

## Consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

Evidence submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

### About you

Organisation: The Association of School and College Leaders Cymru

## 1. The Bill's general principles

### 1.1 Do you support the principles of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#)?

Yes

### 1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1500 words)*

The current curriculum is outdated and stale and does not adequately prepare our young people for this rapidly changing world. Throughout this Covid crisis, it is even more evident that our education system needs to be more responsive, flexible and agile. Through the Curriculum and Assessment Bill, this should be more readily achieved. The knowledge, skills and aptitudes needed by our learners requires a relevant curriculum which reflects the needs of the 21st century. Society, technology and employment opportunities are not supported or reflected in the curriculum as it stands.

Our current curriculum is based on a linear and disjointed set of learning experiences where making connections is difficult. This approach can lead to learners not making important links between naturally connected pieces of knowledge and skills. Learning is rarely linear.

The purpose driven curriculum reminds the education system as to the why of education and not just the what. The 6 AOEs with sharp "What Matters" questions as well as the cross curricular subjects are a correct focus for our learners supporting the 4 purposes.

This will of course require a high quality teaching workforce who are fully trained in the delivery of deep learning, new pedagogies, continuous assessment, developing subject knowledge and depth and the science of learning. Professional learning, therefore is vital to the implementation of this curriculum. These elements are correctly inextricably linked.

The mandatory elements of RVE and RSE are welcomed.

The stated focus of learner progress, formative and continuous assessment is very welcome. The fundamental focus on pupil progress will need to be carefully planned for and mapped out. Learning is messy and does not happen in straight lines. As a result, there will need to be meticulous planning and curriculum design, which allows learners to achieve those goals, while neither limiting them nor building in vagueness. In other words, what does progress look like on an individual basis and how do we know when we get there?

A high stakes accountability system which depends on outcomes does not always lead to real and relevant learning. This will require a significant shift in systems to ensure that the new curriculum is not a case of the "Emperor's new clothes."

Learning and teaching design will need to be significantly adjusted to deliver what could be an exciting and vibrant new curriculum for Wales.

### **1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

Yes. Clear legislation is required in order that all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities. Consultation with all stakeholders is welcomed to secure a full buy-in to the implementation and delivery of the Curriculum and Assessment Bill.

## **2. The Bill's implementation**

### **2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

Covid, clearly has had and will continue to have an impact on the speed of implementation. We are in a crisis.

There needs to be a significant investment in professional learning. This budget heading really cannot be cut in the coming years. If we are to deliver a world-class curriculum, it cannot be done on a shoe string. The quality of PL need to be research based, developing on evidence based pedagogies or this will not get off the ground. Those providing training need to be highly skilled, experienced and research based practitioners. This professional learning needs also to be extended to instructional leadership programmes which will be fundamental to a whole school delivery. Any formal leadership qualification needs to be based on high level instructional leadership principles.

All of this needs to be linked to PTS/PLS.

There needs to be reference to re-thinking a high stakes accountability system, which if it remains will simply mean that we will not have moved forward one jot. There is plenty of international evidence to show that this has a stifling effect upon relevant and authentic teaching and learning. This needs to be replaced by a fully functioning self-improving school system which while mentioned in the National Mission, has currently little traction. If there are not collaborative structures set up, the coherence of delivery will be elusive.

Potential barriers includes also an exams system which must reflect the principles of "Successful Futures" and one which is co-constructed. The hiatus between GCSE and post 16 exams is unresolved and the disjoin may be an issue.

Teaching assistants and supply teachers need full training in delivery and content also.

School finances are currently not healthy and there is no sign, again as a result of Covid costs, of any improvement in this area; indeed the reverse is the case. Schools need more, not fewer resources to deliver this curriculum. I note that there is a strong suggestion that exam fees will increase also. This is already a significant cost to schools and will not be welcome at all. Funding is vital.

## **2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

The commitment outlined within the Explanatory Memorandum, to provide continued funding to support professional learning activities during the implementation period, is welcomed. However, this budget has been cut this year which is not helpful.

Any amendment to the exams system needs to be carried out with the profession and co-constructed.

While there is mention of accountability systems not creating imbalance and this is reflected in 3.15 and recognised as a co-dependent policy, this must be addressed for the reasons outlined above.

### **3. Unintended consequences**

#### **3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

No

### **4. Financial implications**

#### **4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#))? If no, go to question 5.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

It is vital to keep funding under review to ensure that high quality, evidence based, iterative professional learning opportunities are provided to practitioners throughout the design and implementation period for the new curriculum.

See comments above re unknown effects of Covid, exam fees and current problems with school budgets.

## 5. Powers to make subordinate legislation

**5.1 Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)). If no, go to question 6.1.**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

There needs to be an opportunity to amend where necessary after a full and detailed evaluation with stakeholders. This global crisis has demonstrated that unforeseen circumstances can have a seismic effect upon all aspects of life.

## 6. Other considerations

**6.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)*

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