

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 6 FEBRUARY 2001

EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES

Report by the Director of Educational & Social Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Education Committee of the first year's operation of the pilot Educational Maintenance Allowance Scheme in East Ayrshire.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Education Committee, on 3 June 1999, (Item 8, Page 89, 1999/2000) approved a proposal to pilot an Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Scheme on behalf of the Scottish Executive. Supplementary Staffing proposals were agreed by the Personnel & Property Sub Committee on 24 August 1999 (Item 18, Page 324, 1999/2000).
- 2.2 The EMA scheme is currently being piloted in 46 local education authority areas; the East Ayrshire pilot scheme is the only Scottish scheme at the current time although the Scottish Executive has indicated that additional pilot schemes will be approved in 2001.

3 MAIN FEATURES

3.1 Aim

To test the extent to which a financial incentive improves post-16 participation, retention and achievement rates in education.

3.2 Features

- (a) The EMA is paid directly to the young person.
- (b) The EMA is paid as a weekly allowance (p to £40 per week) plus additional annual bonuses for attendance and achievement (up to a maximum of £75 for each bonus).
- (c) The payment of EMA will normally be restricted to a period of two years, except for some young people with special needs.

3.3 Eligibility

- (a) The applicant must have completed S4 prior to the commencement of the EMA.
- (b) The applicant must be aged between 16 and 19 years.
- (c) The applicant must be resident, or attending a school, in East Ayrshire.
- (d) The applicant must have, and adhere to, a current learning agreement.
- (e) The applicant must normally be in a recognised full time course

of study (i.e. at least 21 guided learning hours per week), in a recognised institution offering qualifications up to SQA Level Three, which does not attract any other form of public or employer support.

4 PERFORMANCE 1999/2000 & 2000/2001

4.1 Uptake

Details of the uptake of the EMA, and the level of payments made, for pupils in East Ayrshire schools are noted in the table below:

Weekly Entitlement [£]	Uptake 1999/2000	%	Uptake 2000/01, to date	%
0	54	8	33	5
10	28	4	31	5
15	44	6	40	7
20	45	6	37	6
25	47	7	33	5
30	35	5	47	8
35	41	6	42	7
40	423	59	343	57
Total	717		606	

4.2 Agencies & Number of Payments

	Number of Payments		1999/2000			
	1999/2000	2000/01	Attendance Bonuses Paid	%	Achievement Bonuses Paid	%
EAC	717	606	503	70	583	81
Ayr College	138	90	63	46	82	59
Kilmarnock College	110	142	35	32	51	46
Total	965	838	601	62	716	74

4.3 Places

	1999/2000	2000/01
Resident outwith EAC	0	6
Establishments outwith EAC	30	32

5. DEVELOPMENTS

5.1 A full appraisal of the EMA Scheme is being conducted with the Scottish Executive and partner organisations early in 2001. This is likely to include a qualitative study of pupil performance in at least one secondary school.

5.2 It is likely that the EMA Pilot scheme will be extended in Scotland, probably from August 2001. The current IT system will be updated and renewed, with Scottish Executive funding, to provide a modern system which can be extended to provide an administrative support for other local authorities participating in the pilot schemes.

6. FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Scottish Executive funds all costs associated with EMA payments and administration. The annual cost of payments was £755,120 in 1999/2000. The total cost of the scheme was £792,000 in 1999/2000.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The EMA Scheme is welcomed by students and is perceived as providing an incentive to continue in education. At this early stage, the statistics on attendance and performance suggest an improvement in the number of pupils in S5 and S6 but firm conclusions cannot be drawn.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

(i) note the contents of this report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational & Social Services

AYMcD/JBS
29 January 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. East Ayrshire Council, Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Guidance Notes, Issue 2, June 2000

For further information on this report please contact Allan Y McDougall, Head of Resource Support at (01563) 576090.

AGENDA