
Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date:	16 March 2010
Report By:	Acting Director of Education	Report No:	EDUC/19/10/AH
Contact Officer:	Albert Henderson	Contact No:	01475 712824
Subject:	Budget Decisions on Class Sizes P1- P3 and Breakfast Clubs		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the budget decisions taken in respect of class sizes P1-P3 and Breakfast Clubs.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The Committee will be aware of the discussions between the Government and CoSLA on how progress could be made towards lowering class sizes for primaries 1, 2 and 3 whilst at the same time recognising the severe financial pressures being experienced by Councils.

2.2 The Government's proposal was that across Scotland the number of children educated in class sizes of 18 or lower should be increased by 11,000.

2.3 For its part the Government has agreed that the commitment for the expansion of free school meals for all primary 1 to 3 become 'Councils will provide a nutritious free meal to P1-P3 pupils in those schools that are in the 20% most deprived communities in the Council area.'

2.4 The Government has also agreed not to legislate for the increase in nursery hours.

2.5 As part of the budget settlement agreed at Policy & Resources Committee on 9 February 2010 it was agreed to allocate funding £175,000 for 5 extra teachers and these staff would be deployed in schools with a high free meal entitlement. The amount allocated for financial year 2010/11 is £118,000 with the full allocation from 2011/12.

2.6 As part of the staffing exercise it is proposed to deploy these teachers in Newark Primary School and King's Oak Primary School. It is envisaged that this will result in a further 120 pupils being educated in class sizes of 18 or under in P1 to P3.

2.7 In addition it was agreed to allocate £40,000 to provide breakfast clubs for 5 days a week in primary schools with the highest free meal entitlement. The amount allocated for financial year 2010/11 is £27,000 with the full allocation from 2011/12.

2.8 The following schools will be eligible for this increased provision:

- Newark Primary
- King's Oak Primary
- St Francis Primary
- St Gabriel's Primary
- Sacred Heart Primary
- Aileymill Primary
- All Saints Primary

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to approve the distribution of the additional funding for class size reduction and breakfast clubs.

Albert Henderson
Acting Director of Education

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Committee will be aware of the discussions at a national level in respect of progress towards the achievement of class sizes of 18 or lower for Primaries 1,2 and 3. Following the appointment of a new Cabinet Secretary for Education discussions have been ongoing between the Government and CoSLA as to how to progress could be made whilst at the same time recognising the severe financial pressures being experienced by Councils.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 contains a letter from CoSLA which explains the position reached and this letter was to be discussed by Leaders on 11 December with Councils being asked to respond to CoSLA week commencing 14 December.
- 4.3 The proposal outlined in the letter is that across Scotland the number of children educated in class sizes of 18 or lower be increased by 11,000 children which will account for some 20% of the Primary 1, 2 and 3 cohort. This is an increase of approximately 7% compared to the numbers currently in class sizes of 18 or under.
- 4.4 For its part the Government has agreed that the commitment for the expansion of free schools meals for all Primary 1 to 3 become 'Councils will provide a nutritious free meal to all children in Primary 1 to 3 in those schools that are in the 20% most deprived communities in the Council area.' The letter does, however, recognise that Councils may have an alternative approach to achieving similar outcomes.

In addition the Government has agreed not to legislate for the increase in nursery hours from 475 per year to 570 hours from August 2010.

- 4.5 The Committee is asked to note that the Government recognises that where a group of children has more than 1 teacher assigned to it and the ratio of pupils to teachers is 18 or lower then this will count towards the overall class size reduction figures. This provides significantly more flexibility than the need to have children educated in physical class sizes of 18 or less which brought with it some extremely challenging Asset Management issues for Councils.
- 4.6 The letter also advises the Government will recognise that the progress made by Councils in respect of kinship care is in line with the Concordat and Committee will be aware that Inverclyde Council has put significant extra resources into this area over the last 2 years.
- 4.7 Finally Councils have been asked to continue to make progress towards increasing the number of Primary 1 to 3 pupils who are educated in class sizes of 18 or lower.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the resources agreed in this year's budget for reduced class sizes and increased breakfast club provision be allocated as outlined in Section 2.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL BUDGET – PART YEAR COSTS 2010/11 £	ANNUAL RECURRING COSTS 2011/12 £
Primary Schools Teacher Staffing	118,000	175,000
Breakfast Clubs	27,000	40,000
Totals	145,000	215,000

Costs will be contained within additional funding allocated.

