

REPORT TO: DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 18TH JUNE 2001

REPORT ON: TIME FOR TEACHING - ACTION PLAN

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 361-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise Committee on progress made in addressing issues identified in the “Time for Teaching - Improving Administration in Schools” report and to seek approval of an Action Plan to take forward remaining areas for development and improvement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee:-

- i) note the progress which has been made by the department in addressing issues identified in the “Time for Teaching - Improving Administration in Schools” report.
- ii) approve, in principle, the Draft Summary Action Plan attached as an appendix to this report.
- iii) approve the short-term secondment of two staff to co-ordinate the development and implementation of best administrative practice within our schools and the preparation and introduction of a comprehensive departmental management information systems strategy. This will address the short-term areas for improvement outlined in Section A of the Draft Action Plan.
- iv) note that the medium/long term areas for development and improvement (Draft Action Plan - Section B) require a major review of support staffing for schools and will have resource implications. The identification of appropriate funding will require to be addressed in the Revenue Budget Planning cycle.
- v) note that areas for action proposed in Section C of the Draft Plan will require communication/consultation with the Scottish Executive and other agencies.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The short-term secondment of two members of staff to address areas for improvement set out in Section A of the Draft Action Plan can be achieved within existing staffing complement and at no additional cost to the Council.

3.2 Addressing the areas for improvement set out in Section B of the Draft Action Plan may have significant financial implications for the Council. A comprehensive review of support services available to schools will be required in conjunction with Personnel and Management Services Department. The financial implications of such a review will need to be considered within the annual Revenue Budget preparation process. It should be noted that the McCrone Committee has proposals for increased administrative support to schools. It is envisaged that a working group involving appropriate staff and trade union representation will address this issue as part of the McCrone implementation process.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Improvement in schools administration and freeing up more teacher time will assist with increased equality of access to educational opportunity for pupils.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Improvement in schools administration and freeing up more teacher time will assist with increasing equality of access to educational opportunity for pupils.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 It has been evident for some time that the amount of administrative work falling to be carried out by teaching staff has been increasing. This is particularly the case for promoted teacher posts in schools.

6.2 The report "Time for Teaching - Improving Administration in Schools" was the product of a joint study by the Accounts Commission and H. M. Inspectors of Schools looking at administration in schools. The principal purpose of the report is to help schools and education authorities to improve value for money in the way they handle administration tasks. The report was circulated to all authorities and schools.

6.3 The report outlined four areas where work should be done to improve administration in schools.

- i) Schools should streamline what they do in administration.
- ii) Schools and authorities should review the use they make of ICT.
- iii) Schools and authorities should review who does which tasks within schools.
- iv) There should be a questioning of the current staffing structures in schools and the development of alternative models.

6.4 Authorities and schools were required to carry out a self assessment of their school administration arrangements with a view to addressing the recommendations in the form of an Action Plan by July 2001.

6.5 A working group was established to co-ordinate the self-assessment of school administrative arrangement and to compile an Action Plan for consideration by the Education Committee. The group is jointly chaired by the Education Resources Manager and the Head Teacher of Craigie High School and also includes: Head Teachers of Eastern Primary School, Park

Place Nursery School, Kingspark Special School, Depute Head Teacher, Baldragon Academy, Acting Adviser (0-14), Management Services Manager, Personnel and Management Services Department and Chief Administrative Officer, Education Department.

6.6 In carrying out the self assessment the working group referred to the information and self assessment materials for auditors and authorities which were prepared by the Accounts Commission. In order to limit the additional workload falling on school staff it was agreed that the issue of the general questionnaires to collect assessment evidence was to be avoided. It was recognised that significant detail was already available from surveys undertaken under a number of Best Value Reviews and that specific focus groups would be an appropriate vehicle for filling in any gaps.

6.7 The authority's External Auditor is currently undertaking the local audit of progress made to date in implementing the findings of the "Time for Teaching" report in accord with the follow-up arrangements for national studies.

