

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 12 FEBRUARY 2003

**THE RESULTS ON THE CONSULTATION OF THE PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE
A NEW BUILD ON THE PRESENT SITE OF ST JOSEPH'S ACADEMY
INCORPORATING:**

- **Rationalisation of the twin campus of St Joseph's Academy in Kilmarnock and Cumnock**
- **Incorporating a New Build Denominational Primary School involving the amalgamation of St Columba's and St Matthew's Primary Schools**
- **Including New Build for Pre School Provision**
- **Enhanced Community Learning Facilities**

**APPENDIX A - THE CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT
APPENDIX B - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

**WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS FROM INTERESTED PARTIES ON THE
CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION IN THE
MEMBERS LOUNGE.**

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Report by the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On 21 November 2002 East Ayrshire Council's Education Committee approved the issuing of a consultative document which proposed a new build for St Joseph's Academy, incorporating a new build denominational primary school involving the amalgamation of St Columba's and St Matthew's Primary Schools including new build for pre school provision and enhanced Community Learning Facilities. A copy of the consultative document is attached as Appendix A.

1.2 The main issues raised in the consultative document were:

- A key factor for the Council is the need to ensure that the best possible educational environment is available through the provision of a safe, secure and up-to-date environment
- The Council's vision for the school estate and the need to:
 - Ensure that all aspects of the modern curriculum can be delivered to children of all abilities.
 - Provide the most up to date Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all schools.
 - Provide maximum access for pupils, staff and parents.
 - The development of the Arts, Culture and Sports and Health education and the creation of Centres of Excellence to deliver an agenda of continuous improvement.
 - Provide a secure environment for all who are educated and work in the school.
 - Provide access to the community having regards to those with particular need.
 - Provide catering and dining facilities of the highest standard in a modern environment.
 - Provide appropriate social area provision for parents and pupils.

- Make a commitment to the environment and environmental issues.
- Develop Learning Partnerships through the New Community Schools model and forming strong partnerships with local/national organisations committed to offering support.
- The recognised need for a significant investment in the school estate.
- The availability of national funding under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative.
- The submission of an outline business case to the Scottish Executive according to guiding principles, which are:
 - (i) Rationalisation of school provision
 - (ii) A commitment to social inclusion and a presumption in favour of mainstream education
 - (iii) Provision of pre-school provision
 - (iv) Access to lifelong learning through an integrated community learning provision
 - (v) Partnership with other agencies supporting community development and better neighbourhoods
 - (vi) Development of Centres of Excellence in secondary schools to provide enhanced and specialist support in a range of academic, sporting and cultural pursuits.

1.3 In relation to St Joseph's Academy:

The projected future maintenance costs of the buildings are in the order of £6,125,000. Such costs coupled with the age of the building and the fragmented layout of the current building do not reflect efficient use of the Council's resources.

1.4 In relation to St Columba's Primary School

The projected future maintenance costs of the building is in the order of £606,000. Such costs do not reflect efficient use of the Council's capital resources which could be reinvested in resources for learning for the benefit of the pupils.

1.5 In relation to St Matthew's Primary School:

The projected future maintenance costs of the building is in the order of £578,000. Such costs do not reflect efficient use of the Council's capital resources which could be reinvested in resources for learning for the benefit of the pupils.

1.6 In relation to Community Learning:

The present campus of St Joseph's Academy is well used in support of community learning activities.

1.7 Inclusion:

The Council is committed to a policy of inclusion. A number of changes in legislation bring obligations to ensure that all have equal access to facilities. Through the facilities for hearing impairment and visual impairment there is already much good practice. The possibilities offered under this proposal would address a number of issues related to equal access.

2. THE CONSULTATION

- 2.1** Written representations on the Committees proposals were sought from interested parties in terms of the Education (Publications and Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulations 1981 and Amendment Regulations 1987, 1988 and 1989.
- 2.2** In accordance with statutory requirements parents of affected schools and the appropriate school boards have been consulted. Copies of the consultation document were also made available to the staff of St Joseph's Academy, St Columba's and St Matthews Primary Schools, Community Learning, representatives of teacher and staff unions, elected members including members of the Scottish Parliament and Members of Parliament.
- 2.3** The existence of the document was publicised in the press and copies were made widely available in the Education Offices and affected schools, in the local community and to local interest groups.
- 2.4** A number of meetings including four public meetings were arranged by the school boards of the establishments affected. These were attended by parents, staff and members of the community. The meetings offered the opportunity for discussion and clarification of the proposals as well as a forum for people to express their views of the proposal. These events, and in particular the one organised for members of the community by the school board were well supported and gave the opportunity for views to be expressed.
- 2.5** A specific e-mail address was created to facilitate the consultation. A number of respondents took advantage of this means of communicating their views.

