

2014/8

29 August 2014

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in August 2014

Main talking points

It's been exams results month of course and much of the talking has been about the impact of some of the so-called 'Gove' reforms on results. The programme of reform continues however and Ofqual's 2014-2017 Corporate Plan, published this month and listed under the Reports below, offers a useful guide to what's in store. For a Labour perspective, Tristram Hunt's speech also cited below, contains some interesting detail about their plans. Elsewhere this month, primary schools may be interested in the provisional key stage 2 test results now released, secondary schools in the CBI's 'Future Possible' Report on young people's skill programmes, FE in the consultation on success measures and HE in Labour's plans for a revamped higher-level tech route. All are referenced below.

Key headlines from the month

- Key Stage 2 tests. 79% of pupils achieve level 4 or above in 2014 tests
- Free meals. Concerns continue about costs and capacity
- Primary maths support. To be beamed in from India in trial programme
- PISA tests. More Chinese pupils to participate in future tests
- Free Schools. London Institute study finds the disadvantaged often miss out
- Studio Schools. 4 more announced
- UTCs. 7 more announced
- League Tables. Head teacher groups plan alternative model
- Digital technology. Ofcom confirm 6yr olds more savvy than 45 yr olds
- Inspections. Ofsted publish revised guidance for coming year
- Teachers. A quarter move into top income tax bracket
- GCSEs. A*-Cs up to 68% but concerns about performance in English and science numbers
- A levels. A*-Es slight drop to 98%, A*s up to 8.2%, STEM entries up
- AS level. Labour confirm it'll re-couple
- Regulation. Ofqual sets out its priorities for over the next 3 years
- Work experience. CBI call for co-ordinated system of Local Brokers
- 16-19 Study Programmes. DfE confirms latest guidance.
- Traineeships. Scheme reaches first birthday with 7,400 learners signed up
- Apprenticeships. New campaign and standards rolled out
- NEETs. Down to 9yr low
- Skills Crunch. Prince's Trust highlights where it's biting hardest
- 19+ learning. Government consults on new outcome success measures
- FE. Government update the sector in latest briefing letter
- HE student funding. UUK's new Panel calls for evidence
- Student Satisfaction. Bath, Keele and St Andrews come out on top
- HE. Labour sets out plans for Tech Universities

Reports/Publications of the month (in order of publication)

- **Apprenticeship Funding Reform.** BIS updates on its earlier funding consultation confirming introduction of its initial co-investment model in 2014/15 with full new system from 2016
- **Digital Communications Infrastructure Strategy.** The government calls for views from respective industries as it seeks to map out a future strategy
- **Trends in Undergraduate Recruitment.** UUK publishes its latest report into UK and EU undergrad recruitment and finds an increase in alternative providers but decrease in p/t numbers
- **Ending number controls in HE.** The HE Policy Institute (HEPI) analyses the Australian experience in removing HE number controls and raises concerns about a rushed approach here
- **Only a Matter of Time?** The think tank Policy Exchange examines the issues around extending the school day and finds many schools already do but that a voluntary approach works better
- **College Governance.** BIS's latest guide, timed to coincide with work from the AoC, highlights the important role college governors play in holding college leaders to account
- **Success measures in adult education.** BIS maps out the possible impact of and seeks views on its 4 proposed outcome based success measures for 19+ learning

- **Future Possible.** The CBI calls for a structured and supported programme of work-related learning and guidance to help young people prepare for the world of work
- **Trends in HE applications and admissions.** The Independent Commission on Fees finds a continuing wide access gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students
- **Remember the Young Ones.** The think tank IPPR calls for a youth apprenticeship levy along with a youth allowance as part of its proposals for school to work transition
- **On Speaking Terms.** The think tank Demos reports on a fragmented and poorly funded ESOL system in England and calls for a student-style loan system to help improve things
- **2014-2017 Corporate Plan.** Ofqual puts the emphasis on validity, vocational qualifications, efficiency and transparency as it sets out a busy work programme for the next three years
- **Implementing Rigour and Responsiveness.** The new Skills Minister maintains a familiar tone as he sends out the latest in the series of briefing Papers to FE Governors and Leaders
- **Funding for In-service Maths Teacher Training in FE.** The SFA explains how the new scheme will work from this September
- **Careers guidance and inspiration.** DfE and BIS set out the latest requirements on sixth form and FE colleges
- **Robbins Rebooted.** The Labour Party starts to build its vision of a new, earn while you learn tech route through Tech University partnerships working with industry and colleges
- **Elitist Britain.** The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission examines the background of 4,000 public leaders and finds continuing evidence of elitism operating

Speeches of the month

- George Osborne's 5 August Northern Powerhouse **speech** pledges to put plans to create an economic powerhouse in the North at the heart of his Autumn Statement this year
- Iain Duncan Smith's 11 August Getting Britain Working **speech** argues that economic and social welfare reforms should go hand in hand as part of the recovery programme
- Tristram Hunt's 18 August Choice in Education **speech** reflects on some of the lessons from the great Butler Reform Act of 70 years ago and identifies key education reforms for Labour

Quotes of the month

- *"The bar has not been set higher this year than last and so students who would have succeeded before these changes should succeed now, all other things being equal."* The Chief Executive of Ofqual calms the nerves in the week before the exam results come out
- *"Under the leadership of my predecessor, Michael Gove, we've turned the exam system on its head so that it works for children not politicians."* Nicky Morgan sets the tone for the government's response to the 2014 exam results
- *"More broadly, I am hopeful that we can build on the Tech Bacc and move towards a Nat Bacc framework that binds all learning routes together within a vigorous curriculum framework."* The Shadow Education Secretary on his vision for 14-19 learning
- *"A decrease of 0.1% in the overall pass rate represents about 800 entries. It is not a significant shift. This is a stable picture of exams year on year."* The General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders puts the A level results into context
- *"Reform was necessary because so many pupils gained qualifications that neither employers nor universities recognised."* Alison Wolf explains why the exam system needed reform

Word or phrase of the month

- 'Snowploughers.' Pushy parents, apparently

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