6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications

6.3 Human Resources

Human Resources will be involved in the recruitment process

6.4 Equalities

Funding being allocated according to need.



From the President Councillor Pat Watters

9 December 2009

To : Leaders of Member Councils

Cc : Chief Executives

Dear Colleague,

Concordat Commitment on Class Sizes

As you will be aware, there has been considerable press and Parliamentary interest in progress regarding the Concordat commitment to reduce class sizes. This commitment was made in the spirit of the new relationship established by the Concordat and both COSLA's Leaders and the new Cabinet Secretary for Education are determined that the strength of that new relationship is demonstrated by the way in which we deal with this difficult issue.

The Government wish to see a considerable increase in the number of children in primaries 1,2 and 3 educated in class sizes of 18 or lower. While this is an existing Concordat commitment, what has changed is that for the first time the Cabinet Secretary has been explicit about progress and would like to see a further 11,000 children across Scotland as a whole in classes of this size increasing the percentage of children in this situation to some 20 per cent. This represents a further 7 per cent on the current position.

It is recognised that the Concordat was developed and agreed in one set of financial circumstances but is being delivered in much more difficult financial times. COSLA's Group Leaders are prepared to put the Cabinet Secretaries' proposals to Councils but have been clear that to even consider delivering a greater priority and more explicit target in relation to class sizes, Councils will need greater flexibility in other areas. In order to recognise this and to indicate the priority that is attached to the policy of class size reduction the Cabinet Secretary is prepared to offer this flexibility around about other Concordat commitments in order to allow Councils the maximum opportunity to contribute to the achievement of this clearer aspiration regarding class size reduction.

In return for Councils agreement to a specific and enhanced commitment to reduce class sizes in line with the aspiration outlined above, the Scottish Government proposes that :

- The commitment to the expansion of free school meals will be that " Councils will provide a nutritious free meal to all children in primaries P1-P3 in those schools that are in the 20 per cent most deprived communities in a Council area". Councils might wish to consider an alternative targeting scheme of equal extent.

A nutritious free meal can be breakfast, brunch or lunch and will need to meet relevant nutritional standards. In schools that provide a free breakfast or brunch children who are entitled to a free lunch on the basis of the benefits received by their family will still be entitled to that lunch.

- For the purpose of this class size commitment the Scottish Government accepts that “ a group of children with more than one teacher assigned to it will be treated as more than one class. Specifically, if 2 teachers are assigned to a class of not more than 36 pupils that counts as 2 classes of not more than 18”.
- Councils will provide free pre-school education to all children from their third birthday from August 2010 and affirm their commitment to the jointly devised Early Years framework, but there will be no legislation or regulation to require local authorities to expand pre-school provision from 475 hours to 570 hours from August 2010.
- Overall, local government’s progress so far on delivering kinship care payments will be recognised as making a major and satisfactory contribution to the Concordat Commitment.
- Councils will continue to make progress on class sizes beyond 2010 in line with the current wording of the Concordat.

COSLA’s Group Leaders insisted that all Councils should be involved individually in this issue in an appropriate way. To achieve this, it was agreed that this letter should go to Leaders and Chief Executives explaining the more specific class size reduction aspiration of the new Cabinet Secretary, and the flexibilities that Government were prepared to offer in order to make the achievement of this aspiration as likely as possible.

Councils are therefore being asked to

note the Government’s newly clarified aspiration;

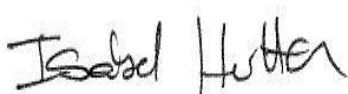
to note the package of flexibility that has been negotiated; and

in the light of that **to indicate to us how many additional children** within their Council area they could educate in class sizes of 18 or less in primaries 1,2, and 3 from August 2010.

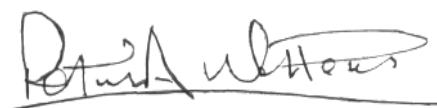
Councils should note that the additional flexibilities will only be available if on a Scotland wide basis the Government’s aspiration for an additional 11,000 children to be in class sizes of 18 or less is met. Councils should also be aware that Ministers will want to clearly monitor, what action is being taken by individual authorities to achieve the 11, 000 increase.

We would like responses as soon as possible, but by middle of next week (Week beginning 14 December).

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Isabel Hutton
COSLA Spokesperson



Councillor Pat Watters, CBE
President