

2011/12

30 Dec 2011

Policy Tracker - 'Keeping track of what happened in the world of education for December 2011'.

Main talking points

The year drew to a close with some significant announcements and reports. High up on the list for schools was two announcements by Michael Gove, one on funding provision for 2012/13 and the other granting more time for the National Curriculum Review. For young people, there was the YPLA Funding Statement for 2012/13, a new participation strategy and a new 'vision' for youth training and support. Colleges equally heard about their funding totals for 2012/13 and received an update on progress in reforming the sector, HE was recognised as having an important role in the new growth-based Research and Innovation Strategy while the Skills Minister rounded off a busy year for apprenticeships with an important Statement on future quality and standards. Links to all these can be found below.

Key headlines from the last month

- Early Years. Minister confirms changes for Sept 2012
- Primary schools. Minister confirms review of the use of calculators
- Studio Schools. Further 12 announced adding to the 6 already open
- National Curriculum Review. Introduction delayed for a year to allow for more thinking time
- GCSEs. Ofqual confirm shift towards linear GCSEs
- Teachers. Results of first round bids under the Scholarship system announced
- Head teachers. Compulsory 'licensing' qualification to be removed
- Pensions. Heads of Agreement reached for scheme from 2015
- Apprenticeships. Terms of reference for Select Committee inquiry announced
- Higher Apprenticeships. Results of first bidding round announced
- Jobs. The TUC highlight some jobs most at risk of long-term unemployment
- Manufacturing. Major 'Foresight' inquiry into manufacturing future launched
- Intellectual copyright. Proposals to modernise the copyright system put out to consultation

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

- '[New Challenges, New Chances.](#)' The BIS Dept report on how their reform plans for the FE sector are going
- '[Skills Investment Strategy.](#)' The BIS Dept set out their investment plans for supporting the adult skills system over the next three years
- '[Enhancing Life Chances by Improving Satisfactory Schools.](#)' The RSA examine the issue of schools labelled 'satisfactory' and look at ways in which improvements can be made
- '[Apprenticeship Inquiry.](#)' A cross Party Group in Parliament come up with further recommendations including the creation of a Royal Society of Apprentices
- '[Unlocking growth in cities.](#)' The Government map out its strategy for helping leading cities become engines for growth
- '[Skills for Life Survey.](#)' The BIS Dept's survey indicates progress made in adult literacy, numeracy and ICT levels over the last 8 years but points out how much more is needed
- '[The importance of ICT.](#)' Ofsted report on their findings about ICT provision in schools over the last 3 years and call for improvements particularly at secondary level
- '[Apprenticeship policy in England.](#)' The Centre for Economic Performance add their voice to concerns about how the apprenticeship system has developed and offer some new levers
- '[Innovation and Research Strategy for Growth.](#)' The BIS Dept publish a new strategy with an emphasis on working with HE and supporting growth through small businesses
- '[Written Ministerial Statement on Education Funding.](#)' Michael Gove outlines funding provision for schools and 16-19 over the coming year

- ['16-19 Funding Statement.'](#) The YPLA set out the details and priorities for 16-19 funding for 2012/13
- ['Building Engagement, Building Futures.'](#) The Government publish its cross Dept strategy for increasing participation in education, training and work for 16-24 year olds
- ['Reducing bureaucracy in further education in England.'](#) The NAO point to a number of ways in which cost and burden could be reduced for the sector
- ['DfE: Interim Capability Assessment.'](#) The latest assessment of the Dept's capabilities highlights a number of delivery challenges at a time of great change for the Dept
- ['Positive for Youth.'](#) The Government bring together actions from across 9 Depts to create a new vision and set of proposals to support young people aged 13-19
- ['Employer ownership of skills: securing a sustainable partnership for the long term.'](#) The UK Commission set out a new vision for greater employer ownership of the skills system
- ['UK Employer Skills Survey: First Findings.'](#) The UK Commission report on some familiar themes from its initial analysis of its detailed employer skills survey
- ['The Framework for the National Curriculum.'](#) The Expert Panel summarise its thinking so far as work continues to sketch out a new National Curriculum

Speeches of the month

- Michael Gove's 1 December Schools Network speech extols the virtues of partnerships and signals the onset of some important forthcoming announcements on the uses of technology
- Chuka Umunna's 2 December UUK speech explains how the Opposition's policy review will manage to slash maximum HE fees from £9,000 to £6,000
- Vince Cable's 8 December British Council speech offers some interesting thoughts on the global market for skills
- Nick Clegg's 8 December City deals speech identifies the 8 core cities given new freedoms to help generate growth
- Vince Cable's 12 December Green Economy speech spells out the principles behind the Government's current Green Agenda including the Green Investment Bank
- John Hayes's 19 Dec Apprenticeship Statement announces a number of changes to ensure quality and standards remain intact

Quotes of the month

- *"It is about who should be listening to whom. That is perhaps the most important way in which it differs from the various other strategies for FE that have been printed in recent years."* The FE Minister sets out the new thinking behind the latest round of FE reforms
- *"If the standards are sufficiently stretching and the expectations of competence high, I believe that a course should naturally extend over at least 12 months."* The Skills Minister sets down some clear expectations for 16-18 apprenticeship programmes
- *"Schools shouldn't be a dreary trudge from one test to the next."* The Schools Minister confirms the end of modular GCSEs with new linear courses beginning in Sept 2012
- *'The longer timescale will allow for further debate with everyone interested in creating a genuinely world-class education system.'* The Education Secretary accepts the call for more time for the National Curriculum Review

Word or phrase of the month

- £200. The total budget for Christmas for many low-income families
- 'Catapults.' The new name for Technology and Innovation Centres

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Policy Tracker on what happened in December 2011

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