3. VIEWS EXPRESSED

- 3.1** A total of 73 written submissions were received, including those made by e-mail. These submissions included those from:
- St. Joseph's Academy School Board
 - St. Columba's Primary School Board
 - St. Matthew's Primary School Board
 - St. Patrick's Primary School Board
 - St. John's Primary School Board
 - St. Joseph's Academy Senior Management Team
 - Constituency Members of the Scottish Parliament
 - Constituency Local Elected Members
 - Parents and other relatives
 - Rt. Rev. Maurice Taylor
 - Other interested parties
 - UNISON
 - Head Teachers Association of Scotland (HAS)

Of the submissions, 4 were signed by a number of individuals.

A full summary of respondents is included at Appendix B.

In addition to the written submissions, the meetings referred to in 2.4 enabled a number of significant issues to be raised. The following paragraphs attempt to summarise the issues raised at the meetings and in the written responses to the consultative documents.

- 3.2** Of the 73 written responses 34 expressed support in respect of the proposals contained in the Consultation Document. A number of responses commented on the enhanced educational facilities and opportunities for both staff and pupils as a result of the new build. In addition several commented on the far sighted nature of the proposals and expressed a view that “the advantages will far outweigh the disadvantages”.
- 3.3** The St. Joseph’s Academy School Board indicated their support for the proposals, highlighting that a flagship campus would secure Catholic education in East Ayrshire. They also recognised the impact additional travelling may have for pupils resident in the south of the authority.
- 3.4** The Head Teacher and her senior management team colleagues at St. Joseph’s Academy expressed strong support for the proposal to rationalise the twin campuses on the Grassyards Road, Kilmarnock site. In particular, they made reference to the increasing challenge to deliver a broad range of subjects for those attending the Cumnock campus in S3 and S4, due to the lack of pupil numbers. They commented that the levels of attainment in the school have shown an increase. “In session 2001-2002 our students achieved the best set of results ever”. They wished to build on this improvement through the proposed rationalisation to bring the school together under one roof.
- 3.5** The St. Columba’s Primary School Board also indicated their support for a new denominational primary school with “state of the art facilities”. They did however raise a number of issues such as the security of primary aged pupils in a larger campus and minimising disruption in the transfer of pupils to the new establishment.
- 3.6** The St. Matthew’s Primary School Board agreed at their open meeting, held on 9 January 2003, to support the proposals. The Board also asked for a commitment to on-going consultation to ensure that issues raised at the meeting could be discussed as progress is made.
- 3.7** Staff at both St Columba’s and St. Matthew’s have also written to support the proposals and asked that consultation continues at every step throughout the process. At the public meetings for both schools the Director assured parents and staff that this would be the case.
- 3.8** Responses were also received from the School Boards of St. John’s and St. Patrick’s Primary Schools. The views expressed were against the proposals on the grounds that denominational secondary education would be removed from the Cumnock area and would be detrimental to the Catholic population.

3.9 The Bishop of Galloway Rt. Rev. Maurice Taylor submitted objections to the proposals, stating that the plans do not support “a positive duty to be especially anxious to give all necessary and possible support to Cumnock and area”. The response also states that “the viability and success of St. Conval’s High School proves that a four year Catholic secondary school in Cumnock is perfectly possible”.

3.10 A number of parents also submitted a written response on the proposals. In general the parents of children from the Cumnock area were against the proposals and viewed them as a diminution of denominational secondary education in this area. In particular comments were often made about travelling distances and times and the inaccessability of a school campus in Kilmarnock. They were concerned about the ability of their children from outlying areas to participate in the extra curricular activities at the school.

Parents from the Kilmarnock area, including those of pupils at the two primary schools, viewed the proposals favourably. Responses from these individuals mentioned the enhanced community use, the increased security that the proposals give for long term denominational education and integrated service working. Support for the continuation of Early Years and the development of Community Learning on the new campus was expressed.

