

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 23 NOVEMBER 2007**

#### **SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY EXAM RESULTS 2007**

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

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To advise Elected Members of the overall East Ayrshire performance in the 2007 diet of examinations.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Each year the Scottish Executive publishes the results obtained in the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations to schools and education authorities. It is no longer the practice, nationally, to publish figures on performance on a school-by-school basis in the format that became known as 'League Tables'. There is, however, still a requirement for authorities to make available to parents the results for individual schools. This is done principally through school handbooks and the compilation of information for parents of P7 pupils moving to secondary school.

### **3. INTERPRETING THE RESULTS**

- 3.1 Summary tables of results are provided in section 4.
- 3.2 The figures in section 4 are presented as a percentage of the relevant S4 roll. This is to enable some level of comparison to be made. Use of the S4 roll means that the effects of differing staying on rates to S5 and S6 is removed.
- 3.3 It should be noted that increasing numbers of young people are following alternative courses such as ASDAN, or XL clubs. Some are also attending Kilmarnock College or Ayr College for vocational courses. Schools, and therefore the Authority, do not receive any statistical credit for this feature of provision which follows national guidelines on the curriculum.
- 3.4 In the past, figures were presented on a straightforward basis of performance in Standard Grades and Higher Grades. With the introduction the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) performance is reported against the following levels:
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|----------|--|
| Level 7: | Advanced Higher at A-C: CSYS at A-C          |
| Level 6: | Higher at A-C                                |
| Level 5: | Intermediate 2 at A-C: Standard Grade at 1-2 |
| Level 4: | Intermediate 1 at A-C: Standard Grade at 3-4 |
| Level 3: | Access 3 Cluster: Standard Grade at 5-6      |
- 3.5 The data presented in this paper is pre-appeal. Success in appeals will further improve the results in due course.

#### 4. THE RESULTS – S4 AND S5

- 4.1 The Scottish Qualifications Authority has concluded that performance, nationally, in 2007 is “broadly similar to the levels attained in previous years”. This statement can also be applied to attainment within East Ayrshire which has shown slight decline in standard grade attainment offset against improvement at higher grade.
- 4.2 In 2006/07, the SQA withdrew the “derived grades” element of its appeals process which in certain circumstances, provided an automatic appeal to improve a student’s result if there was a case for underperformance. These students are now expected to appeal through the normal appeals process. Additional information is provided on Derived Grade at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 This change will predominantly affect Standard Grade achievement as the majority of derived grades were for Standard Grades. This year’s figures, which are pre-appeal, show that the percentage of S4 pupils achieving five or more awards at Standard Grade Credit level has fallen by five percentage points. There has been a fall of 3 percentage points at General Level. The end of derived grades contributes to this drop.
- 4.4 In previous years the post-appeals attainment figures have generally been only one or two percentage points higher than the pre-appeals figures. This year the difference is anticipated to increase more as the students who would have benefited from derived grades, instead will benefit from successful appeals.
- 4.5 The percentage of pupils achieving English and Maths at Standard Grade level has increased from 89% in 2006 to 90% in 2007 but remains in line with previous performance.

	Eng & Maths by the end of S4				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Clackmannanshire	89	89	82	90	89
Falkirk	90	88	89	82	90
North Ayrshire	89	91	91	90	91
North Lanarkshire	90	90	89	91	91
West Lothian	92	94	95	95	94
Family Average	90	91	90	90	91
<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>
National	91	91	90	91	91

	<b>5+ Awards at SCQF Level 3</b>				
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Clackmannanshire	85	83	84	88	90
Falkirk	90	88	89	88	89
North Ayrshire	88	90	91	88	90
North Lanarkshire	92	92	90	91	91
West Lothian	92	94	92	93	94
Family Average	91	91	90	90	91

<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>89</b>
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National	91	91	90	91	91
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	<b>5+ Awards at SCQF Level 4</b>				
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Clackmannanshire	71	69	72	71	71
Falkirk	73	70	72	73	72
North Ayrshire	72	70	72	69	69
North Lanarkshire	74	74	73	74	71
West Lothian	76	78	77	80	75
Family Average	74	73	73	74	72

