

# COMMISSION ON SCHOOL REFORM

## BULLETIN: SURVEY RESULTS

### BACKGROUND

In November 2011, the think tanks Reform Scotland and the Centre for Scottish Public Policy set up the Commission on School Reform to consider whether the school system in Scotland is meeting the present and future needs of young people and to make specific recommendations as to how the system might be improved or suggest areas that require further enquiry.

The Commission has the following objectives:

- to form a fair and objective view of Scotland's educational performance compared to what is provided elsewhere,
- to consider the challenges that Scottish education is likely to face in the next 50 years and how likely it is to meet those challenges,
- to identify any problems within the current school system in Scotland and try to analyse the root causes of them, and
- to develop proposals that will enable young people, whatever their background, to fulfil their potential and meet the unprecedented challenges of the modern world.

The Commission invited comment from all with an interest in Scottish school education and is currently considering the oral and written evidence received ahead of publishing a final report in early 2013. That report will offer suggestions for Government and look to assist young people, parents, teachers and others to shape their own objectives for the education system.

### CONTEXT

As part of the wider evidence gathering process the Commission carried out an online survey of people's views of the Scottish school education system. The survey was promoted through social networks and received 326 responses. The following tables break down the responses to the questions depending on whether the respondent is still at school or how long ago they left full time education.

We accept this survey is not scientific and participants were self-selecting, however, it does present some interesting findings. For example:

- 61 per cent said that they did not think the Scottish school education system was sufficiently ambitious for both its pupils and Scotland
- 63 per cent thought their school education was geared towards them passing exams
- 49 per cent said they did not feel they were given enough support and advice to help with the transition from school
- 59 per cent said they did not think young people had sufficient say in relation to their education
- 62 per cent said that they understood the Curriculum for Excellence and how it would change school education
- While 74 per cent felt that the Scottish school education system helped them reach their potential, 36 per cent said that system only helped more academically able children to reach their potential

Generally, the findings echo the sentiment outlined in our [interim report](#) that while the Scottish system performs well, there is certainly room for improvement.

<b>1. Are you?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
In primary education	20	6%
In secondary school education	87	27%
In FT higher or further education	32	10%
Left FT education less than 5 years ago	12	4%
Left FT education between 5 & 10 years ago	16	5%
Left FT education more than 10 years ago	159	49%
<b>Answered question</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>2. Do you feel that your school education helped you/ is helping you reach your potential?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	65.0% 13	77.0% 67	56.3% 18	75.0% 9	62.5% 10	78.6% 125	74% 242
No	25.0% 5	9.2% 8	43.8% 14	25.0% 3	25.0% 4	17.6% 28	19% 62
Don't Know	10.0% 2	13.8% 12	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12.5% 2	3.8% 6	7% 22
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

<b>3. Do you think the Scottish school education system helps..?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
All children reach their potential	35.0% 7	37.9% 33	18.8% 6	16.7% 2	6.3% 1	22.6% 36	26% 85
Only more academically able children reach their potential	27.6% 6	46.9% 24	46.9% 15	58.3% 7	68.8% 11	34.0% 54	36% 117
Only better off children reach their potential	15.0% 3	6.9% 6	28.1% 9	16.7% 2	12.5% 2	21.4% 34	17% 56
No-one reach their potential	0.0% 0	3.4% 3	6.3% 2	8.3% 1	6.3% 1	8.2% 13	6.1% 20
Don't know	20.0% 4	24.1% 21	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	6.3% 1	13.8% 22	15% 48

Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326
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<b>4. Is Scottish school education sufficiently ambitious for both its pupils and Scotland?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	45.0%	46.0%	12.5%	25.0%	6.3%	18.9%	27%
	9	40	4	3	1	30	87
No	40.0%	26.4%	78.1%	75.0%	81.3%	76.1%	61%
	8	23	25	9	13	121	199
Don't Know	15.0%	27.6%	9.4%	0.0%	12.5%	5.0%	12%
	3	24	3	0	2	8	40
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

