Submission from a secondary school headteacher - anonymous

I have completed the survey. I think the bigger issue rests in the BGE, there is still a real lack of clarity. The benchmarks are mixed and staff are still reporting to me that they are not easy to use.

But, the main reason I write is my real worry over decisions being made by the SQA and I would appreciate the Committee taking action (if possible) on one in particular. Schools have been advised that unit assessments do not need to be completed for pupils to gain a pass at N5. They have been told that as a result the examination pupils sit will be more challenging. In addition we have been told that the fall back position for pupils who fail N5 where they can gain positive recognition is being taken away.

The impact of the combination of the above must be reconsidered as a matter of urgency. Pupils (currently in S3) will be sitting N5 examinations with no specimen papers. The fall back position should remain for a few more years until the new examinations are embedded. Otherwise our young people are at risk. Moreover, schools will be reluctant to present borderline candidates for N5 for fear of no fall back position. So, instead of closing the gap and raising attainment, we could see quite the reverse.

My strong message to SQA is please stop and reflect. I understand the move away from Unit Assessments was based on teacher workload but the other associated moves will create more and put the young people at risk. Please do not removed the Recognising Positive Achievement facility.