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Our Ref: 230330 Gilruth J/PR/LB

**General Secretary: Dr Patrick Roach**

Jenny Gilruth MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Dear Ms Gilruth,

On behalf of the NASUWT, I would like to express our very best wishes to you on your appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills for the Scottish Government.

We do not doubt that there will be many issues high on your agenda. We hope that education and closing the poverty-related attainment gap will be as high a priority for the Scottish Government as it is for the NASUWT. We look forward to working with you to support the efforts of the teaching profession in maintaining world-class education for all children and young people and in removing barriers to learning for the most disadvantaged, including through the expansion of universal free school meals provision.

We hope that you will agree that investing in teachers must be at the heart of the Government's vision and programme of work and we look forward to working with you to develop a fully resourced recovery programme for education allied to greater efforts to ensure the place of serving teachers at the heart of all aspects of education decision-making.

Equality, tolerance and respect are integral to a strong, prosperous and civilised society. Tackling the underrepresentation of Black teachers across the profession, especially at the most senior levels, to ensure that the education system is inclusive and equitable should continue to have a strong governmental focus and additional targeted action must be undertaken if we are to achieve the target set of at least 4% of minority ethnic teachers in Scotland's schools by 2030.

As a member of the Gender Equality Taskforce in Education and Learning, the NASUWT is also committed to tackle the lack of gender equality which remains evident in education settings. Our schools must be safe places for all staff and no woman should ever feel harassed, scared or intimidated just by going to work. Misogyny has no place in our schools, workplaces or on our streets and we look forward to working with you as the chair of the Taskforce to achieve a gender competent experience of education and learning for all girls and women.

We also hope that you will recognise and take urgent steps to address the workload crisis in our schools, and work in partnership with trades unions and the teaching profession at large in tackling unnecessary bureaucracy and in putting teacher workload front and centre of the Government's priorities. An early resolution to the current impasse over the promised reduction in pupil class contact time would provide a powerful message of your commitment to teachers and learners.

The NASUWT had very constructive engagement with your predecessor, Shirley-Anne Somerville, earlier this month about the issue of poor pupil behaviour, where she acknowledged that there is a significant challenge with this as we emerge from the pandemic. She made a commitment to address this as a matter of urgency and we would be keen to work with you to take this forward.

The pandemic brought a sharp focus on health and safety and, though we are emerging from this, Covid has not disappeared so a cautionary approach with appropriate mitigations in schools needs to continue. A broader consideration of the health and safety of teachers and pupils is also needed, especially with regard to the school buildings they occupy and their mental health and wellbeing.

The NASUWT looks forward to working with you and we look forward to an early meeting with you to discuss how we can work with you to secure the very best for pupils and teachers in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Roach', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Patrick Roach  
**General Secretary**