



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

To:
Councillor Jennifer Raynor
Cabinet member for Education

Please ask for: Michelle Roberts
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Dyddiad:

This is a letter from the Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel to the Cabinet Member for Education following the meeting of the Panel on 18 May 2015. It highlights the Panel's discussion and any outcomes arising from the meeting.

Dear Cllr Raynor

Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel

We met on the 18 May 2015 with the Chief Education Officer to discuss progress with the EMLAS review and changes to the Education Improvement Grant. We have detailed our thoughts below.

The Panel were informed that the EMLAS review was finalised on 16 April 2015 and a summary report containing five alternative service delivery models were discussed at Cabinet/Executive Board away day on Monday 20 April. We understand that Delivery Model 2 Central Service with reduced staffing FTEs was identified as the preferred model (we have asked to see a breakdown of the different models options, since not all panel members were aware of them). We were told that EMLAS staff have been told informally about the outcome of the EMLAS review and have been invited to come forward on an informal basis with expressions of interest in ER/VR or reduced hours. We also heard that plans are being developed with HR to start a 30-day formal consultation process from Monday 1 June with EMLAS staff and trade union representatives. There are no plans in place to undertake wider consultation with schools/parents/carers/other stakeholders as there is essentially no change to the service delivery model for EMLAS, though the service will be reduced.

The panel understand that currently approximately 3200 young people are receiving a service from EMLAS and that this has increased by about 600 since September which equates to about 20% rise. Recognising that Swansea is a city of sanctuary and an asylum seeker dispersal area, the panel did have concerns that the planned reduction of this service by 20% will threaten the council's ability to provide support to vulnerable learners and their families. We were informed that the service will be streamlined but by mitigating risk to the service is important.

We were also informed that this service is now purely grant based and we agreed that it will be important to plan for the future sustainability of this service. We were keen to ensure that a parallel process of upskilling schools/teachers in Swansea was being progressed to help build in that sustainability. We were interested to find out more

about what the capacity to do this is currently, and specifically to find out the extent to which the service considers that the building-capacity element of their work has been successful.

We discussed the Education Improvement Grant for 2015/16 and we were informed that Local Authorities no longer receive funding for a number of individual grant elements. Instead, they will receive one grant and this will be the Education Improvement Grant (EIG). The Chief Education Officer detailed how this will be divided and informed us of the different ways this could be done. We agreed that the best way forward is through an approach that targets the council's priorities.

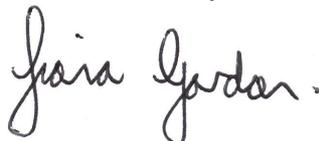
Arising from this discussion was the issue of free school meals (FSM) administration. The panel wished to highlight their concerns in relation to the centralising of FSM application/allocation and the impact this has had on the overall take up of free school meals, which in turn will affect individual schools' Pupil Deprivation Grant allocations.

In summary we would like:

1. Reassurance from you that FSM administrative centralisation is the best way forward and that schools have had input into this change.
2. Information on how school/teachers are currently being upskilled in teaching EMLAS children? And what are the future plans in this area?
3. To be kept up to date on progress in relation to EMLAS changes and the impact.

We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fiona Gordon
Convener Schools Performance Scrutiny Panel
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