

CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM – SCHOOLS’ BUDGET WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the Schools’ Budget Working Group held on Friday 30 September 2005 at Penrith Rugby Club.

Present: Mr R Alston, (Foundation Secondary), Mr S Bowditch (Special Schools), Ms J Farebrother (Nursery Schools), Mr C Rafferty (Allerdale Primary), Mr R Rogers (Eden Primary and Chair of Group), Mr A Hodge (LEA), Mr D Johnston (LEA), Mr H Slater (LEA) and Ms N Shiels (LEA).

Apologies: Mrs E Barraclough, Mr S Halfpenny, Mr K Little, Ms M Pickthall, Mr A Rutter

The Special Schools representative expressed strong concern that very few members of the working group were present. He was concerned that all sectors were not properly represented and that if any decisions were taken, they would have been taken by a minority of the working group. The Chair and other members of the group, however, assured him that this was an opportunity to discuss issues in full before any recommendations were put to the Schools’ Forum.

1. <u>Notes of the Meeting held on 13 September 2005</u>	<u>Action</u>
Subject to an amendment on page 2 which altered ‘fair’ to ‘transparent’ (paragraph 2, third line) the notes of the meeting of the Schools’ Forum Budget Working Group held on 13 September 2005 were agreed as an accurate record.	NS
2. <u>Matters Arising</u>	
It was reported that the actions agreed at the last meeting were progressing.	
3. <u>Performance Related Pay Grants – 2006/07</u>	
A report was presented that asked the group to recommend to the Schools’ Forum a preferred method of allocating the grant for Performance Related Pay for 2006/07. This grant had previously based on actual expenditure but from 2006/07 it would come to the Local Authority as a fixed sum. Determination of the method of allocation was left to the authority after consulting the Schools’ Forum. A spreadsheet that detailed the actual distribution of the grant was attached. Also shown, for comparison purposes, was the allocation if the sum was distributed in accordance with the current AWPU values. It was felt that to move straight to AWPU allocations would be too great a change so it was suggested that a move towards AWPU allocations but with some transitional arrangements would be preferable. The Special Schools representative was concerned that the five special schools would be severely affected by such a move as only a small proportion of the funding they received was directly related to AWPU. The group recognised that these type of anomalies arose time and time again and that it was important to try to find ways to bring different methods of funding into line. The Chair assured the Special Schools representative that that his concerns would be noted and that where decisions, in principle, resulted in particular difficulties in some sectors then some form of transition would be investigated. HS suggested that, for special schools, instead of using AWPU, AWPU plus SLD could be used which would give a greater AWPU. This suggestion led to further discussion and questions. In order to respond properly some further work was necessary.	
The Budget Group then agreed that they would recommend that the allocation should be AWPU based subject to there being transitional arrangements in place.	HS

4. Formula Review

On 13 September 2005 the Schools' Budget Working Group had begun the process of looking at the assumptions that had been used as a basis for the work to review the formula. This work had not been completed but progress had been made on the research work and the group were now asked to agree some basic principles that would allow the work to continue. During the discussion a number of changes were suggested and all members of the Budget Group had received a letter dated 4 October 2005 that set out the agreed changes together with examples of the effects of the changes.

The main areas discussed during the morning included :

- the possible effect on special school and nursery school budgets
- use of different class sizes at different key stages
- use of different average teacher salary for primary and secondary
- level of investment in staffing – numbers of teachers/teaching assistants
- mid-day supervision/health and safety issues
- need to be transparent

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the group would be held on Tuesday, 11 October 2005 at Newton Rigg, the meeting would begin at 9.30am.

6. Any Other Business

At the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 13 September it had been recommended that the targeted meals grant be retained with a further detailed strategy and plan to be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum on 9 November. There was a query relating to the decision and the agreed action was confirmed.

P&R/NJS
11 October 2005