



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

Over the past fortnight, with Parliament still in recess, the education policy landscape has been dominated by the publication of reports and research papers, as well as the ongoing leadership campaigns of Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss. Both have set out some thoughts on education policy, outside of the inevitable conversation around grammar schools.

The Sutton Trust published findings on A levels and university access post-pandemic, and recommendations to support access in the face of learning loss. We also saw an interim report from TASO (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in HE) on the [impact of summer schools on disadvantaged students](#), which found that programmes are failing to reach those most in need.

In Scotland, it was reported that the SNP will [consider a motion at their party conference](#) this year to increase the age at which children start school by two years to six, in line with most other European countries.

Top stories

Conservative leadership hopefuls Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak talk education and skills

- As the Conservative leadership campaign has continued both candidates have begun to outline their education and skills policy.

Liz Truss

- Would lift the ban on new grammar schools.
- Outlined a six point plan to position herself as the “education Prime Minister”.
 - Replacing failing academies with “a new wave of free schools” and expanding high performing existing academies.
 - Improving numeracy and literacy standards, with a target of 90% of primary school students meeting expected standards.
 - Reforming university admissions, including granting automatic Oxbridge interviews to students with 3A*s at A Level and basing admissions on actual grades instead of predicted.
 - Reviewing the “balance of funding” between subsidised university fees and vocational training, moving funding from poor quality degree courses to vocational training.
 - Following through on government plans to change staff to child ratios for early years childcare.
 - Extending the range of early years care providers who accept government childcare entitlements and giving working parents access to childcare around the school day.

Rishi Sunak

- Wants to [see PE lessons rated by Ofsted](#) inspectors to ensure exercise isn't “pushed out” of the school day at primary and secondary schools.

- Pledged to ban all the 30 Confucius Institutes in the UK and force universities to disclose foreign funding partnerships of more than £50,000.
- Suggested he would reform the curriculum to focus on workplace skills, as well as science, maths and technology
- Pledged to put Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) on to a statutory footing, providing schools with guidance on what is acceptable, and giving parents the ability to request to see teaching materials, including from external groups. He would also stop organisations like Stonewall delivering SRE.

Impetus publishes [report on the National Tutoring Programme \(NTP\)](#)

- The youth charity and NTP founding partner, Impetus, published a report outlining a package of suggested reforms to help the NTP reach the thousands of children who have fallen behind at school.

Recommendations included:

- That DfE and tuition partner contractors should ensure availability of programme data, to help the sector understand if tuition partners are reaching those most in need.
- That DfE should expect its tuition partner contractor to offer a capacity building programme to enable existing tuition partners to improve and ensure high standards, while also supporting providers who fall short of accreditation criteria to make a stronger application next year.
- That DfE should explore allowing higher subsidy rates for higher quality tuition partners to incentivise schools to choose higher quality tuition partners.

The Sutton Trust publishes [new research on A Levels and university access](#)

- In the context of pupils sitting the first national exams since 2019, the research focused on pandemic-related learning loss and the effectiveness of mitigations, as well as its impact on university admissions. It found that:
 - 62 per cent of this year's applicants felt they had fallen behind their studies compared to where they would have been without the pandemic.
 - Only 52 per cent of A level students thought the arrangements for exams this year had fairly taken into account the impact of the pandemic on students' learning. Meanwhile 45 per cent of teachers thought the extra measures put in place for this year's exams didn't go far enough.
- The report's recommendations including giving special consideration to applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds; providing additional support on results day; universities identifying learning gaps early and providing the support required to fill these (alongside additional wellbeing support); allotting Government funding for additional catch-up support for students in 16-19 education; and Ofqual reviewing and adapting this year's mitigations with input from teachers and this year's cohort.

DfE publishes [independent research on changing skills needs in selected occupations](#)

- The Skills and Productivity Board commissioned RAND Europe and the Institute for Employment Research (IER) to undertake research looking into changing skills needs within occupations in 4 priority areas: managers, science and technology, skilled trades and health.
- It found a need for technical and digital skills, including knowledge and use of technologies including hardware and software, and data science. Participants also suggested that the promotion of multiple routes into these professions and the funding of continuous professional development should be improved.
- Another important category was communication and people skills, which were established to remain critical in future. Teamwork and being able to address complex needs in a coordinated way, the ability to provide a long term vision, risk management, opportunity exploitation and EDI awareness were all seen as vital skills.

