

CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM – SCHOOLS’ BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the Schools’ Budget Working Group held on Friday 10th June, 2005 at William Howard School, Brampton.

Present: Mr R Alston, Mr S Halfpenny, Mr R Rogers, Mr A Rutter, Mr B Thomas, Mrs J Farebrother, Mr A Hodge, Mr D Johnston and Mr H Slater

Apologies: Mr S Bowditch, Mr C Clarke, Mrs J Stocker, Mr P Chappellhow, Mr T Hobson, Mr C Rafferty, Mr M Yearsley and Mr J Douglas

FORMULA REVIEW – PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

	Action
<p>The Group looked at the report presented by LEA Officers which suggested a methodology for review of the schools’ delegated funding formula.</p> <p>The Chair felt that this was an extremely important issue and one of the most important which the Forum had ever considered. It was essential that members understood what was being presented to them.</p> <p>The Report was introduced by David Johnston. It was stressed that nothing which was being presented was set in stone. The work to date and presented to the Group was simply to find a starting point and the purpose of the meeting was to reach a consensus on a process and a way forward.</p> <p>The model was based on finding the minimum cost of a class, by looking at a “reasonable” (rather than “aspirational” funding level.) This would then be used as a basis for devising a formula. It was expected that once this minimum class cost was ascribed to every school there would be a surplus of funds which would available for distribution on top of this. The minimum class cost would not vary at school level, but factors on top of this might – e.g. small schools allowance.</p> <p>It was recognised that as well as class costs, there were difference in school costs, but the point of the first part of the exercise was to find a “model spend” for schools. This would not be the same as the final formula allocation. Members of the group agreed that this was a useful way forward and that it would make the cost differences between different schools transparent at that stage. It was stressed that the intention was not to fund schools based on the model spending level.</p> <p>Work over the next few weeks would therefore concentrate on agreeing the components of a “model spend” at class level. The figures presented were simply a starting point. There would also be a need to visit and discuss some of the costs with schools and it was agreed that a letter be sent to all schools to explain the work of the Group and notify schools of possible contact with LEA officers in this process.</p> <p>Harry Slater then went through some of his assumptions with regard to the figures. These would form the basis of work at future meetings.</p> <p>In summary, members of the Group felt that this was a useful exercise which would make transparent the different levels of funding made available to schools through the current formula. It might lead to more working together in schools to share those costs which were identified as being high and least cost-effective when schools operated in isolation.</p> <p>As regards a specific issue raised by a junior school about the level of the KS2 AWPU,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>AH to send letter to all schools</i></p>

<p>it was agreed that the LEA write to the school to inform them about the work being undertaken.</p> <p>Future dates for meetings and an outline timetable were then arranged as below:</p> <p>June 29th, 11.15 (after Full Forum meeting): to discuss the composition of the elements in the class cost formula.</p> <p>September 13th (after Full Forum meeting): to confirm the “model spend”.</p> <p>September 23rd: to look at proposals for the budget formula</p> <p>October 11th (Full Forum): to agree on consultation proposals</p> <p>Oct 12th – November 4th: consultation with schools on new formula</p> <p>November 11th: (Full forum): to finalise formula and recommend any changes to County Council</p>	<p><i>AH to write to school</i></p>
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