 40 per cent within ten, driven out by excessive and intensive workload, lack of professional agency and stress.

To make matters worse, the Government has imposed a pay freeze. This will compound the damage caused by a decade of real terms pay cuts, which has contributed to recruitment and retention problems in the profession.

The NEU will prioritise supporting you to take collective steps now, in your school or college, to take control of your professional life.
To help you to achieve change, the union will provide on-going advice and guidance on issues you have identified as key: in-school accountability, workload and flexible working for example. The first set of guidance on how to tackle unreasonable in-school accountability measures will be available soon.

Your local branch and staff in your region are also providing support to help you to reduce workload and work intensity and to ensure members’ voices are heard when decisions are made in your workplace. The first set of guidance will be available in November.

**VALUE EDUCATION, VALUE EDUCATORS**

As well as shaping what is happening in workplaces, we will be highlighting your key areas of concern and what parents and students are worried about so that, together, we can change things and make them better.

The costs of Covid-19 have been borne by schools and colleges which just haven’t been given what is necessary to help children succeed.

Education funding needs to increase substantially if we want every child to fulfil their potential. But the amount pledged by Government to compensate for lost learning amounts to just £310 per pupil. Other countries are spending far more – the US is investing £1,830 per young person and it’s £2,090 a head in the Netherlands.

Class sizes continue to increase – secondary class sizes are at their highest since records began; primary their highest this century. As a result, teachers and support staff have a far harder job ensuring every child gets the attention they need.
TO VALUE EDUCATION, THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO INCREASE FUNDING AND INVEST IN RECOVERY NOW

The most successful nations are developing education systems which enable them to compete in a world where new technologies and industries are changing the way people work, communicate, learn and develop.

The UK is being left behind in this race to economic prosperity and social inclusion.

Disadvantaged pupils in England are 18 months of learning behind their more affluent peers by the time they finish their GCSEs.

Covid-19 has shone a harsh light on the plight of 4.3 million children living in poverty in the UK. That’s 31 per cent of children, or nine in a classroom of 30.

Child poverty destroys children’s potential. An estimated nine per cent of UK families do not have a laptop, tablet or desktop computer. Two million UK households don’t have access to the internet. These families are not able to fully participate in modern society or the workplace, and remote learning is much more difficult without devices or the internet.

Forty per cent of the education attainment gap is set in stone before children even start school. And 70 per cent of children growing up in poverty live in a household where at least one person is in paid work.

TO VALUE EDUCATION, WE NEED TO END CHILD POVERTY AND MAKE SURE NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND.

The English education system tops the OECD league table for the number of tests its pupils take.

Over-testing has a profoundly negative effect on pupils’ attitudes to learning and the development of their skills. England now tops the international league tables for rote learning and memorisation.
Children entering education in 2021 will be young adults in 2033. Schools can prepare them for jobs that have not yet been created, for technologies that have not yet been invented, to solve problems that have not yet been anticipated.

To navigate through such uncertainty, students will need to develop curiosity, imagination, resilience and self-regulation; they will need to respect and appreciate the ideas, perspectives and values of others; cope with failure and rejection, and to move forward in the face of adversity.

To achieve these goals, our curriculum and assessment system must be changed. Our children and young people need experience of making and doing as well as reading and writing. They need more teaching and less testing.

To value education, high stakes testing should be scrapped and replaced with a 21st century assessment and qualification system fit for our children and young adults.

Working together we can put the voice of our profession at the centre of shaping the education system, in the best interests of our pupils and the communities we serve.
WORKLOAD – DOES IT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY?

A 2018 international survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on teaching and learning in schools found that:

- In England, 38 per cent of teachers experience stress a lot of the time (more than double the OECD average).
- Teachers work more unpaid overtime than any other profession in England, with working weeks approaching 50 hours.
- Teachers in England are excessively watched and only those in one other country, Singapore, are more observed and monitored.
- Teachers in England are less likely than their OECD counterparts to be asked their views on professional issues which are central to their working lives – including the curriculum and the school’s disciplinary policies.

We know that NEU union groups can negotiate with their leadership to reduce excessive elements of accountability that drive up workload. We want educators to be empowered to steer curriculum and pedagogy. We want to ensure staff are valued and that they receive the best pay, conditions and pensions.

We will need to build a movement for change – at workplace, district and national levels.

We will work together, with the full weight and resources of our union, to support you in your workplace to be a part of this change.

Together with your workplace colleagues, you could:

- collectively discuss professional issues together;
- raise ideas, recommendations and concerns in negotiations with your leadership team;
- make use of NEU resources;
- elect an NEU rep or reps in your workplace.

Kevin Courtney and Mary Bousted
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