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Press Article

Furlong and Donaldson offer advice to new Cabinet Secretary for Education

On Monday, 6 June, the Education Workforce Council in partnership with The Open University in Wales held its inaugural event 'Professionally Speaking' with Professor John Furlong and Professor Graham Donaldson at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Hosted by journalist Catrin Haf Jones of ITV Cymru Wales, around 250 delegates from the Welsh education sector were present to hear the professors' visions for the future of Welsh education in Wales.

In her first public appearance since being appointed as Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams took the opportunity to speak with education professionals from schools, further education colleges and work-based learning providers across Wales prior to being offered friendly advice from both experts.

John Furlong is Emeritus Professor of Education at Oxford University and in 2015 published his report into teacher training in Wales 'Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers'. Professor Graham Donaldson has over 40 years' experience working in education and is the author of the independent review of national curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, 'Successful Futures'.

The speakers outlined their visions for the future of the Welsh education system and the proposed changes to Initial Teacher Education before taking part in a question and answer session where one attendee asked the professors what their advice for the new Cabinet Secretary would be.

John Furlong said, "Hold your nerve and get excited about the direction of travel that has already been set. It is an incredibly exciting and radical agenda.

"The biggest challenge will be making it happen and learning how to work with all the people already up and running and drawing on extensive support. I want you to be the person who gets the credit for making it happen."

Graham Donaldson added, "As we move forward over the next few years there will inevitably be lots of ups and downs. One of the critical roles the Secretary can play is to try to protect the integrity of what we're trying to do from the bumps in the road by managing politics and the external environment.

"Also the need to keep talking about the prize because this is all about inspiration and the need to continue to inspire the teaching profession and the wider community to see that what we're doing is something very special, and if we get right, it will be fantastic."

'Professionally Speaking 2016' was recorded and can be viewed by visiting www.ewc.wales or by following the #profspeak16 on Twitter.

Ends.