3.11 Provost Boyd submitted a written response which expressed the concerns faced by his constituents. The Provost’s letter also highlights that Catholic education is an integral part of the lifestyle in the south of East Ayrshire and “should be enhanced and not eroded in any way”. These comments are broadly similar to those raised by Councillor Ross.

3.12 Responses were received from the Head Teachers’ Association of Scotland (HAS) and UNISON. The HAS submission welcomed the opportunity to upgrade educational facilities. UNISON recorded opposition to any transfer of staff under the proposal.

4. COMMENTS ON THE VIEWS EXPRESSED

4.1 The issue of the consultative document raised considerable interest and concerns amongst staff, parents, school boards, community groups and other interested parties. The volume of written responses and the level of attendance and questioning at meetings confirms the important place that schools have in the community. This demonstrated the real interest that parents and others have in the quality of education that their children receive and particularly the concerns that parents and others have over proposals for change to the existing arrangements.

4.2 The expressions of support which were made by a number of respondents in respect of the proposal have been noted.

4.3 The concerns expressed by those parents of children who currently attend the Cumnock Campus of St. Joseph’s Academy from S1 to S4 particularly in respect of the travelling distance from rural areas in the South of the authority are carefully noted. However, the authority is prepared to give assurances

that all students will enjoy full participation in all aspects of school life including after school activities. Careful planning and the commitment of all involved will be required to ensure that those pupils who have further to travel are not disadvantaged in any way. This commitment is given. Careful, participative planning will be necessary to deliver this commitment.

- 4.4** The Department of Educational and Social Services wishes to continue to work in partnership with the staff of all schools concerned and members of their School Boards in the development of the proposals and will ensure that the appropriate mechanisms exist to take this forward. There is a clear commitment to consult with all interested parties, especially staff, parents and pupils.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1** The education authority remains fully committed to the effective provision of Catholic education across East Ayrshire. Recent moves to strengthen Catholic secondary education through the process of rationalisation have proved successful. That the secondary school is now reporting steady improvements in pupil attainment since recent mergers have been introduced is significant.
- 5.2** There is no intention to remove access to Catholic education for secondary aged pupils. Rather these proposals are submitted for consideration with a clear focus on strengthening provision for the schools involved in a new, purpose-built up-to-date campus on the present St Joseph's Academy site in Kilmarnock.
- 5.3** Concerns about the proposed closure of the Cumnock campus have to be taken into careful consideration. Supportive comments from the Head Teacher of St Joseph's Academy and her senior colleagues have also to be taken into account. The projected intake for the Cumnock Campus from St John's and St Patrick's Primary schools presently stands at around 18 pupils. The ability to sustain a wide curriculum, in particular since the introduction nationally of curriculum flexibility in planning, is considerably constrained if the status quo is maintained. The emphasis placed on the quality of learning and teaching for pupils is central.
- 5.4** The co-operation and support for the proposal from the two primary schools directly involved, Early Years and Community Learning is acknowledged. All wish to be involved in further consideration and planning, including the pupils. That is readily agreed to.
- 5.5** The concerns expressed by some correspondents about travel distances for pupils from outlying areas and their full involvement in the life of the proposed new arrangements are not taken lightly. The commitment to plan carefully in support of affected pupils is readily given. On balance, for these pupils, the access to greatly enhanced facilities and learning and teaching opportunities outweighs the disadvantages which have been expressed.

5.6 The opportunity to strengthen provision for denominational education presents the need for open, careful and sensitive planning. That will be a priority in the implementation phase, if the proposals are accepted.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee agree:

- (i) A new build St. Joseph's Academy be provided on an identified site on the existing campus at Grassyards Road, Kilmarnock and incorporating a new build denominational primary school resulting from the amalgamation of St. Columba's and St. Matthew's Primary Schools, with early years facilities, and enhanced Community Learning opportunities.
- (ii) The existing buildings of St. Joseph's Academy, at Kilmarnock and Cumnock, be closed with effect from the end of the school session June 2006. Pupils transfer to new build St. Joseph's Academy in August 2006 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (iii) The existing St. Columba's and St. Matthew's Primary School buildings be closed with effect from the end of the school session June 2006. Pupils will transfer to a new build denominational Primary School within the new build education centre at the present St. Joseph's Academy Kilmarnock campus in August 2006 or as soon as possible thereafter.
- (iv) Enhanced Community Learning facilities be incorporated in the new build.
- (v) In terms of the Education (Publication, Consultation etc) (Scotland) Regulations, the implementation of the proposal to close St Matthew's Primary School requires referral to the Scottish Executive (80% rule) along with the implementation of the rationalisation of the Cumnock Campus of St Joseph's Academy because this proposal provides alternative secondary provision more than 10 miles from the existing campus; and
- (vi) The Education Committee will be advised of the outcome of this referral in due course.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

EC/JBS
31 January 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Written responses from consultation document

Members wishing further information should contact John Mulgrew, Director of Educational and Social Services, Tel (01563) 576017 or Euan Couperwhite, Head of Resource Support, Tel (01563) 576090.

