Dear Angela,

The Education and Culture Committee is currently undertaking work on the educational attainment gap and expects to be designated lead committee for the forthcoming education bill, which will also contain provisions on attainment. To inform this work, I would be grateful if you could provide further information on the Scottish Government’s new £100m Attainment Scotland Fund and what it is designed to achieve. In particular, please clarify—

- Whether the £100 million represents new funding;
- How many local authorities you expect to benefit from future years’ funding;
- The mechanisms and criteria by which the funding will be allocated in this and in future years;
- The degree to which the local authorities in question will have discretion over how the funding is spent;
- Whether all the funding will be provided directly to local authorities, or whether any will be provided to other bodies, such as health boards or the third sector;
- Whether all the funding is intended to be spent in primary schools, or whether there will be any discretion available to local authorities to spend on secondary schools or pre-schooling;
- How the intended outcomes of the Fund will be established and measured, and who will be responsible for monitoring progress. Please confirm whether the Fund’s outcomes will be monitored separately from the outcomes expected of other on-going work on attainment;
- What actions you may be able to take in local authorities should there be little or no improvement arising from the Fund.

Yours sincerely,

STEWART MAXWELL MSP
CONVENER