



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

SCHOOLS FORUM WORKING GROUP
Tuesday, 10th January 2023
(Microsoft Teams)

NOTES

PRESENT: Ryan Morgan (Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership) - Chair
Stuart James (Afon Taf High)
Owen Morgan (Cyfarthfa Park Primary)
Rhiannon Stephens-Davies (Greenfield Special)
Alwen Bowen (Ysgol Rhyd Y Grug)
David Anstee (Ysgol Y Graig Primary)
Anthony Lewis (Head of School Planning & Improvement)
Ian Kent (Education Accountant)

IN ATTENDANCE: Joanna Lewis (LMS Manager)
Gary Winston (Clerk to the Forum)

No.	Discussion/Action
1.	<p><u>Welcome</u> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.</p>
2.	<p><u>SEN Funding - IDP Transition</u> Ian Kent explained that the current system for funding SEN was being reviewed due to the changes to ALN Provision.</p> <p><u>Language Support Funding</u> It was necessary to agree a transition scheme for Language Support as schools moved from SA and SA+ to IDPs and the reduction of pupils on the SEN Register. If the current system was maintained, it would result in a significant reduction in funding to schools as the number of SA and SA+ pupils fall.</p> <p>A model was presented which provided details of SA, SA+ and statemented pupils for the last three years (2020, 2021 and 2022) with IDP figures also being considered in 2022 i.e. total number on SEN & ALN registers. The proposal is that funding for 2023/2024 be based on the highest figure over the last three years. This would mean that no school should receive less funding in the transition period.</p> <p>OM: We have all been trying to reduce the number of ALN pupils but when we look at these figures it appears that there has been an increase in some schools?</p> <p>AL: We have taken the information from PLASC last year. We acknowledge that schools are at different places with the changes to ALN. We would expect the numbers to be reducing but this hadn't happened everywhere by last PLASC.</p> <p>There is a need for further discussions to consider how we allocate for ALN in the long term but what we are trying to agree now is a method of managing the transition.</p>

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	<p>RM: I have concerns that some schools will be continuing to receive very high levels of funding.</p> <p>AL: This is true, but the general trend is that there is a reduction in ALN pupils, and it is fairly consistent.</p> <p>OM: Should we just use the 2022 figures?</p> <p>AB: Could we use an average of the three years?</p> <p>DA: My school numbers have gone up, but we didn't have a proper picture of the situation back in 2021, and so the 2022 figures are more accurate. the average approach could be a good option.</p> <p>OM: The average would disadvantage schools who have been more proactive in reducing ALN numbers.</p> <p>AL: If we used 2022 figures only it would also disadvantage those schools who have been more proactive in reducing numbers on the SEN register.</p> <p>SH: What are the views of the ALN Team on this model?</p> <p>AL: Jill Watkins agreed it was a reasonable model for transition, as schools have been at different places with transition, and it does protect funding so that school are not penalised for being proactive.</p> <p>SH: We do need a more robust system and there needs to be more accountability.</p> <p>RM: The PLASC data for 2023 needs to be looked at carefully.</p> <p>AL: We won't necessarily need to use this model in 2024, its just a transition model for this year. We will have 2023 PLASC data from January count date to consider for next year's transition funding in the formula. We'll also need to develop a new model that is appropriate for the new system once all pupils have transferred from the SEN register.</p> <p>RM: Are we happy to support the transition model suggested for 2023?</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to accept the transition model which was based on the highest SEN & ALN pupil number over the last three years as the transition model for Language Support funding in 2023/2024.</p> <p><u>Social Needs Funding</u></p> <p>Noted that the current model doesn't include SA numbers in the count, only SA+, Statemented and IDPs. The current model is based on the last 3 years average data for total pupils SA+, Statemented and IDP. No amendments were proposed for this funding model for the period of transition as this doesn't penalise schools who have been proactive with the transition.</p> <p>The current model was proposed to continue during the period of transition.</p>
3.	<p><u>Formula Funding Budget Reduction 2023/2024</u></p> <p>Ian Kent explained that the School Budget Forum had been informed of the £2.5 million reduction in funding to the school budgets as a result of the reduction in funding to the Local Authority, and that the Working Group had been asked to consider models for implementing reduction.</p>

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	<p>Two models were presented: Both models included reducing the clothing allowance funding from the formula for secondary schools as this funding is no longer required due to the extension of PDG Access Grant across all year-groups. The clothing allowance allocation has already been removed from Primary schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model 1 – Remove the clothing allowance funding from the formula for secondary schools - £67,500 in total. Find the remaining £2,432,500 based on a 5.14% reduction across all schools. This 5.14% reduction excludes the LRB funding schools receive. • Model 2 - Remove the clothing allowance funding from the formula for secondary schools - £67,500. Find the remaining £2,432,500 based on pupil numbers. This would result in some schools having a higher % reduction in funding than others. It also disproportionately benefits the Special school due to their lower pupil numbers. <p>SH: I would echo Simone’s comments from last night’s meeting where she said that if we accept this, we are saying we can manage with the cut. It does not take into account the impact it will have on standards or the ability to implement the RARS Strategy.</p> <p>RM: You can’t expect schools to continue doing what they have previously done if we reduce staff levels. Intervention will be updated, and this will impact standards.</p> <p>OM: In reality we have little choice, the option to have the same level of reduction seems fairer and will lead to less animosity between schools.</p> <p>AL explained that other options were also considered i.e. reducing the funding provided for R&M or the pupil number allocation provided in the formula’s but that there wasn’t sufficient funding in these factors to find the £2.5 million reductions required. If either model 1 or 2 were agreed then the % reduction to each schools’ formula would be shown as a line in the formula allocation sheet.</p> <p>RM: How soon will schools get the new formulas with the cuts?</p> <p>AL: If we can agree today, we will try and get the indicative formulas out this week. We will share with the School Support Officers, and you can begin to assess the impact.</p> <p>RM: Are we happy to vote on Model 1?</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed to accept Model 1, which implements a 5.14% cut to all schools as the preferred model.</p> <p>The recommended option would now be presented to the School Forum Meeting next week for approval and then consultation would take place with each school / governing body.</p>