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Douglas Ross MSP
Convenor
Education, Children and Young People
Committee
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2 september 2025

Dear Convenor,

I wanted to let you know that I have asked John Wilson, the former head teacher of Broughton High School, Edinburgh to lead work on identifying future reform priorities, fulfilling a commitment in this year's Programme for Government *"to set out our priorities for future reform of school education by June 2025, appointing an experienced headteacher to lead this work."*

John will provide Scottish Ministers with advice on future reform priorities drawing on his experience in five different schools in three different local authority areas. I have asked him to initially focus his work on three key areas that reflect my ambition to empower school leadership:-

1. **Education governance** – taking account of existing Empowering School Leaders Guidance and the Headteacher Charter, consider areas where further focus and activity is required to support school leaders.
2. **School funding** - drawing on the experience of Devolved School Management and 10 years of the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund, consider the future priorities for supporting empowered school leaders to deliver improved outcomes for every learner.
3. **Support for School Improvement** - reflect on the recent HMIE Thematic Inspection on local authority approaches to supporting school improvement, which highlighted inconsistent improvement outcomes in secondary schools; and provide advice on what should be prioritised to support self-evaluation for self-improvement.

John will be assisted in his work by an advisory group and by new headteacher panels for both primary and secondary schools that I have established and will chair. I am looking forward to meeting with both panels for the first time in early October in a joint session, alongside John.

The appointment of an independent professional adviser on further schools reform ensures that the work to evolve the education system continues beyond the passing of the Education (Scotland) Bill, the establishment of new national bodies and the changes we are making to the curriculum, qualifications and assessment in the years ahead.

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Yours sincerely

JENNY GILRUTH

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