

MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT TALK OF “POSITIVE” DISCUSSIONS ON TEACHER PAY LARGELY A PR EXERCISE

Scotland’s teacher unions have today expressed their collective anger and disappointment with the continuing lack of progress in pay negotiations with the Scottish Government and COSLA. An SNCT negotiating meeting on Friday of last week, which was again labelled as “positive and constructive” by the Scottish Government and COSLA, once again failed to result in any progress whatsoever toward a new pay offer to Scotland’s teachers. While trade unions remain committed to a fair pay agreement, negotiated through the SNCT, teachers’ representatives are increasingly questioning whether the Scottish Government and COSLA truly share this commitment. No further negotiation meetings of the SNCT are currently scheduled.

Commenting, Des Morris – EIS Salaries Convener and Chair of the Teachers’ Side of the SNCT – said, “It is becoming increasingly clear that both the Scottish Government and COSLA have little or no interest in finding the modest additional funding that could bring a new offer to the table to potentially end this pay dispute. Five months since their sub-inflationary 5% pay offer was overwhelmingly rejected by teachers, and more than two months since a rehashed version of the same offer was again rejected, the Scottish Government and COSLA brought absolutely nothing new to the table in last week’s meeting - just a stubborn stance that Scotland’s teachers should accept 5% which represents yet another substantial real-terms pay cut that only further erodes the value of teachers’ pay.”

Mr Morris continued, “The reality is that the union side wants to negotiate, and has offered a wide range of suggestions towards the potential ‘compromise’ that the First Minister and her Cabinet Secretary have said is needed to reach agreement. We have had absolutely no proposals from the Scottish Government and COSLA, however – merely the same old tired lines, and a repeated and unreasonable insistence that all of the ‘compromise’ must come from Scotland’s teachers.”

Mr Morris added, “It is disingenuous and unacceptable for the Scottish Government and COSLA to continue to misrepresent negotiations as positive and constructive. The cold, hard truth is that, despite all their public claims of ‘working tirelessly’ and ‘turning over every stone’ to reach agreement, their entrenched position and refusal to offer any compromise at all leaves teachers, children and young people, and their parents facing the prospect of continuing and escalating strike action in Scotland’s schools. The ongoing and planned strike action is entirely avoidable. The Scottish Government and COSLA need to come forward with a genuinely improved offer that unions can put to our members.”

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