

Scottish teachers overwhelmingly reject pay offer

Our reporter
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Teachers in Scotland have overwhelmingly rejected a 3 percent pay offer from the Scottish government and local authorities. Teachers, some 30,000 of whom marched through Glasgow last month, are demanding a 10 percent pay increase to redress some of their huge income losses over the last decade.

Ballot results from teacher members of the Educational Institute for Scotland (EIS), the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association (SSTA) and the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) unions, all showed huge majorities against the pay offer.

98 percent of EIS members rejected the offer on a turnout of 74 percent of its 48,000 members. 97 percent of the 73 percent of SSTA members who voted rejected the offer, while a survey of 1,000 NASUWT members found that 54 percent were willing to strike against the offer.

EIS general secretary, Larry Flanagan, warned “this is the biggest ballot turnout in 40 years... and the biggest single rejection of a pay offer.”

“It shows there is deep discontent about pay, but also workload, the cuts to additional support needs staff and the general impact of rising class sizes and resources reducing.

“The threat of industrial action has never been more real in living memory.”

Teachers were immediately denounced by employers group, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). Resources spokeswoman Gail Macgregor complained “If we could give more to teachers we would, but as budgets reduce we have to think about what we would have to cut if we were to pay teachers more.

“Cosla has a policy of parity and it is incredibly unhelpful if one part of the workforce ends up receiving

more than another part of the workforce. It creates a sense of them and us and creates a morale issue.”

The teachers vote came shortly after members of Unite, Unison and GMB unions voted to reject similar offers made to local government workers. According to Unison, 79 percent of voters rejected the offer while 67 percent supported industrial action in pursuit of a pay claim. In all, some 244,000 workers are employed by Scottish local authorities.

The Scottish government, local authorities, teaching and local government unions are desperate to avoid strikes, and above all to prevent a united offensive by teachers and council workers. While the local government unions claim to be “organising statutory industrial action ballots,” they wrote to Derek Mackay, Scottish Finance Secretary urging him to come up with a better offer they could then attempt to sell to their members.



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