

**Report To:** Education & Lifelong Learning Committee      **Date:** 12 May 2009

**Report By:** Corporate Director, Education & Social Care      **Report No:** EDUC/39/09/CR

**Contact Officer:** Chris Robertson      **Contact No:** (01475) 712850

**Subject:** Implementing new timetables in secondary schools

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the elected members with how schools are progressing with the implementation of a reconfigured school day in secondary schools.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 At the last meeting of the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee on 17 March 2009, the Committee noted a paper explaining how the savings identified by more efficient timetabling would be achieved.
- 2.2 This paper provides some information about what actions have been taken by schools and by Education Services in order to work towards the new timetables.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to approve the progress that has been made.

**Ian Fraser**  
Corporate Director, Education & Social Care

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The changes in the timings of the pupil day meant that the Corporate Director of Education & Social Care contacted families under the terms of Education Circular 2.2 in order to ascertain their views.
- 4.2 The additional periods put into the pupil week meant that schools had to review their curriculum offerings.
- 4.3 Education headquarters staff wished to support schools in their planning.

## 5.0 PROPOSAL

### 5.1 The views of parents and families: Circular 2.2

- 5.1.1 A letter from the Corporate Director of Education & Social Care outlining the new pupil week was sent to all families in Inverclyde from which pupils would be attending secondary school in August 2009. Comments were invited from parents and pupils by mail or email.
- 5.1.2 No responses were received in the post.
- 5.1.3 A number of comments were received by email, as noted below:

From parents	19
From pupils	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

All contacts were acknowledged. In all cases a reply was sent that attempted to answer the points made by the respondent.

- 5.1.4 The responses fell into three broad categories:
  - (a) Issues relevant to the new timetable but not falling within the terms of Circular 2.2.
  - (b) Issues that actually exist at present.
  - (c) Neither of the above: that is, points that were both relevant to the circular and are genuinely new issues.
- 5.1.5 Under (a), parents were questioning the need for savings and failing to understand how the reconfiguration of the week could achieve savings. There was some anxiety expressed about the nature of the new curriculum offerings.
  - These points were answered by a brief explanation of the rationale and reassurance that schools would be considering their curriculum offerings very carefully.
- 5.1.6 Under (b), some concerns were expressed about traffic congestion, and complaints made about the time that would be lost travelling between classes.
  - These were answered by pointing out that these problems do exist at present, and that schools always attempt to minimise disruption between lessons.
- 5.1.7 There were actually only very few responses that were both appropriate and relevant to education. They expressed:
  - complaints about the earlier start in the morning;
  - opposition to the shorter lunch time;
  - concerns about the longer afternoons for pupils on two days;
  - fears that the asymmetric week would make arranging child care more difficult.

The answers that were sent to those respondents attempted to explain that the choices that had been made had had to be balanced against other constraints and told respondents the reasons lying behind some of the choices.

## **5.2 Additional curriculum offerings**

- 5.2.1 The addition of two extra periods in the week meant that schools were able to review their curriculum offerings.
- 5.2.2 Four out of the seven secondary schools are now able to deliver the Scottish Government's guidelines on physical education. The three schools who are unable to do so are prevented by constraints in their PE facilities, and will phase in the additional PE when they are in their new or refurbished buildings.
- 5.2.3 In addition to PE, schools are offering enhancement in the curriculum in the following subjects:
- S1 Maths, French, ICT, Technical, Personal and Social Education (PSE), Art, Drama.
  - S2 Spanish, ICT, Music, Home Economics, PSE.
  - S3 Supported study, PSE, English, Maths, skills development, study skills.
  - S4 Study skills, PSE, work experience, English, Maths, modern language, skills development.
  - S5 & S6 Equal time given to all subjects/courses.

## **5.3 Actions taken to support schools**

- 5.3.1 Several actions to be taken in support of this change were outlined in section 5.1 of the paper submitted to Committee on 17 March 2009.
- 5.3.2 Secondary school timetablers met to discuss the curriculum offerings and any problems specific to timetabling for a 32 period week. This was a useful and productive seminar, appreciated by those who attended.
- 5.3.3 An officer has made the requisite contacts with other services and partners both inside and outwith the Council.
- 5.3.4 Curriculum discussions at head teacher level continue. The additional time becomes a positive factor in structures proposed for *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- 5.3.5 Issues arising from the change have already been discussed at a meeting between the Head of Schools and the teachers' unions.
- 5.3.6 A seminar has been organised for Principal Teachers of PE. At this, a practitioner from Glasgow Council will inform our Principal Teachers about how the additional PE time has been used in his school, and promote discussion among the PE staff as to how to make most effective use of their extra time.
- 5.3.7 A number of issues have already been noted in order to form part of the review planned for next session.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 A saving of £174,000 for 2009/2010 and a further saving of £280,000 for 2010/2011 will be put in place.

## **7.0 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None.

## **8.0 EQUALITIES**

None.