

Pennaeth Addysg Head of Education

Dewi R. Jones

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To headteachers and chairpersons of governing bodies of all schools in Gwynedd

Dear Headteacher/Chair of Governors

Re: School Balances

At the last meeting of the Schools Budget Forum held on 26 November 2012, a detailed discussion was again held on the issue of the comparatively high balances of schools in Gwynedd.

Forum members clearly expressed the wish that the financial resources should be spent for the benefit of the schools' current pupils rather than carry over balances just for its own sake. Everybody understands the need for careful future planning, and that is fully appreciated, but it seems that the currently available funding in the Education system is not being put to best use.

The Cabinet Member for Education mentions that the high level of balances makes it difficult for schools to receive additional funding or receive lower cut-backs than the other Council services.

In addition, I have been asked to release several documents that are linked to this matter:

1. A recent statement by the Welsh Government on school balances where it is mentioned that Gwynedd Schools have the highest balances in Wales
"Gwynedd, with 5.9%, had the highest level of reserve funds as a percentage of the expenditure that is delegated to schools"
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/localgov2012/121024/?skip=1&lang=cy>
2. List of School balances based on pupil numbers (**Appendix A**)
3. School balances based on pupil numbers who are eligible for free meals (**Appendix B**)
4. Revised budget for 2012/13 drawing comparison between the schools situation and the original estimate on the use of balances when setting budget for 2012/13 (**Appendix C**)
5. School Balances Questionnaire for 2011/2012 noting the intention of all schools with balances greater than 5%

Each school is welcome to provide comments for me on the response form, and I will present further comments at the next meeting of the Schools Budget Forum to be held on 4 February 2013. (**Appendix Ch**)

You may recall that we held a consultation on an amendment to the documentation where the LA is entitled to intervene with school balances. The background is that at their meeting held on 5 July 2011, the Schools Budget Forum agreed to add the 8% clause to the legislation. The Forum now wishes to consider deletion of this clause and this will be discussed at the next Forum meeting to be held on 4 February 2013. In the meantime, you are provided with an opportunity to express an opinion on this matter and a response form for this purpose is also enclosed. (**Appendix D**).

Yours sincerely

Dewi R Jones

Dewi R Jones
Head of Education

Copy: Education Department's Management Team

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