



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

By email only—

EH99 1SP

ecyp.committee@parliament.scot

9 February 2023

Dear Cllrs Buchanan and Young,

I am writing on behalf of the Education, Children and Young People Committee regarding an evidence session held with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills on the 2023/24 budget on 18 January. The Official Report of the meeting can be found [here](#); relevant column numbers are set out below.

I note your correspondence to the Committee dated 7 February regarding investment in school staff. I am writing on behalf of the Committee to ask you to provide some further information in relation to teacher and support staff numbers and contact time.

At the meeting, the Cabinet Secretary referred to the Government commitment to have 3,500 additional teachers and 500 additional support staff by the end of this parliamentary session. The Scottish Government has provided £145.5 million per year to local authorities for 2022/23 and 2023/24 to recruit additional teachers and support staff.

The Committee asks COSLA to set out what agreement was reached with the Scottish Government in relation to FTE staff when the provision of the additional funding was initially agreed.

The Cabinet Secretary expressed concern about the lack of progress on teacher numbers and referred to discussions with COSLA in relation to what can be

expected to be delivered with the £145.5 million funding. The Committee would welcome some information from COSLA on the outcome of these discussions.

On 7 February, the Cabinet Secretary made a statement about the additional annual funding of £145.5 million being provided for increased teacher numbers and support staff. In the year ahead (2023/24), if this is not delivered by a local authority, the Scottish Government will withhold or recoup funding allocated for these purposes.

The Committee asks COSLA to set out whether local targets for increased FTE staff have been set, with a view to meeting the overall target set by the Scottish Government at the start of the Parliamentary session. It would be helpful if COSLA could provide information on any longer-term strategy or route maps for achieving FTE staff targets and whether there is any flexibility built into these plans. The Committee would also ask COSLA to set out any structural issues or barriers to meeting the overall target.

In the meeting, the Cabinet Secretary referred to separate ASN funding of £15 million, [announced in 2019](#), for councils to expand on the number of pupil support assistants working in Scotland's classrooms. The Committee asks COSLA to provide details of progress made in relation to the number of pupil support assistants in our schools for 2022/23 and what targets have been set for 2023/24.

It would also be helpful if COSLA could set out how the annual £145.5 million funding (for 2022/23 and 2023/24) and the £15 million (announced in 2019) are intended to work together, given that they can both be used for expanding the number of support staff.

In evidence, the Cabinet Secretary referred to discussions with local authorities and the unions regarding a reduction in class contact time. The Cabinet Secretary referred to a difference in views regarding how to deliver such a reduction. I would ask COSLA to provide the Committee with some detailed information about how these discussions are progressing and how any barriers to reaching an agreed way forward can be addressed. The Committee would also welcome information on what progress has been made to date in reducing class contact time.

The Committee will be taking further evidence from the Cabinet Secretary on the budget for 2023/24 at its meeting on 22 February. The Committee would therefore request a response to this letter by 16 February.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Webber MSP

Convener

