



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Education Children and Young People Committee

Cllr Tony Buchanan, Children and Young
People Spokesperson and Cllr Katie
Hagmann, Resources Spokesperson

T3.60

The Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh

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By email only—

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22 March 2023

Dear Cllrs Buchanan and Hagmann,

Thank you for your letter of 16 February regarding teacher numbers, pupil support staff and learning hours. As you are aware, the Committee took further evidence on the budget for 2023/24 from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills at its meeting on 22 February.

The Committee notes from Scottish Government correspondence that local authorities have received £88m per annum to protect the pupil teacher ratio, teacher numbers and to provide places on the Teacher Induction Scheme for all probationers who need one. Additional annual funding of £145.5m per annum has also been provided to maintain increased teacher numbers and support staff.

Your letter to the Committee of 7 February states that you believe ‘there is a difference in the expectation between Scottish Government and Local Government on the additionality that the £145.5m provides in terms of teaching, and importantly, support staff’.

The Scottish Government has provided this additional funding for the stated purpose of protecting the pupil teacher ratio and teacher and support staff numbers; therefore, the Committee would ask COSLA to set out the way in which the funding received to date has been used by local authorities if not for that stated purpose.

Your letter of 7 February goes on to say that it was not agreed that the teacher census would be used to monitor Local Government’s use of the £145.5m and that the Scottish Government and COSLA had agreed to jointly design a simple collection

exercise. The Committee asks COSLA to provide further information on how the collection exercise would work and what data would be used. Further, the Committee asks COSLA to set out the steps it is taking to ensure that there is an agreed system for measuring the use of this funding in 2023/24. The Committee is concerned that if different datasets are being used by Scottish Government and Local Government then there will be no reliable mechanism for measuring outcomes.

In evidence on 22 February, the Cabinet Secretary acknowledged there may be a need to take exceptional circumstances in some local authorities into account when considering the use of the additional funding and whether to apply penalties in relation to teacher and support staff numbers. The Committee notes that some local authorities are experiencing a decrease in school rolls, whilst others have increasing pupil rolls; some local authorities might need more classroom assistants rather than teachers.

The Committee believes that there should be an element of flexibility in how the funding can be used. The Committee asks COSLA to set out how local authorities deal with such differing circumstances in deploying the additional funding.

Finally, the Committee notes that the most recent [school support staff statistics](#) were published today; the Committee asks COSLA to provide comments on these statistics, in the context of the issues covered in this letter.

I would be grateful if COSLA could provide a response within one month of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Webber MSP

Convener