

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 DECEMBER 2007

STRENGTHENING THE DELIVERY OF A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To advise Cabinet of progress made in recent delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence and to seek approval for the secondment of a member of staff to further strengthen this delivery.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** A Curriculum for Excellence was published in 2004 and is the most significant curriculum development in the last decade in Scottish education.

A Curriculum for Excellence establishes clear values, purposes and principles for education from ages 3-18 in Scotland. The document set out profound implications for the nature of learning, how it is taught and what is assessed. It enables schools and teachers to anticipate changes and challenges which young people will face in the future to take account of the advantages in education and to tackle aspects of the current curriculum which must be improved.

The underlying aim of A Curriculum for Excellence is that all children should develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society.

- 2.2** For the first time ever a single 3-18 curriculum supported by a simple and effective structure of assessment and qualifications is being put in place. This will allow the right pace and challenge for young people, particularly at critical points, like the move from nursery to primary and from primary to secondary.

It also provides greater choice and opportunity earlier for young people to help them realise their individual talents and to help close the opportunity gap by better engaging those who currently switch off from formal education too young. It provides more skill for work options for young people and further enhances the links between local authorities, schools and further education colleges, particularly Kilmarnock College and Ayr College.

There is more space in the curriculum for work in depth, thus ensuring that young people develop the literacy, numeracy and other essential skills and knowledge that they will need for life and work.

- 2.3** A Curriculum for Excellence also proposes more space for sport, music, dance, drama, art, learning about health, sustainable development and

enterprise and further activities that broaden the life experiences and life chances of young people.

3. A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE – PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1 East Ayrshire has embraced the fundamental aims and aspirations of A Curriculum for Excellence and has made significant progress over the last two years. Staff in schools and support officers from the centre have been working to develop a curriculum which will enable all young people to understand that the world they are living in reaches the highest possible levels of achievement and equip them for work and learning throughout their lives. To do this, we aim to:

- Make learning active, challenging and enjoyable
- Provide expectations which are not too fragmented or overcrowded with content
- Connect the various stages of learning from 3-18
- Encourage the development of high levels of accomplishment and intellectual skill
- Include a wide range of experiences and achieve a suitable blend of what has traditionally been seen as the academic and vocational
- Give opportunities for children to make appropriate choices to meet their individual interests and needs while ensuring that these choices lead to successful outcomes
- Ensure that assessment supports learning

3.2 All of this has been delivered through an extensive programme of continuous professional development. The work of central support staff, working closely with colleagues in schools to develop curricular resources and materials and by these staff modelling good practice in learning and teaching in the classroom. In February 2007, during the in-service days, all staff across the authority were involved in a wide ranging programme of seminars and conferences and in inter-visitations focusing on good practice workshops, that allowed the sharing of the best examples of curricular materials and strategies for supporting the learning and the assessment of children and young people.

3.3 Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), as the main national deliverers of A Curriculum for Excellence, have provided extensive support nationally and locally through the appointment of an area advisor.

3.4 By creating a delivery mechanism focussing on a year of engagement and familiarisation, followed by a year of development and implementation, LTS have been providing learning outcomes for all of the areas of the curriculum. To date, learning outcomes have been provided for numeracy and science with an expectation that all of the other outcomes will be provided to schools by Easter 2008.

Within East Ayrshire, a consultation and engagement steering group has been established, which comprises representatives from all sectors of the department, network support and central support officers. In addition, a small

executive group of four key officers provides direction to the development of A Curriculum for Excellence within the department. This is supported by key officers in delivering aspects of Enterprise Education, Critical Skills and Assessment is for Learning.

4. STRENGTHENING THE DELIVERY OF A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE IN EAST AYRSHIRE

4.1 In order to strengthen the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence in East Ayrshire, it is proposed to second a senior member of staff from across the sectors of education at head teacher or depute head teacher level. Such a person will be able to contribute significant expertise at both a strategic and operational level and provide advice and guidance on how best to roll out aspects of curriculum development in schools and classrooms across the authority. As a result staff will be better equipped to introduce new curricular model supported by innovative teaching approaches and pupils will be better equipped to develop their capacities and better prepared to contribute positively to the school and the wider community.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The seconded post will be financed from within the Curriculum for Excellence implementation budget. The secondee will be on existing conditions and salary. Depending on the designation of the member of staff seconded, backfill cost will vary between £7k and £14k.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 A Curriculum for Excellence provides direct support to Improving Opportunities and Promoting Community Learning. In addition, these developments are key in the delivery of the More Choices: More Chances programme designed to significantly reduce the number of young people going into negative destinations on leaving school.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Nil.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) agree to the seconded post to strengthen delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence.
- (ii) otherwise, note the contents of the report.

Graham R Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

KMcK/EO'N
9 November 2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

A Curriculum for Excellence in East Ayrshire, Education Committee – 12 September 2006

Members requiring further information should contact Kenneth McKinlay, Acting Head of Service: Schools Tel: (01563) 576126 or

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