

## CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM – SCHOOLS’ BUDGET WORKING GROUP

### Notes of the meeting of the Schools’ Budget Working Group held on Tuesday 11 October 2005 at Newton Rigg, Penrith

**Present:** Mr S Bowditch (Special Schools), Ms J Farebrother (Nursery Schools), Mr K Little (CCC – Labour Group), Mr R Rogers (Eden Primary and Chair of Group), Mr A Rutter (Teachers’ Professional Associations), Mr B Thomas (CEYDCP), Mr A Hodge (LEA), Mr D Johnston (LEA), Mr H Slater (LEA) and Ms N Shiels (LEA).

**Apologies:** Mr R Alston, Mr C Clarke, Mr S Halfpenny, Ms M Pickthall, Mr C Rafferty

#### 1. Formula Review

#### Action

Since the previous meeting of the group held on 30 September a number of changes had been made to the model which, it was hoped, would reflect what had been agreed. All members of the group had also received a note of the changes from Harry Slater. This note was used as the basis of discussion at this meeting.

Level of Investment – The group discussed the level of investment in the model. Currently the model spend was approximately at FSS in both primary and secondary. This allowed some flexibility but as soon as the investment was increased, the flexibility was lost.

There was further discussion about the level of/type of staffing that had been used to produce the model. The group talked about the actual levels of staffing in nursery and special schools compared to those in primary and secondary schools. The model used a similar basic level of staffing for all classes, whatever the key stage, but the different costs of a teacher in the primary or secondary sector had been reflected.

The group were reminded that they were looking at the basic principles upon which the model was based but that they were discussing very specific areas. It was made clear that if the model departed too far from FSS then some schools would have great difficulties.

Class Sizes – It was not thought that there would be sufficient justification for the same class size to be used across all the key stages – basically because it didn’t happen in practice. The implication of levelling out the class sizes was that funding would move from secondary to primary. On balance, it was thought that the correct approach was not to level out the class sizes. Primary colleagues did, however, highlight the changing role of the primary teacher who was now expected to teach an increased number of subjects that they had done in previous years. This meant that the role of the primary teacher was no longer as different to that of the secondary teacher. This point could be used as justification in the case for more equal class sizes.

The group agreed that further work to agree a class size number for each key stage should be undertaken. The number would then be agreed with a representative from each sector. Different models could then be brought back to the group.

Midday Supervisors – There had been some concern about health and safety issues related to the level of midday supervision included in the model, especially for small schools. This was just one of many small school issues. It would be helpful to draw up a list of small school issues/anomalies/areas that could have a serious effect.

HS

Special Schools – The special schools representative had repeatedly expressed his concerns, on behalf of the five special schools, about the effect that the proposals

would have on the special schools. It was recognised that this was a problematic area. The special schools representative proposed, and it was agreed, that:

1. The formula review for special schools would not be completed or introduced until 2008.
2. The present formula would apply to 2008.
3. A forum sub-group be set up to undertake the work of formula/budget review for special schools.

In addition it was agreed that before 2008 there would be a review of statement values. This would be undertaken by LEA colleagues from Access and Inclusion.

Nursery Schools – Again, this area was not as straight forward. It was, however, agreed that the model should be applied to nursery schools. The minimum funding guarantee would maintain the level of funding required whilst the debate continued. The level of additional funding required for nursery schools and other schools would be clearer.

## **2. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the group would be held on Tuesday, 1 November 2005 and would begin at 9.30am. The venue for the meeting would be confirmed as soon as possible.

Keith Little gave his apologies for the meeting and these were noted.

NS

## **3. Any Other Business**

- i) At the last meeting of the Schools' Budget Working Group Performance Related Pay Grants had been discussed. There was a query about what had been agreed and it was confirmed that the current practice would be removed over the next few years but that there would be some transition in place.
- ii) Michael Watmough had recently been appointed as Lead Head of Service for the Education Directorate. This was a temporary appointment to assist the new Director of Children's Services, Moira Swann during her first few months in Cumbria. The special schools representative asked if this had been communicated to schools. It was likely that this had been circulated via the portal but it would be checked.

NS

P&R/NJS  
25 October 2005