<b>5. Who do you think CURRENTLY has the main influence over the school education you receive (or used to receive)?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Scottish government	25.0%	43.7%	43.8%	16.7%	43.8%	38.4%	39%
	5	38	14	2	7	61	127
Local authority	40.0%	16.1%	28.1%	50.0%	12.5%	34.0%	29%
	8	14	9	6	2	54	93
Head teacher	15.0%	16.1%	21.9%	25.0%	25.0%	19.5%	19%
	3	14	7	3	4	31	62
Parent	5.0%	4.6%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	5%
	1	4	1	0	0	9	15
Yourself	5.0%	5.7%	0.0%	8.3%	6.3%	0.6%	3%
	1	5	0	1	1	1	9
Peers/friends	0.0%	2.3%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1%
	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Other/Don't know	10.0%	11.5%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	1.9%	5.2%
	2	10	0	0	2	3	17
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**6. Who do you think SHOULD have the main influence over the school education you receive (or used to receive)?**

	Are you?						
	In primary education	In secondary school education	In FT higher or further education	Left FT education less than 5 years ago	Left FT education between 5 & 10 years ago	Left FT education more than 10 years ago	Total
Scottish government	25.0%	14.9%	15.6%	8.3%	12.5%	22.0%	19%
	5	13	5	1	2	35	61
Local authority	25.0%	9.2%	9.4%	16.7%	12.5%	12.6%	12%
	5	8	3	2	2	20	40
Head teacher	25.0%	23.0%	15.6%	33.3%	43.8%	39.0%	32%
	5	20	5	4	7	62	103
Parent	10.0%	3.4%	21.9%	8.3%	0.0%	13.8%	11%
	2	3	7	1	0	22	35
Yourself	10.0%	34.5%	34.4%	25.0%	25.0%	7.5%	19%
	2	30	11	3	4	12	62
Peers/friends	0.0%	1.1%	3.1%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1%
	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
Other/Don't know	5.0%	13.8%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	5.0%	6.7%
	1	12	0	0	1	8	22
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**7. Do you think your school education was/ is geared towards..?**

	Are you?						
	In primary education	In secondary school education	In FT higher or further education	Left FT education less than 5 years ago	Left FT education between 5 & 10 years ago	Left FT education more than 10 years ago	Total
Helping you pass exams	55.0%	46.0%	78.1%	91.7%	81.3%	67.3%	63%
	11	40	25	11	13	107	207
Helping you learn the skills necessary for life	10.0%	19.5%	3.1%	8.3%	0.0%	3.8%	8%
	2	17	1	1	0	6	27
Both of these equally	15.0%	27.6%	6.3%	0.0%	12.5%	20.8%	20%
	3	24	2	0	2	33	64
Neither of these	10.0%	5.7%	12.5%	0.0%	6.3%	7.5%	7%
	2	5	4	0	1	12	24
Don't know	10.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	1%
	2	1	0	0	0	1	4
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**8. Do you think your school did enough to help provide any additional support you needed, whether for difficulties you were having with class work, or other issues such as problems at home or bullying, which impacted on your ability to learn?**

	Are you?						
	In primary education	In secondary school education	In FT higher or further education	Left FT education less than 5 years ago	Left FT education between 5 & 10 years ago	Left FT education more than 10 years ago	Total
Yes	50.0%	52.9%	28.1%	25.0%	31.3%	31.4%	38%
	10	46	9	3	5	50	123
No	45.0%	18.4%	53.1%	50.0%	50.0%	42.1%	38%
	9	16	17	6	8	67	123
Not applicable	5.0%	28.7%	18.8%	25.0%	18.8%	26.4%	25%
	1	25	6	3	3	42	80
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**9. Do you feel you were given enough support and advice to help with your transition from school?**

	Are you?						
	In primary education	In secondary school education	In FT higher or further education	Left FT education less than 5 years ago	Left FT education between 5 & 10 years ago	Left FT education more than 10 years ago	Total
Yes	30.0%	29.9%	43.8%	33.3%	25.0%	31.4%	32%
	6	26	14	4	4	50	104
No	40.0%	13.8%	56.3%	66.7%	68.8%	64.8%	49%
	8	12	18	8	11	103	160
Not applicable - I haven't left school yet	30.0%	51.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16%
	6	45	0	0	0	0	51
Don't know	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%	0.0%	6.3%	3.8%	3%
	0	4	0	0	1	6	11
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**10. When compared with other countries, do you feel that the Scottish education system is perceived to be...?**

