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- SNP 'rigging the stats and lowering the bar' on education

21 Jun 2018



The SNP has been accused of lowering standards of education by assessing pupils as having attained required standards – even when they've failed their course.

Earlier this week the SNP government hailed its own report showing attainment in literacy and numeracy had exceeded 90 per cent.

However, at First Minister's Questions today, Ruth Davidson revealed the measure by which children are assessed has been changed.

The Scottish Conservative leader pointed out that it used to be the case that a pupil would have to pass a course in order to obtain a literacy and numeracy achievement.

Now, according to guidance set out earlier this week, a youngster can achieve a pass at National 4 level by only succeeding in a single unit.

Examples of this include a unit at National 4 English where a child can "listen to and watch TV ads".

Literacy and numeracy used to be measured by the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), which has now been cancelled, having last been published in May 2017.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The SNP has spent the week patting itself on the back over literacy and numeracy rates.

"But under its own new rules, a pupil is deemed to have met those required standards of attainment, even if they fail English and maths.

"The First Minister keeps telling us she wants to boost standards.

"But instead, the SNP has cancelled surveys, rigged the stats and lowered the bar for literacy and numeracy.

"It's no wonder parents don't trust the system.

“The SNP has been utterly complacent on education, despite Nicola Sturgeon claiming it is her top priority.

“It is ludicrous for the SNP government to change the bar so literacy rates are met without pupils being equipped to spell properly, or numeracy achieved without pupils being equipped to add properly.

“The nationalists aren’t interested in restoring Scottish education to levels of global excellence, and instead want to massage the statistics to make themselves look good.

“It’s a disgraceful approach which is harming the prospects of generations of young people.”

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20 Jun 2018



A cross-party Holyrood committee will (today) publish a damning review of Scotland’s economic performance under the SNP and call for an urgent review of economic strategy.

The influential Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee has unanimously agreed a report which recognises that economic growth in Scotland under the SNP is significantly below growth rates in the UK economy as a whole and is falling far behind historical growth rates in Scotland.

The report “Scotland’s Economic Performance” also concludes that “levels of GDP growth are marginal, productivity low and wages are stagnant”.

The Holyrood Committee highlights that “the future will be equally challenging given the independent Scottish Fiscal Commission’s revised forecast of lower tax revenues, of as much as £1.7 billion, and already low GDP growth has been revised downwards to less than 1%.”

The Committee recommends that in order to reverse the decline in Scotland’s economy “the Scottish Government must use all of the levers at its disposal to bring a sharper focus on growing the economy” starting by reviewing and updating the Economic Strategy “as a matter of urgency.”

Dean Lockhart, Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary said:

“This is a savage critique of the SNP’s economic record over the past 11 years.

“This highly respected cross-party Committee has concluded that the SNP has significantly failed to meet all of their own economic targets.

“The SNP likes to blame Brexit and the UK Government for economic problems experienced in Scotland but this report once and for all highlights that the SNP have all the powers necessary to realise Scotland’s economic potential.

“But this is simply not happening. The Committee clearly reports that the Scottish economy under the SNP has been under-performing for 11 years and that urgent action must now be taken to reverse this decline.

“The economic incompetence of the SNP will directly result in less spending being available in vital areas including schools, hospitals and roads.

“It is now time for the SNP to listen to this important Committee Report and urgently change economic policy for the sake of Scotland.”

NHS deal for Scotland

17 Jun 2018



Ruth Davidson has today welcomed the UK government’s decision to invest an extra £20 billion in the NHS.

The deal will mean the Scottish Government will receive a £2bn windfall to support health care in Scotland.

The Scottish Conservatives are today demanding that Nicola Sturgeon make it clear that every penny of the extra funding goes to health care in Scotland.

Today’s announcement follows a speech by Ruth Davidson in Glasgow earlier this month in which she called on a major new investment package.

Across the UK, the deal provides an annual increase of 3.4% guaranteed until 2023.

Based on current plans, this announcement will provide the Scottish Government with additional Barnett funding worth £2bn in real terms by 2023/24.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“It is hugely welcome that the UK Conservative Government has provided this long-term funding plan for our NHS.”

“As we celebrate the fact that our NHS is 70 years young, it’s important we look to how we deliver the sustainable health and social care communities across Scotland will require in the future.”

“I believe the best days for our NHS are ahead of it – this financial commitment by the Conservatives will let our health care professionals work to build a stronger, safer, and better NHS for all of us.”

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs added:

“Nicola Sturgeon must now make it clear that every penny of the extra cash she receives thanks to this UK government action goes on health care here in Scotland.”

“Too often in the past the SNP has failed to meet extra investment in the rest of the UK. The SNP must not be allowed to do that again. It is time for our NHS to come first.”

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17 Jun 2018



The SNP has yet to invest a single penny of its trumpeted Digital Growth Fund, more than a year after it was announced at the party’s conference.

In March 2017, Nicola Sturgeon told nationalist delegates that her government would set up the £36 million fund to “meet the upfront costs of digital skills training”.

However, following a parliamentary question from Scottish Conservative MSP Rachael Hamilton, ministers admitted no money has yet been delivered.

Economy secretary Keith Brown stated: “No loans have been issued as of yet.”

He added that the first phase – £2 million worth of loans – were due to be allocated at some point in June, but failed to detail exactly when.

The SNP's failure to deliver cash follows controversy over its Scottish Growth Scheme, which has so far handed out just £25 million in two years, considerably less than the £500 million pledged.

Scottish Conservative MSP Rachael Hamilton said:

"This is just another example of the SNP setting out investment plans to grab the headlines, then failing when it comes to delivery.

"Scotland's digital skills sector will have been encouraged by this announcement but, more than a year on, are yet to see a penny.

"The SNP government needs to explain what has happened to this cash, and why it's taking so long to reach its destination.

"Tens of millions of pounds would go a long way to helping turn around Scotland's economy, and would also help the nationalists shed the reputation of being an anti-business government.

"Instead, another promise has been broken, and companies in need of support continue to suffer."

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15 Jun 2018



Nicola Sturgeon is being challenged to admit that separation from the UK would mean "austerity max" for Scotland – following the publication of a new report today on the cost of her independence blueprint.

The report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies concludes that the SNP's plans would lead to serious cuts to public spending for as long as 18 years after independence.

The report says it is "inconsistent" to claim that the SNP's plans "do not amount to austerity but the UK Government's current policy does".

Yet, following the publication of her "Growth Commission," Nicola Sturgeon has refused to admit that her plans would reduce spending on schools and the NHS.

The Scottish Conservatives are therefore calling on Nicola Sturgeon today to admit the obvious – that independence comes at a huge cost.

The report makes clear that extra cuts would be required under independence – but that the SNP Commission “does not say where the axe would fall”.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Nicola Sturgeon wants us to believe that independence would come cost-free. Yet this impartial expert report makes clear it would be austerity max for as long as 18 years.

“That is the staggering price the Nationalists are prepared to pay for their obsession with breaking up the United Kingdom.”

“Nicola Sturgeon needs to come clean. She should simply admit it: independence comes at a huge cost. Until she does, nobody should believe a word she says.”

“This report only underlines why it is so important that we oppose a second referendum on independence. We don’t want to go back to yet more insecurity and turmoil – Scotland needs to go forward to a more secure, prosperous future as part of the UK.”