

2015/6

29 June 2015

Policy Tracker - Keeping track of what happened in the world of education in June 2015

Main talking points

Six weeks on from the election and the education agenda appears in full swing

Key headlines from the month

- Funding cuts. DfE and BIS budgets each facing cuts of £450m from current budgets
- School funding. Possible developments around new formula due later this year
- 16-19 funding. Signatories come together to urge the Chancellor to help
- Childcare Bill. Bill published as taskforce set up to consider costs
- Education Bill. Completes second reading
- Primary schools. Pupil numbers in England up 2.1% in latest census
- Coasting schools. Experts seek to define as the DfE confirms consultation
- School Leadership. New profession-led Foundation announced
- School behaviour. New practitioners' panel set up
- Ofsted. New inspection arrangements confirmed
- National Reference Test. Ofqual explains all in letter to schools
- GCSE grading. Education Secretary confirms L5 as the new 'good pass' grade
- Singaporean maths. Beginning to have impact according to latest research
- EBacc subjects. Government prepares to mainstream
- 14-19. Labour leaders call for a full review of provision
- A level science assessment arrangements. Ofqual consults
- Voc Quals. Latest annual celebration heralded
- Apprenticeships. New taskforce set up to oversee progress towards the 3m target
- Training providers. Growth budgets frozen in build-up to the Budget
- Institution for FE. Gains its Royal Charter
- Adult participation. Up slightly though not for disadvantaged groups
- FE. Skills Minister continues to muse about refining college missions
- HE fees. Willetts suggests system working but needs 5-yearly MOT
- Maintenance grants. Fears grow about their long-term future
- Migration. Government calls for advice about new skills levy on Tier 2 visas

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

- **Perceptions of A levels, GCSEs, Other Quals in England.** Ofqual's latest annual survey of views on the quals system finds confidence still strong but concerns about some changes
- **Missing Talent.** Commissioned research from the Sutton Trust looks at why children, especially bright boys from disadvantaged backgrounds, struggle to convert KS2 success into GCSE success
- **Education and Adoption Bill.** The government sets out its new Bill intended to 'speed up the turnaround of failing schools' but leaves many details open for summer consultation
- **Outcomes of access agreement monitoring.** OFFA reports on its monitoring of HE access agreements over 2013/14 and finds a drop in financial support but an increase in other support
- **HEPI/HEA 2015 Student Academic Experience Survey.** Satisfaction remains high in this latest survey but students want more contact time and to know how the fees are being spent
- **Character nation.** The think tank Demos in partnership with the Jubilee Centre call for a stronger focus on character development in schools in a new report
- **Council support for 16-19 participation.** The latest survey from the Local Government Association finds councils having to reduce their levels of funding and support as cuts bite
- **A digital student learning experience.** Eduserve finds a lack of funding, commitment and clear procurement policies hampering the management and provision of learning resources in FE
- **Developing Great Teaching.** The Teacher Development Trust and TED Global get together to report on what makes for effective professional development for teachers
- **The Economic Role of UK Universities.** Universities UK publishes its latest assessment of how much UK universities contribute to UK GDP and finds it now totalling nearly £40bn
- **Raising the Productive Potential of the Economy.** The lifelong learning organisation NIACE lists some of the skills priorities ahead of the Chancellor's Budget and Productivity Plan

- **Inspection Handbooks for Schools and for FE.** Ofsted lays down the new arrangements and lists of things it will look for in inspections from this Sept
- **How to run a country: Education.** The think tank Reform continues its build-up to the Spending Review by looking at how to make the school system more productive
- **Student Funding Panel.** UUK's Funding Panel reports on its year-long review into HE financing and concludes that while maintenance support needs changing, the fee system needs more time
- **Social Mobility Report.** The Commission's latest report highlights the barriers faced by many disadvantaged young people seeking entry into 'top' professions
- **Colleges and Employers.** The AoC publishes a selection of case studies showing how colleges are working with employers to deliver the training and skills needed
- **College mergers and federations.** BIS and the FE Commissioner offer best practice guidance for those thinking of taking the plunge
- **Heading for the precipice.** Professor Alison Wolf makes a compelling case for re-balancing higher funding around technician training as the basis for economic recovery

Speeches of the month

- New HE Minister Jo Johnson's 1 June **speech** to the Going Global Conference extols the virtues of international students and commits to helping the market grow
- Nick Gibb's 11 June Policy Exchange **speech** argues the case for core academic subjects to be at the heart of the curriculum for most pupils at KS4 but adds that consultation will follow
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 15 June 'Future of Education Inspections' **speech** confirms the new shorter, more frequent inspection model and other changes coming in from this September
- Nicky Morgan's 16 June King Solomon Academy **speech** sets out the new tough expectations on schools in areas like the provision of the EBacc, GCSE grading and pupil behaviour
- Glenys Stacey's 17 June Grammar School Heads Association **speech** updates on the latest developments in the GCSE and A level reform programme
- Nicky Morgan's 18 June Festival of Education **speech** commits to a long-term plan of excellence for all and confirms that education remains high on the agenda
- Sir Michael Wilshaw's 18 June Festival of Education **speech** offers a paean of praise for teachers and challenges some of the unfair media portrayals of them
- John Cridland's 19 June Festival of Education **speech** re-opens debate about the nature of 14-19 learning and the need to incorporate skills, opportunities and guidance for all
- David Cameron's 22 June 'Opportunity for all' **speech** argues that the new tough stance on school improvement will help extend educational excellence to all

Quotes of the month

- *"For as everyone knows, when it comes to living within your means, the sooner you start the smoother the ride."* The Chancellor on taking the rough before the smooth
- *"What the rest of the G7 finishes making on a Thursday afternoon takes us until the end of Friday to get done."* The Shadow Skills Minister highlights the issue of productivity
- *"I don't want anyone to mistake stability for silence, to presume that education is no longer a priority for the government."* The Education Secretary on silence not being golden
- *"I would suggest a full-blooded commitment to building a proper 14-19 baccalaureate curriculum."* Tristram Hunt on where Labour's education policy needs to go next
- *"The general sense we're getting from heads is that it's worse than 2002."* The chief executive of Teach First on an impending teacher recruitment crisis
- *"It won't be a cliff-edge experience."* The Chief Inspector on the new inspections
- *"I want to see the date for the last ever GCSE circled in the Education Secretary's diary."* The DG of the CBI wants a sell-by date on GCSEs

Word or phrase of the month

- *'Funsultant.'* For when staff need perking up ...

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