	Are you?						
	In primary education	In secondary school education	In FT higher or further education	Left FT education less than 5 years ago	Left FT education between 5 & 10 years ago	Left FT education more than 10 years ago	Total
Among the best in the world	15.0%	17.2%	18.8%	8.3%	0.0%	6.9%	11%
	3	15	6	1	0	11	36
Above average	45.0%	27.6%	37.5%	33.3%	43.8%	38.4%	36%
	9	24	12	4	7	61	117
Average	30.0%	36.8%	25.0%	50.0%	31.3%	33.3%	34%
	6	32	8	6	5	53	110
Below average	5.0%	9.2%	12.5%	8.3%	18.8%	18.2%	14%
	1	8	4	1	3	29	46
Don't know	5.0%	9.2%	6.3%	0.0%	6.3%	3.1%	5%
	1	8	2	0	1	5	17
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**11. Do you think there is too much emphasis on measuring and testing?**

	Are you?						
	In primary education	In secondary school education	In FT higher or further education	Left FT education less than 5 years ago	Left FT education between 5 & 10 years ago	Left FT education more than 10 years ago	Total
Yes	55.0%	51.7%	75.0%	83.3%	75.0%	52.8%	57%
	11	45	24	10	12	84	186
No	35.0%	31.0%	21.9%	16.7%	25.0%	40.3%	34%
	7	27	7	2	4	64	111
Don't know	10.0%	17.2%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	9%
	2	15	1	0	0	11	29
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**12. Do you think primaries, secondaries, colleges and universities offered a joined up approach?**

<b>Are you?</b>							
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	20.0%	29.9%	9.4%	0.0%	6.3%	11.9%	16%
	4	26	3	0	1	19	53
No	65.0%	35.6%	78.1%	83.3%	93.8%	78.6%	67%
	13	31	25	10	15	125	219
Don't know	15.0%	34.5%	12.5%	16.7%	0.0%	9.4%	17%
	3	30	4	2	0	15	54
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

**13. Do you think young people have sufficient say in relation to their education?**

<b>Are you?</b>							
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	50.0%	27.6%	15.6%	16.7%	12.5%	38.4%	32%
	10	24	5	2	2	61	104
No	45.0%	57.5%	84.4%	83.3%	87.5%	51.6%	59%
	9	50	27	10	14	82	192
Don't know	5.0%	14.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.1%	9%
	1	13	0	0	0	16	30
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

<b>14. Do you think the most important element of a good teacher is..?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
To be well informed about the subject	5.0%	10.3%	9.4%	0.0%	6.3%	2.5%	6%
	1	9	3	0	1	4	18
To keep discipline in the class room	5.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2%
	1	2	0	0	0	4	7
To listen to the opinions of young people	10.0%	28.7%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	4.4%	11%
	2	25	0	3	0	7	37
To communicate their knowledge, skills and enthusiasm	65.0%	56.3%	90.6%	66.7%	93.8%	89.3%	79%
	13	49	29	8	15	142	256
Don't know	15.0%	2.3%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	1.3%	2%
	3	2	0	1	0	2	8
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

<b>15. Do you understand what the Curriculum for Excellence is and how it will change Scottish education?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	85.0%	36.8%	53.1%	75.0%	56.3%	74.2%	62%
	17	32	17	9	9	118	202
No	15.0%	52.9%	46.9%	25.0%	43.8%	22.0%	33%
	3	46	15	3	7	35	109
Don't know	0.0%	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	5%
	0	9	0	0	0	6	15
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326



<b>16.Are parents given enough opportunity to be involved in their children's education?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	80.0%	39.1%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	51.6%	44%
	16	34	8	3	2	82	145
No	20.0%	46.0%	75.0%	66.7%	68.8%	39.0%	46%
	4	40	24	8	11	62	149
Don't know	0.0%	14.9%	0.0%	8.3%	18.8%	9.4%	10%
	0	13	0	1	3	15	32
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326

<b>17. Do you think there is enough communication between your local community and your local schools?</b>							
	<b>Are you?</b>						
	<b>In primary education</b>	<b>In secondary school education</b>	<b>In FT higher or further education</b>	<b>Left FT education less than 5 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education between 5 &amp; 10 years ago</b>	<b>Left FT education more than 10 years ago</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yes	70.0%	33.3%	6.3%	16.7%	6.3%	34.6%	32%
	14	29	2	2	1	55	103
No	30.0%	52.9%	90.6%	83.3%	75.0%	51.6%	57%
	6	46	29	10	12	82	185
Don't know	0.0%	13.8%	3.1%	0.0%	18.8%	13.8%	12%
	0	12	1	0	3	22	38
Answered question	20	87	32	12	16	159	326