APPENDIX B**LIST OF RESPONSES TO St JOSEPH'S ACADEMY CONSULTATION**

Ref No.	Date Received	Name	Date Responded
1.	29/11/02	Margaret Jamieson MSP	29/11/02
2.	03/12/02	Bill McGregor, James Hamilton Academy	04/12/02
3.	12/12/02 via e-mail	Kevin Dorrian, PT Physical Education	12/12/02 via e-mail
4.	06/01/03	Thomas Murphy, Our Lady & St Patrick's	07/01/03
5.	06/01/03	George H Gillen, 75 Car Road, Cumnock	07/01/03
6.	20/12/03 via e-mail	Andrew McSorley, Teacher Rep, St Joseph's Academy SB	07/01/03
7.	06/01/03	Mrs Eileen Quinn, 10 Craigie Road, Kilmarnock	07/01/03
8.	24/12/02	Malcolm McLean, Chair, St Joseph's SB	07/01/03
9.	06/01/03 via e-mail	Thomas Quinn, 10 Craigie Road, Kilmarnock	07/01/03
10.	06/01/03	Rev Maurice Taylor, 8 Corsehill Road, Ayr	07/01/03
11.	07/01/03	Ms Elizabeth Danagle, 17 George McTurk Crt, Cumnock	07/01/03
12.	07/01/03	Ms Mary-Grace Burinski, 21 Darnconner Ave, Auchinleck	07/01/03
13.	07/01/03	Mr Patrick Hand, 105 Arran Drive, Auchinleck	07/01/03
14.	06/01/03 via e-mail	Mr Paul Quinn, 32 Holmhead Road, Cumnock	07/01/03
15.	07/01/03 via e-mail	David Cush, On Behalf of Music Department, St Joseph's Academy	08/01/03 via e-mail
16.	07/01/03 via e-mail	David Cush, As Principal Teacher of Music, St Joseph's Academy	08/01/03 via e-mail
17.	08/01/03	Arthur West, UNISON	08/01/03
18.	08/01/03	Rev Gerald Donnelly, St John's Parish, 92 Glaisnock Street, Cumnock	08/01/03
19.	08/01/03	Mrs E McKendry, 11 South Dean Road, Kilmarnock	08/01/03
20.	08/01/03	Brigid Rooney, Head Teacher, St Joseph's Academy	08/01/03
21.	09/01/03	John Murphy, 10 Barrhill Terrace, Cumnock	09/01/03
22.	09/01/03	Thomas Milgrew, 3 School Road, Auchinleck	09/01/03
23.	09/01/03	Moira Drennan, Principal Teacher of Support for Learning, St Joseph's Academy	09/01/03
24.	09/01/03 via e-mail	Eileen Meek	09/01/03 via e-mail
25.	09/01/03 via e-mail	Dorothy McCabe, Assistant Head Teacher, St Joseph's Academy	09/01/03 via e-mail
26.	09/01/03 via e-mail	Michael McKenna, St Joseph's Academy	09/01/03 via e-mail
27.	10/01/03	Patricia Hewet, 26 Oakbank Drive, Cumnock	10/01/03

