

Teachers will win dispute with Scottish Government, union official claims

Scottish teachers in dispute over pay with the [Government](#) will win, the president of the country's biggest teaching union has said.

Staff have been locked in sometimes fraught negotiations with the [Scottish Government](#) and councils for months, prompting multiple days of walkouts and further action planned in the constituencies of key politicians.

[Teachers](#) will take action this week in areas represented by First Minister [Nicola Sturgeon](#), Deputy First Minister John Swinney, Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville, Green education spokesman Ross Greer and Katie Hagmann, a councillor in Dumfries and Galloway and the finance spokeswoman for local authority body Cosla.

Speaking at a fringe event at the Scottish Labour conference in Edinburgh, EIS president Andrene Bamford said the resolve of the teaching workforce to push for a 10% pay rise remains.

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“I’ve been all around the country, and I can tell you right now – if there’s any doubt in the room – EIS members’ resolve has absolutely showed no signs of slowing down, it is as strong as it ever was,” she said.

The president added: “I am fully convinced that we will win this – and we will win this.

“We have to win this, because although it’s about pay, it’s about more than pay, it really is about education in its entirety.

“This fight is about raising the status of education, raising the status of education as an education system and raising the status of education as a profession.”

Ms Bamford said there had been “little cuts” in previous years, including to teacher support staff and additional support needs teachers, adding: “[Children](#) are just not getting the education they deserve.

“After years of little cuts we now find ourselves in a mess.”

She took aim at the Education Secretary, ridiculing her claims that no stone would be left unturned, saying: “She hasn’t even lifted a pebble.”

She added that the latest offer of 6% for 2022-23 and 5.5% for 2023-24 was “disingenuous”.

The offer, which was made and summarily dismissed by the EIS this week, Ms Bamford said, was just the previous 5% offer, plus the money saved by teachers going out on strike, which

she claimed was more than 1%.

Meanwhile, a survey of EIS members found just 15% of the about 16,500 respondents were satisfied with their workload, while 78% said they were rarely able to complete their work within working hours.

Ms Bamford added that 40% of respondents work more than eight extra hours a week, while more than half said they “rarely have sufficient time in a working week” to do what they need to.

Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said: “Our focus is on resolving the industrial dispute, delivering a fair and sustainable settlement for teachers and ending disruption to pupils, parents and carers.

“We are very disappointed that the EIS rejected outright the latest pay offer – the fifth offered to unions – which would have meant an 11.5% increase, or £5,000, in April for most teachers, and a cumulative increase of almost 30% since January 2018.

“The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers has met regularly throughout negotiations and is next scheduled to meet on Tuesday February 21.”