

Schools Forum

**Tuesday 28 March 2006 at 5.00pm
at the Blakenall Heath Village Centre, Walsall**

Present:

Mr N Chomyk
Mr A Cheminais
Mr J Baker
Mr M T Barton
Mr A Davies
Mr E Gee
Mr G Crowther
Ms S Bradford
Ms B Leese
Mr S Holtam

Also Present:

Ms D Morris
Mrs T Chappelhow
Mr G McQueen

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Mrs E Perrins
Mr J Clarke
Mr P Nickless

2. School Development Grant: retained funding

Mr McQueen spoke on a paper circulated at the meeting. He explained that the School Development Grant had been formulated from a number of predecessor grants, and included resource for:

- Costs for Advanced Skills Teachers
- Gifted and Talented Summer Schools
- EiC and Excellence Clusters
- Targeted Behaviour Improvement
- Infrastructure and hands-on support for ICT

Mr McQueen confirmed that schools had received an increase of 3.4%, £16.1m having been allocated to schools. In line with regulations, Schools Forum was asked to agree to the retention of £1.173m, representing the cash amount from the predecessor grants in 2005/06.

After discussion it was **agreed** that Education Walsall retain £1.173m of the School Development Grant.

3. Practical Learning

Ms Morris delivered a verbal report, updating the position on the distribution of funds for Practical Learning. It was confirmed that:

- Funding was related to the number of pupils in the 14-19 age range
- The method for the distribution of funding in the 2007/08 year could be different from that adopted for the 2006/07 year but needed to be agreed by the Forum at the same time as the methodology adopted for the 2006/07 year/

In discussion, members of the Forum expressed the view that the distribution of funding solely on pupil numbers was unlikely to result in maximum impact from the resource; selected schools would receive substantial funding due to large sixth-form numbers, but would make relatively low usage of practical learning opportunities.

It was **agreed** that pupil numbers would be used for the distribution of practical learning resources in the 2006/07 year and that a targeted mechanism would be used subsequently. Possible mechanisms for the distribution of funding to be modelled for consultation with Secondary Headteachers, and subsequently with the Schools Forum, in May/June 2008.

4. Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAg)

Mr McQueen spoke on a paper circulated at the meeting.

It was noted that a minor change to primary weightings in the EMAg formula would prevent turbulence in school budgets. The Schools Forum agreed to approve a moderated weighting, as described in the paper, for the 2006/07 year.

The Forum expressed the view that in future, schools should be advised of likely turbulence in advance, giving them the opportunity to manage it and reducing the need for dampening.

5. Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

Ms Morris presented a verbal report, drawing the Forum's attention to anomalies that could result if the MFG was calculated for 'Successor Schools' unless the MFG was calculated on an adjusted budget share. It was **agreed** by the Forum that monies relating to split site allowances

be added to the formula elements excluded from the calculation of MFG.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 School Meals

Clarification was sought on Standards Fund available to support the provision of school meals. It was confirmed that £194k was available and that Education Walsall was in talks with Walsall Council over best use of the funding.

6.2 Increased Pupil Numbers

A discussion was generated through correspondence from Frank F Harrison School. The Schools Forum endorsed the view that school budgets should be calculated, in line with guidance, on January PLASC data.

It was noted that contingency funding was built into the formula, with a trigger mechanism, to identify and benefit schools with unexpected increases in pupil numbers.

7. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as