28.	10/01/03	Frances Jack, Video West, 29 Townhead Street, Cumnock	10/01/03
29.	10/01/03	Members of the Art, Design & Technology Dept, St Joseph's Academy	10/01/03
30.	10/01/03	Mary Margaret Lucas, Assistant Head Teacher, St Joseph's Academy	10/01/03
31.	10/01/03 via e-mail	Andrew McSorley, Depute Head Teacher, St Joseph's Academy	10/01/03 via e-mail
32.	10/01/03 via e-mail	Anne Ross, PT, Business Education, St Joseph's Academy	10/01/03
33.	10/01/03 via e-mail	Jim Campbell, parent	10/01/03 via e-mail
34.	10/01/03 via e-mail	Maria Dorrian, Principal Teacher of Guidance, St Joseph's Academy	10/01/03 via e-mail
35.	10/01/03 via e-mail	Joe Sikora, PT RE, St Joseph's Academy	13/01/03
36.	10/01/03 via e-mail	Joseph Lynch, Assistant Head Teacher, St Joseph's Academy	13/01/03
37.	10/01/03 via e-mail	Mary Margaret Lucas on behalf of the Guidance Team, St Joseph's Academy	13/01/03
38.	13/01/03	John J McHugh, Church Rep on Education Committee, 17 Bannoch Place, Kilwinning	13/01/03
39.	13/01/03	Provost Jimmy Boyd	13/01/03
40.	13/01/03 via e-mail	Cathy Jamieson on behalf of a concerned parent in Cumnock	13/01/03 via e-mail
41.	13/01/03	Mrs P Wallace, 93 Barbieston Road, Auchinleck	13/01/03
42.	13/01/03	Concerned Grandparent, 21 Well Road, Auchinleck	13/01/03
43.	13/01/03	Councillor Eric Ross	13/01/03
44.	13/01/03	David Sadler, 1A Townhead Street, Cumnock	13/01/03
45.	13/01/03	J & A McGrady Footwear, The Precinct, Cumnock	13/01/03
46.	13/01/03	John Bigger, QBS, 9 Townhead Street, Cumnock	13/01/03
47.	13/01/03	Isobel Brown, Ayrshire Cancer Support, 3 Townhead Street, Cumnock	13/01/03
48.	13/01/03	Bill Bain, Oakhouse Mortgages, 3 The Square, Cumnock	13/01/03
49.	13/01/03	Robert Donnelly, R D Sports, Townhead Street, Cumnock	13/01/03
50.	13/01/03	Wilma Wallace, Quids In, 23 Townhead Street, Cumnock	13/01/03
51.	13/01/03	M Wilson, Staff member, St Joseph's Academy	13/01/03
52.	13/01/03	John & Rosemary Burinski, 45 Church Street, Auchinleck	13/01/03
53.	13/01/03	Martin Durnan, Chair, St Patrick's Primary School Board	13/01/03
54.	13/01/03	Colin D McInnes, Chair, St Columba's PS Board	13/01/03
55.	13/01/03	Michael McGrath, staff member & parent, St Joseph's Academy	13/01/03
56.	13/01/03	Vincent & Katrina Stevenson, 6 Riverside Gardens, Cronberry	13/01/03
57.	13/01/03	Margaret McGrath, 9 South Hamilton Street, Kilmarnock	13/01/03
58.	13/01/03	Mrs Kathleen Jones, 2 Burns Avenue, Kilmarnock	13/01/03

59.	13/01/03	Jim Monaghan, 20 George McTurk Court, Cumnock On behalf of Save Our Schools Campaign	13/01/03
60.	13/01/03	Brian & Janice McAvoy, 3 Marchmont Court, Hurlford, Kilmarnock	13/01/03
61.	13/01/03 via e-mail	John Dalzell, 1 Montgomery Street, Catrine	13/01/03
62.	13/01/03 via e-mail	Jack Milarvie, St Matthew's Primary School Board	13/01/03
63.	13/01/03 via e-mail	Robert Sheerins, 15 Landsborough Drive, Kilmarnock	13/01/03
64.	13/01/03	Elizabeth Smith, Chairperson; St John's Primary School Board	13/01/03
65.	13/01/03 via e-mail	Ben Davis, Assistant Principal Teacher of English (Drama, St Joseph's Academy)	13/01/03 via e-mail
66.	13/01/03	Mr William Cush, 23 Munro Avenue, Kilmarnock	13/01/03
67.	13/01/03	Marion Dorrian, Principal Teacher of Guidance, St Joseph's Academy	13/01/03
68.	13/01/03	J Gilliland, Gilliland & Co, Townhead Street, Cumnock	13/01/03
69.	13/01/03 via e-mail	St Matthew's Primary School staff and parents	13/01/03 via e-mail
70.	13/01/03 via e-mail	Pauline Clarke on behalf of staff at St Columba's PS	13/01/03 via e-mail
71.	13/01/03	Maureen Cardie, Head Teacher, St John's Primary School	13/01/03
72.	16/01/03	Dr Allan Gunning, Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire & Arran,	
73.	21/01/03	Wai-yin Hatton, Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire & Arran	

TOTAL – 73