

2014/2

27 Feb 2014

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

### Main talking points

An action-packed month with five themes emerging. First, making do, very much what FE and HE now have to do following their latest funding settlements. Second, continuing system reform with both the skills system and the schools system under scrutiny. Third, accountability, with new measures under development everywhere. Fourth, assessment, the subject of further reports. And fifth, the economy: are we there yet? Not according to the Chancellor.

### Key headlines from the month

- Tests for 4/5 yr olds. Government said to be contemplating
- Assessment. NAHT Commission calls for retention of levels
- Assessment Innovation Fund. Bidders wait to hear if they have been successful or not
- Character. Different views emerge about how to develop this in school
- Primary school sport. Government extends funding pledge for further five years
- Maths. The Education Minister acquaints herself with the Shanghai method
- Progress 8. Final methodology due before end of term
- IT. Government announce new funds to support the Year of Code
- Geography. Introduction of new A level put back a year
- College of Teaching. Moves a step nearer as blueprint published
- Teaching Assistants. Add value according to Education Endowment Foundation Research
- Maths. New Recruitment Incentive scheme announced for FE maths teachers
- School hols. Schools get chance to determine under Deregulation Bill proposals
- Academies. Calls for inspections of chains grow as one chain is unhitched
- Youth unemployment. Down 48,000 to 917,000 in latest stats
- FE funding. Funding eligibility tightened in latest Funding Statement
- FE. The ETF launches its new Expert (advisory) Panels
- HE funding. Allocations confirmed at end of March following Grant Letter
- HE Access. Russell Group launches new 'visit a uni' scheme for 13/14 yr olds

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

- **Behaviour and discipline in schools.** The DfE puts out its latest guidance for schools and teachers
- **Higher Ed Funding 2014/15.** The BIS Dept confirms a cut in the annual grant to HEFCE for 2014/15 but protects high-cost subjects, Student Opportunity, science and research
- **New College of Teaching Blueprint.** The Prince's Teaching Institute leads the latest blueprint which proposes three core functions but leaves the question of funding open
- **Skills Funding Statement 2013-2016.** The latest settlement leaves FE facing a cut in the adult skills budget as apprenticeships, traineeships, English and maths remain top priorities
- **Transforming public services.** The thinktank IPPR calls for a more connected and 'relational' model in the latest quest to match services to needs
- **Character and Resilience Manifesto.** The All Party Parliamentary Group of MPs and the think tank CentreForum list 18 recommendations to help develop 'character'
- **Commission on Assessment.** The NAHT concludes its six-month review with a list of design principles intended to help schools cope with the new requirements
- **School Teachers' Review Body.** The Body responds to the Government's latest requests on pay and conditions by removing some restrictions but leaving hols/working hours alone
- **Progress 8 Factsheet.** The DfE offers a summary of the latest position on its all-important secondary school accountability measure due to be applied for 2016 exam results
- **Student Loan Repayments.** The Public Accounts Committee expresses concerns about the rising costs of unpaid student debt
- **Review of Quality of Marking.** Ofqual's final report in a 12 month review finds a system coping well with some 16m scripts each summer but an appeals system needing overhaul

- **The Student Deal.** PA Consulting believes the new HE fees culture requires a different relationship between students and unis built around 4 core principles
- **Introducing Generation Citizen.** The think tank Demos offers the latest observations of 'youth today' and finds them connected, concerned and community-committed
- **Unfinished Business?** HEPI's first major report under new leadership reviews the HE landscape and finds a number of areas where careful cultivation is needed
- **Not just making tea.** The UKCES sets out to dismantle some of the myths surrounding the offer of work experience
- **Progress report on the Regional Growth Fund.** The National Audit Office still finds a lot of the money underspent and calls for an increase in the ratio of benefits of cost
- **Up to the Job.** The Think Tank Demos points to the economic and employment returns that can accrue from increasing the number of apprenticeships

### Speeches of the month

- Michael Gove's 3 February London Academy speech calls for state schools to replicate some of the best 'proven' practices of independent schools as part of continuing reforms
- Ed Miliband's 10 February Hugo Young Lecture proposes granting parents new call-in powers over schools as part of a new people-driven culture for public services
- Elizabeth Truss's 13 February Resolution Foundation speech highlights the changes being made to the quality of childcare and support for working parents
- Tristram Hunt's 13 February 'Schooling for the Future' speech calls for no surrender on standards and the teaching of 'character' as part of a more balanced curriculum
- George Osborne's 20 February Hong Kong speech reminds us that there are still more reasons to be careful than cheerful when it comes to the economy
- Chris Leslie's 25 February SMF speech sets out five principles intended to guide Labour's Zero-Based Review of public expenditure
- Nick Clegg's 27 Feb 'better choices, better prospects' speech promises new careers guidance for schools, new local course directories for young people and JCP help for 16/17 yr olds

### Quotes of the month

- *"I want to deliver a budget which ensures that around the world, wherever you are, you can't help but see 'Made in Britain.' That's the budget I'm going to deliver."* The Chancellor makes his plans clear about his forthcoming Budget
- *"But we don't have confidence in those figures. We think that the value of student loans never to be repaid could be even higher."* The Public Accounts Committee goes for the jugular
- *"Further recurrent savings will be required in 15/16."* HEFCE's annual Grant letter suggests little light
- *"Qualifications will be removed from public funding where there is little or no demand or where the qualifications cannot be shown to be responding to a clear business need."* The latest Skills Funding statement spells out the new funding rules
- *"I appreciate that since I became Education Secretary I have been asking a great deal, a very great deal of those who work in our schools."* The Education Secretary comes to praise
- *"Our requests are reasonable and could yet halt the stark decline in teacher morale which is so damaging to teacher recruitment and retention."* The NUT sees things differently as it prepares to strike

### Word or phrase of the month

- *'Generation C.'* The new connected young citizens according to the thinktank Demos
- *'People powered public services.'* Ed Miliband's alliterative reform model for public services
- *'Too clever.'* Why some kids are told not to take voc courses according to Edge research

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It is also possible to follow some of the team with [Steve Besley](#) and [Louis Coiffait](#) on Twitter, and to subscribe to our [YouTube](#) and [Vimeo](#) channels.

Policy Tracker on what happened in February 2014

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