<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>72</b>
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National	76	77	76	77	75
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	<b>5+ Awards at SCQF Level 5</b>				
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Clackmannanshire	25	27	31	28	28
Falkirk	30	28	29	31	30
North Ayrshire	29	29	31	29	28
North Lanarkshire	28	30	27	30	27
West Lothian	33	36	33	36	33
Family Average	29	30	30	31	29

<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>
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National	34	35	34	35	32
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	<b>1+ Awards at SCQF Level 6</b>				
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Clackmannanshire	30	31	29	37	33
Falkirk	32	36	33	34	34
North Ayrshire	33	31	32	35	32
North Lanarkshire	34	34	35	33	34
West Lothian	36	36	37	34	38
Family Average	34	34	34	34	34

<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>
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National	39	39	39	38	38
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	<b>3+ Awards at SCQF Level 6</b>				
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Clackmannanshire	15	15	17	20	16
Falkirk	16	19	18	18	17
North Ayrshire	17	18	18	18	17
North Lanarkshire	18	17	19	15	17
West Lothian	21	21	21	19	21
Family Average	18	18	18	17	18

<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
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National	23	23	23	22	22
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	<b>5+ Awards at SCQF Level 6</b>				
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Clackmannanshire	5	4	7	9	7
Falkirk	7	8	6	6	6
North Ayrshire	7	8	7	8	7
North Lanarkshire	7	6	7	6	7
West Lothian	9	8	9	9	9
Family Average	7	7	7	7	7

<b>East Ayrshire</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
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National	10	9	10	10	9
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## 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Performance at Standard Grade level has decreased slightly this year although it is anticipated that this is due, in part, to the removal of the derived grade procedure. It is anticipated that the appeal outcomes will improve performance within these performance measures.
- 5.2 There has been improvement in Higher Grade results for 2007 as East Ayrshire continues to perform better than the comparator family authorities.
- 5.3 This information, detailed breakdown of figures by individual schools, and other information will be used by the Quality Improvement Team to support head teachers and subject departments to further improve performance for next and subsequent years.
- 5.4 These figures will be of interest to young people and parents. They will therefore be discussed with the Student Councils and representative parents' groups including Parent Councils.

## 6. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Nil.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

**7.1** It is recommended that the Committee note the terms of the report.

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services  
12 November 2007

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Scottish Executive publication of SQA examinations

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers or wishing further information on this report should contact Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Service on Telephone No. 01563 576017.

## APPENDIX 1 – DERIVED GRADES

The Scottish Qualification Authority's appeal process ensures that candidates who have performed less well than expected in the external examination can have their result reviewed, provided that there is evidence to support this.

'Derived Grades' was the name given to the first stage of Scottish Qualification Authority's appeal process.

Approximately two months before the examinations take place, each centre is asked to provide an estimate of the result which a candidate is expected to achieve in the external examination. The estimate is a professional judgment by the subject teacher who matches the evidence of candidate performance against the grade descriptions contained in the Arrangements documents for every subject. These estimates can be changed by the centre at any point up to the day of examination.

After the examination, the SQA compares the teacher's estimate of a candidate's performance against their actual performance in the examination. If the teacher has estimated accurately for the majority of candidates, then the candidates who have narrowly failed to achieve their estimated grade, or who had a genuine reason for absence on the day of examination, will automatically be awarded that grade. This process was known as the 'Derived Grade'.

The Derived Grades process was reviewed by the SQA in the 2006 report *Review of Estimates, Derived Grades and Appeals* published in October 2006. The report recommended the complete removal of the Derived Grade procedure in combination with improved estimates and evidence for appeals. It was noted within the recommendations that the removal of the Derived Grade process would result in "a change in the distribution of results, with a consequent depression of attainment across the different grades. The percentage of top grades would show a small decrease, and the difference would go to the lower grades"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Review of Estimates, Derived Grades and Appeals published by Scottish Qualifications Authority, October 2006, page 9.