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STOP IT NOW

NUT CALLS FOR A BOYCOTT OF TESTS AT KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 IN ENGLAND

Ballot papers are in preparation for a boycott of National Curriculum Tests at Key Stages 1 and/or 2. All members, including heads and deputies, teaching in schools which include either or both Key Stages will be balloted. The ballot will open on 19 November and close on 15 December.

The boycott is intended to commence on 5 January 2004 when primary teachers would otherwise start preparing for the tasks and tests. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union's Executive in London on 6 November 2003, following a survey of members' views, which showed that 82.5 per cent of primary teachers would back a boycott of Key Stage 1 tests and 71.4 per cent a boycott of Key Stage 2 tests.

The dispute concerns the impact of National Curriculum tests on the work of teachers and the imposition of a testing regime which constrains the exercise by teachers of their professional judgement.

When the boycott goes ahead, no child's education will be disrupted. Instead teachers will be able to use their professional judgement to their pupils' benefit and in support of their primary purpose of educating children.

KEY STAGE 3

Since the NUT's survey of members seeking their views on Key Stage tests, the Government has announced its intention to publish performance tables from the Key Stage 3 results. This has altered the position in relation to teachers in secondary schools. The Union will be surveying members' views following this decision by the Government and will then decide whether or not to ballot for an extension of the boycott to cover these tests as well.

Wales

In Wales Key Stage 1 tests have been abandoned and a review of Key Stages 2 and 3 is underway. In recognition of this review, the ballot will be confined to members in England. When we know the outcome of the review, the position of teachers in Wales will be looked at again.

NUT members in Wales will want to give their full support to colleagues in England.

General Secretary, Doug McAvoy, said:

"The NUT has sought a meeting with the Government to press for a review of testing in England. It has ignored that request.

Teachers in England do not understand why they and their pupils should be treated differently from those in Scotland and Wales. The stubbornness of the Government in refusing to discuss with us a similar review for England will add to the anger of teachers.

This is a crucial campaign for the whole teaching profession. The NUT is leading with its ballot for a boycott. I call on all members in schools with pupils at Key Stages 1 and/or 2 to vote 'YES' in the ballot."

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