

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE – 31 OCTOBER 2000**

#### **EXAMINATION RESULTS ANALYSIS NEW STANDARD TABLES AND CHARTS**

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

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To advise Members of the introduction of an electronic based support package designed to allow schools to evaluate attainment, thus providing deeper insight into the performance of subject departments and the school as a whole.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** It is now nine years since HM Inspectors of Schools first published a package of support materials on using standard tables of examination results in school self-evaluation. In those nine years, the Quality Initiative in Scottish Schools has developed to involve schools, education authorities and national bodies working in partnership to establish a more rigorous framework for school improvement across all aspects of a school's activities.
- 2.2** The levels of success achieved in helping pupils gain nationally-certificated qualifications remains one of the key touchstones of a secondary school's success within this broader quality improvement approach. Schools and authorities have become increasingly skilful at using the information provided through the standard tables to refine and target their efforts to raise standards.
- 2.3** With the introduction of the new framework of National Qualifications developed through the Higher Still initiative, it is clear that some changes need to be made to the form and content of the standard tables. It is also timely, however, to take stock of the experience gained by Scottish schools in using the tables, and to build in a number of other improvements to increase their effectiveness. The new Standard Tables and Charts represent a significant step forward in the evaluation of attainment. Not least, the move to electronic publication on a CD-ROM gives users much greater flexibility to analyse the information provided in a variety of different ways.

### **3. WHY ANALYSE EXAMINATION RESULTS?**

- 3.1** Teachers, schools, education authorities and the SEED analyse results as part of the continuing process of self-evaluation and improvement. This process has been greatly assisted by the publication of calculated measures of performance in the Standard Tables of Examination Results, which first appeared in 1991.

**3.2** More specifically, taking a close look at examination results can help to:

- monitor progress towards individual student, course and whole-school targets
- confirm that performance in external examinations is in line with departmental predictions
- monitor the effectiveness of different learning and teaching strategies
- identify cases where performance is above expectation and merits recognition, with any further consideration being for the purpose of spreading good practice
- identify cases where performance is in line with expectations and no major action is indicated
- identify cases where performance is below expectations, and where further investigation is merited with a view to planning for improvement
- provide information for parents and the public, for example, through School Handbooks and Annual Information Reports on Schools.

#### **4. THE NEW STANDARD TABLES AND CHARTS**

**4.1** The Standard Tables have undergone a substantial revision to take account of the implementation of the new National Qualifications framework introduced by the Higher Still development programme. The new tables will replace the previous versions of the Standard Tables and the School Attainment Summary, which were provided annually to schools. HM Inspectors of Schools consequently undertook a review of the Standard Tables and discussed possible changes and improvements within the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), and with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), education authorities and other interested parties.

**4.2** The main changes are:

- the Standard Tables have been revised to take account of the new National Qualifications
- the introduction of a single system of post-16 awards has allowed for the replacement of the formerly separate Standard Tables for SCE and National Certificate awards with one integrated set of tables
- some new statistics are being provided and the way in which others are calculated has been modified
- information previously available separately in the School Attainment Summary has been incorporated into the new Standard Tables and Charts
- the new Standard Tables and Charts are provided in electronic format on CD-ROM.

**4.3** There will be a period of two years during which the new Standard Tables and Charts will be, to some extent, incomplete. For example, in the first year there may be data for four years instead of five in some trend tables and tables showing values for new levels of award such as Intermediate 1 may be sparsely populated, depending on uptake in individual schools.

HM Inspectorate of Schools intends to review the use of the new Standard Tables and Charts after 2001 and may, as a result, make further changes to the specifications.

- 4.4** The introduction of the new framework of National Qualifications has enabled the incorporation of statistics about student attainment at all levels from Standard Grade to Advanced Higher into a single set of tables.
- 4.5** Some improvements have been made to the way in which Relative Ratings are produced. Relative Ratings indicate how well students do in one subject compared to how well they do in all other courses they take. No awards are now included in the calculation for Standard Grade. At all levels, where relative ratings are calculated, values will be provided for the separate cohorts of males and females.
- 4.6** Value added statistics were added to the Standard Tables in 1996. These are retained in the new Standard Tables and Charts. Statistics are produced for value added from Standard Grade to Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2, as well as Higher, in S5. In addition, separate values are provided for males and females at Higher.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST AYRSHIRE SCHOOLS**

- 5.1** Head of Schools and Senior Officers within the Quality Development Team have undertaken training in the use of the New Standard Tables to ensure that full and meaningful dialogue can take place between the Authority and Schools. In addition, training has been provided for Key Officers in the Senior Management Team of each secondary school.
- 5.2** Due to the present difficulties within the Scottish Qualification Authority, detailed analysis of this year's examination results may not be possible for some time. This, however, does not detract from the potential power of these evaluation tools in exam result analysis and as a means of focusing a school's attention on those areas or subjects for whom more challenging targets might be set.

## **6. POLICY/LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** Nil.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members of the Education Sub-Committee:

- (i) invite the Director to report back in due course on the effectiveness of the New Standard Tables and Charts of Examination Results in supporting schools in evaluation attainment; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew  
Director of Educational and Social Services

KMcK/MTC  
5 October 2000

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Standard Tables and Charts – HMI Quality, Standards and Audit Division.

Members wishing further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, Tel: (01563) 576118 or Kenneth McKinlay, Principal, Quality Development, Tel: (01563) 555650.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: GRAHAM SHORT, HEAD OF SCHOOLS**

**AGENDA**