

PE2103/B: Legislate to standardise the prescribed learning hours for Primary and Secondary schools in Scotland

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills written submission, 25 November 2024

Thank you for your letter dated 18 October on behalf of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee requesting an update on the Scottish Government's work with local authorities to reach an agreement on the provision of learning hours in Scottish schools. You also asked for an update on when the analysis of the consultation - *Prescribing the minimum annual number of learning hours: consultation* – will be published. I am happy to provide the following update.

The Scottish Government has continued to engage with local government to agree a voluntary approach to protecting learning hours in Scottish schools. Unfortunately, COSLA leaders at their September meeting decided to reject the voluntary agreement that was proposed. It is disappointing that the representative body for local government has felt unable to provide the assurances that many parents desire, particularly those in the Falkirk Council area, that learning hours will be protected.

I am keen that we continue to work with local government, and their representatives COSLA, on how we can best protect the learning hours pupils in Scottish schools receive. I remain open to continuing our discussions with them, however, if we are not able to come to an agreement with local government, I am committed to bringing forward regulations under the powers in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

With regard to the publication of the analysis of our consultation on the learning hours proposals this will be published in due course. I will ensure that the Committee receives a copy of the report as soon as possible after publication.

I hope this response is helpful.

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