

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 24 FEBRUARY 2010**

### **CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE: UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS**

#### **Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of an additional in-service day allocated by the Scottish Government to support schools implement the assessment and moderation requirements of Building the Curriculum 5 (BTC5), an integral part of the Curriculum for Excellence and to seek approval to utilise this day on Tuesday 1 June 2010.
- 1.2 To update Cabinet on the participation of East Ayrshire Council staff in Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) study visits linked to the development of the Curriculum for Excellence.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Curriculum for Excellence programme began in 2004-05 and is now at the final stage of implementation with the publication of Building the Curriculum 5 (BTC5). In recognition of this, the Scottish Government has allocated, in addition to the three days already approved over sessions 2009-12, an additional in-service day to all educational establishments in Scotland for this session. The purpose of this day is to help schools focus on BTC5 and particularly on introducing and managing the new assessment and moderation proposals.
- 2.2 This session educational establishments in East Ayrshire have been allocated six in-service days. Four of these are school based days and two are allocated to authority activities. The authority days are normally utilised in October and February of each session. The allocation of the additional day would mean that this session there will be another authority in-service day in June.
- 2.3 The revised assessment procedures heralded in BTC5 are significantly different in the senior school from present assessment arrangements and will require comprehensive training and CPD for all staff involved. For example, at present pupils enrolled in Scottish Qualification Courses (SQA) courses from Level 3 Foundation to Level 6 Advanced Higher sit external examinations. Under the new arrangements, all assessments up to Level 4 (Standard Grade General) will be internally assessed within schools. The assessment, moderation and validation procedures for such processes will require to be robust, standardised and fully understood by all staff, pupils and parents across the authority.
- 2.4 Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) is responsible for leading on the support to authorities and schools in preparation for all changes heralded by the Curriculum for Excellence, including the most recent proposals for the revised assessment procedures. As part of their strategy, LTS is investigating best international practice in all of the curriculum areas which will be impacted on by the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence, including assessment. To facilitate this, LTS have sought

the support of local authorities to release staff to form LTS led teams with a remit to investigate examples of best practice across the world and report back on how such practice can benefit Scottish education.

- 2.5 East Ayrshire has traditionally participated in these programmes. During this session, for example, we released eight staff to join teachers and LTS officers from a wide range of Scottish local authorities to visit Canada, New Zealand China, Finland and Germany. With the exception of the visit to Germany, - this was linked to CPD on Holocaust education, the other trips focussed on assessment, language development and reviewing alternative education models designed to improve attainment and achievement.
- 2.6 The impact of these study visits can be demonstrated in, for example, development of the Ayrshire Confucius classroom hub which gave East Ayrshire a leading role in the teaching of Chinese language and culture across the three Ayrshire authorities.. The feedback from the examination of assessment practices in New Zealand has influenced the authority wide moderation programme in English language and shaped the present development of an 'e-portfolio,' which records wider achievements, to be used across the authority and possibly rolled out nationally under the auspices of LTS. On the in-service day of 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010 over six 'in-house' programmes catering for 400 + staff was led by a number of staff who have taken part in the LTS overseas programmes and used their expertise to stimulate debate and deliver insights into strategies to raise attainment and wider achievement. Early evaluations indicate that these programmes have been successful and well led.
- 2.7 All local authorities are fully funded by Learning and Teaching Scotland to release staff to take part in these study programmes.

### **3. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no policy implications in this paper.

### **4. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The work carried out by schools and staff during the in-service day programmes will impact directly on the community planning priorities 'Improving Lifelong Learning', particularly in relation to key elements of assessing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing within the Curriculum for Excellence.

### **5.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.2 Part of the school's Continuous Professional Development budget will be allocated to support travel expenses, materials and preparation time for any in-service programme developed. Existing school budgets will be able to meet any in-service costs.
- 5.3 There are no financial costs in approving staff to join Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) teams on national or international study programmes as LTS fully fund all associated costs.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Head of Schools consulted with Head Teachers of all sectors about the proposed date for the additional in-service day. The date favoured by schools for this session was 1 June. Head Teachers, particularly in the secondary schools, although supported by colleagues from primary, special and early years, favoured this date as senior pupils from fourth to sixth year would be on study leave and this would therefore negate any impact on pupils' preparation for Scottish Qualification Authority examinations. The Parent Council Strategy Group Chair was consulted and his response, on behalf of the Parents Strategy Group, favoured this date as it preceded a local holiday on the 31 May.
- 6.2 It is proposed that given the extensive development work taking place to embed the Curriculum for Excellence, prior to its official launch in August 2010 that a members/officers seminar is planned for early April to brief elected members and chief officers of the key aspects of the programme.

## **7. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are risks that the effective implementation of Building the Curriculum 5 could be negatively impacted upon if teaching staff do not have sufficient CPD to prepare them to best manage the changes in the guidelines.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (i) approve the Scottish Government proposal to allocate the additional in-service day on Tuesday 1 June for session 2009-2010;
  - (ii) approve the continued participation of East Ayrshire Council education staff in national and international study visits led and managed by Learning and Teaching Scotland;
  - (iii) approve the proposal to convene a member/officer Curriculum for Excellence seminar in April;
  - (iv) otherwise, note the contents of this report.

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AS/EO'N  
4 February 2010

### **List of Background Papers**

1. Letter from Scottish Government – Extra In-Service Day to Support CfE Implementation (25 January 2010)

Members wishing further information should contact Andrew Sutherland, Head of Service: Schools, Tel: (01563) 576126.

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