7.0 PROPOSED ACTION

7.1 Proposed actions based on the findings of the self-assessment have been set out in a Draft Summary Action Plan (copy attached). The Draft Plan is in three sections:-

- i) Areas where action can be taken which should result in improved schools administration by review of existing procedure and practice. The improvements should be attainable within existing financial resources. Where procedures and practices are being reviewed this will be undertaken in full consultation with appropriate trade unions.
- ii) Areas for action which will require major review and restructuring of support staffing for schools. These actions will require significant additional resources which will need to be considered within the Council Revenue Budget process.
- iii) Actions which necessitate change in procedures/processes in conjunction with the Scottish Executive or partner agencies. This will require communication/consultation with these organisations to promote the changes proposed.

7.2 A more detailed action plan identifying officer responsibilities and timescales is held within the department to facilitate progress monitoring and is available for inspection.

7.3 Taking forward the actions arising from the identification of areas for improvement listed in the first section of the Draft Plan will be greatly assisted by the temporary secondment of two staff. These staff would be given the task of amending existing procedure/processes to reflect identified "Best Practice" and to assist schools with implementation. They will also be tasked with producing a draft departmental information systems strategy for consideration.

7.4 The review and restructuring of support staffing for schools should be carried out in conjunction with Personnel and Management Services Department.

DRAFT SUMMARY ACTION PLAN

SECTION A: Areas where action can be taken which should result in improved schools' administration by review of existing procedure or processes and where applicable a) identify and share best practice and b) recommending revised systems.

- Pupil Registration and Attendance Monitoring and Reporting.
- Administration related to School Meal Provision.
- Administration of Casework attached to Special Education/ Support for Learning Provision which includes target setting in Individual Education Plans.
- Administration of Health and Safety Procedures.
- More Effective Use of Computer Technology.
- Review of Existing Admin Manual.
- Teacher and Support Staff Supply Arrangements.
- Co-ordination of Continuous Improvement Processes (Best Value/How Good is Our School).
- Administrative aspects of 5-14 National Tests in English and Maths.
- Improved Management of Staff Absence.

SECTION B

- Education Department issue
Improved support to development and maintenance of information technology networks in schools
- Whole School issues
Administration and financial management, lunchtime supervision, pupil attendance, school trip organisation, SQA recording and transfer of information, school reception and security arrangements
- School Department issues
Home Economics – preparation and servicing

Science – preparing, checking and repairing kits, safety role in chemical store

Technical – stocktaking and preparing materials for classes

SECTION C:

Areas where action to improve administration will require to be undertaken in conjunction with the Scottish Executive or partner agencies.

- Control over number and variety of national consultation documents and guidelines emanating from Scottish Executive and other agencies with an educational link.
- SQA administrative procedures.
- Tayside Contracts. (School Meal Administration)

Timescale

1. September - November

The 2 staff seconded will be responsible for reviewing of existing procedures or processes and where applicable a) identify and share best practice and b) recommending revised systems.

- Pupil Registration and Attendance Monitoring and Reporting.
- Administration related to School Meal Provision.
- Administration of Casework attached to Special Education/ Support for Learning Provision which includes target setting in Individual Education Plans.
- Administration of Health and Safety Procedure.
- More Effective Use of Computer Technology.
- Teacher and Support Staff Supply Arrangements.
- Administration of 5-14 National Tests in English and Maths.
- Managing Staff Absence.

2. September - March

The following tasks will be completed by staff being allocated the tasks

- Review of Existing Admin Manual.
- Co-ordination of Continuous Improvement Processes (Best Value/How Good is Our School).

In Section B an action plan with timescales will be delivered once the outcome of the McCrone report has been completed in the areas of:

- Transfer of administrative and other support tasks from teaching staff to support staff. Resource Requisitions, School Trip Organisation, SQA recording and transfer of information, Home Economics preparation and servicing, Science increased support resource admin and health and safety.
- Additional Support Staffing Resources - Administration/ Financial Management, Lunchtime Supervision, Behavioural Support, Pupil Attendance.

In respect of improved support to development and maintenance of information technology networks in schools a system is presently being piloted at St John's High School and this will be reviewed at the end of March.