Areas of change focused on skills required for modern ways of working, and it was noted that policy intervention on culture change was needed.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies publishes **new analysis of school spending and costs**

- Overall, the IFS estimates that by 2024-25, after accounting for the specific costs facing schools, school spending per pupil will still be 3% lower than in 2010. Key findings include:
- Planned reversal of past school spending cuts is no longer on track; actual costs faced by schools are growing faster; school costs to increase by 6% in 2022–23 (but should remain affordable); and cost increases won't be felt equally, with a large amount of funding going to high-needs pupils.
- Taken together, the picture is that schools will likely be facing future real-terms cuts.

Pearson news

Diversity & Inclusion in Schools Parent Research We have partnered with Parentkind to see what parents had to say about equality, diversity, and inclusion in schools. Our research found that while most parents feel they have a good understanding of diversity and inclusion in education, gender stereotypes still play a role in subjects studied in schools. Alongside this, parents highlighted LGBT+ definitions as an area that they might not feel confident discussing with their child. [Read our report here](#)



Pearson tweets of the week



Other news

Parliamentary

- Health and Social Care Committee: Workforce: recruitment, training and retention in health and social care

Regulatory and funding bodies

- ESFA Update: 3 August 2022
- ESFA: Higher Technical Education Skills Injection Fund
- OfS: Evaluation of National Data Skills pilots: Final report
- OfS: Student outcomes and teaching excellence (Consultation outcome)
- OfS: Consultation on changes to the National Student Survey (New consultation)
- OfS: National Student Survey 2022 pilot
- OfS: Evaluation of the student engagement in knowledge exchange programme
- QAA launches International Programme Accreditation
- QAA: Skills and Education Group Access – delayed results
- QAA: Inclusive assessment attributes developed by Collaborative Enhancement Project team
- OIA welcomes UUK guidance on sharing personal data in harassment cases
- UKRI: Independent review of research bureaucracy published
- UKRI: Open access policy update: July 2022
- SLC Board meeting minutes 28 April 2022

Schools

- DfE: Condition Improvement Fund: 2022 to 2023 outcome (Update)
- Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2020 to 2021
- Impetus: The National Tutoring Programme will fail young people unless it reforms
- IFS: School spending and costs: the coming crunch
- The Sutton Trust: Over 1 in 5 A-level students missed more than 20 days of school due to COVID-19 in run up to exams this year
- UCL CEPEO: Post-pandemic funding for SEND pupils
- ONS: Understanding earnings gaps for free school meals recipients in England

Further Education & Skills

- DfE: Skills needs in selected occupations over the next 5 to 10 years (Independent report)
- GMCA and Association of Apprentices launch partnership to boost opportunities for apprentices

Higher Education

- Widening participation in higher education: 2022 (Statistics)
- Initial teacher training performance profiles: 2020 to 2021
- OfS: Students learn data skills best as part of other modules, says report
- Office for Students to implement new approach to regulating student outcomes
- OfS uses its university approval powers for the first time
- New questions on freedom of expression and mental wellbeing in National Student Survey shake-up
- UUK: Changing the culture: sharing personal data in harassment cases

Policy Watch

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- TASSO new report: interim findings on the impact of summer schools in the time of COVID-19
- Onward: How can the UK become a science superpower?
- Reform Scotland: Scrap the cap: Towards 'no win, no fee' higher education

Scotland

- Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2020/21 (Statistics)

Wales

- Impartial careers advice and guidance to young people aged 14-16 years provided by Careers Wales advisers: government response

Consultation Watch

New consultations

- Office for Students: Consultation on changes to the National Student Survey Closes: 1 September 2022
- Public Accounts Committee: Evaluating innovation projects in children's social care Closes: 1 September

Closing consultations

- Ofqual: Regulating alternative academic and alternative technical qualifications at level 3 Closes: 10 August
- Institute for Apprenticeships and Higher Education: Post-16 consultation Closes: 10 August 2022
- Childcare: regulatory changes Closes: 10 August 2022
- Reviews of education, health and care (EHC) plans: proposed timescales Closes: 12 August 2022

Ongoing consultations

- Office for Students: Consultation on specialist provider funding method Closes: 5 September 2022
- Science and Technology Committee (Lords): People and skills in UK science, technology, engineering and mathematics Closes: 6 September 2022
- Implementing the direct national funding formula Closes: 9 September 2022
- Ofsted/CQC: A new approach to area SEND inspections Closes: 11 September 2022
- Work and Pensions Committee: Plan for Jobs and employment support Closes: 16 September 2022
- Early years funding formulae Closes: 16 September 2022
- Implementing a new FE funding and accountability system Closes: 21 September 2022
- Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education: Legal, Finance and Accounting Route Review Closes: 30 September 2022
- Northern Ireland: Consultation on functions currently delivered by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI) Closes: 30 September 2022

What's happening in Parliament next week

Parliament has risen for summer recess and will return on Monday 5 September.

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