

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 28 MAY 2002
NATIONAL PRIORITIES ACTION FUND

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of the establishment of the National Priorities Action Fund.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For the three financial years upto 2001-2002 developments in education have been supported by the Excellence Fund for Schools. This fund, which was the subject of a number of reports to Committee, was a highly successful initiative. A number of important projects including Early Intervention, Class-Size Reduction for P1 - P3, and the National Grid for Learning were part of the Excellence Fund structure. As a consequence, a number of important service developments have taken place that would not otherwise have been possible.
- 2.2 However, since the Excellence Fund concept came into operation, there have been a number of important developments in the way service improvement is managed. The most significant of these has been the introduction of the 5 National priorities and the requirement for Authorities to develop a system of local improvement objectives. These systems indicate the need for a more flexible system that can be better adapted to local need.

3. THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES ACTION FUND

- 3.1 On 5 April 2002, the Scottish Executive issued a letter Authorities explaining the proposals for the National Priorities Action Fund (NPAF). These proposals still await a formal response from CoSLA.
- 3.2 The NPAF will establish 5 action areas within the National Priorities:
- school in the community
 - social justice issues
 - discipline, including strategies for improving behaviour and the ethos of the school
 - school infrastructure
 - health promotion

These action areas will exist for 3 years. The first 4 of 5 action areas have been identified as key themes with health promotion funded from elsewhere.

3.3 There will be a reduction in bureaucracy associated with NPAF. Local authorities will be given more flexibility linked to accountability. Reporting will be refined to an outcome based approach with a concentration on the achievement of agreed objectives. The scheme allows also for flexibility in the deployment of funds within each of the NPAF key areas.

3.4 An annual report will require to be submitted to the Scottish Executive.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The NPAF will allow the Authority to deliver the improvements outlined in its annual statement of improvement objectives.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The indicative distribution of funds under NPAF is:

Key Theme	Programme	£
School in the Community	New Community School Pilot	200000
	New Community School Roll Out	288800
Social Justice	Inclusion	481870
	Support for Teachers	226139
	Study Support	250533
Discipline and Ethos	Alternatives to Exclusion	249799
	Support for Parents	124899
School Infrastructure	National Grid for Learning	463294
	New National Qualifications	120484
Specialist Provision	Centres of Excellence*	370000
	TOTAL	2775818

* Funds are shared with North Ayrshire and Argyll and Bute in this joint project.

5.2 A number of areas previously funded through the Excellence Fund for Schools, are now subject to a distribution through authority's overall resource allocation (GAE). These are Early Intervention (£323,537), Classroom Assistants (£1,191,800), and Class Size Reduction (£288,747) and amount to a funding allocation of £1,804,084. Details, of the proposals to develop the Authority's approach to Early Intervention are given in Annex A to this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) agree the use of the National Priorities Action Fund to Support the areas of development identified in the report ;
- (ii) agree to the extension of the Early Intervention Programme to the upper stages of primary schools as described in Annex A to this report; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report

GRS/GRS
7 May 2002

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools, (01563-576089).

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Implementation Officer: Graham Short

ANNEX A**RAISING ATTAINMENT IN CORE SKILLS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL****1. AIM**

- 1.1** To achieve better levels of attainment support the upper stages of primary schools

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** These are concerned with National Priority 1:
"To raise standards of educational attainment for all in schools, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of achievement including examination results
- 2.2** Early Intervention is a national initiative, aimed at raising standards of literacy and numeracy in the early years of primary schools. The Initiative was funded initially for a 3 year period by Scottish Office Education and Industry Department with contributions from East Ayrshire Council. This initiative was then extended by the Scottish Executive for a further 2 years through the Excellence Fund for Schools. The Initiative will now be fully funded by the National Priorities Action Fund
- 2.3** Quantitative and qualitative data has provided evidence of the success of Early Intervention in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy in primaries 1 to 3 at the early stages of primary school. This was reported to committee on 18 September 2001.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1** Current staffing to support the implementation of the Initiative is: one Project Co-ordinator, three Early Intervention Support Officers and four Nursery Nurses. Overall planning and evaluation is managed by a Steering Group comprising senior officers of the department.
- 3.2** The Early Intervention Initiative has used a phased programme to increase the number of schools involved over a three year period (1997-1999) with additional schools and nursery establishment joining in each phase. Currently all Pre 5 and Primary establishments are involved in the Initiative.
- 3.3** Projects within both nursery establishments and primary schools have been set up to foster increased parental participation in the

development of early skills through play opportunities or through structured parental support. Parental commitment has been high and the response from parents has been enthusiastic.

4. FUTURE PROPOSALS

4.1 Future proposals for the Programme are designed to:

- continue the development of the Profile of Skills
- consolidate and extend existing good practice at key transition points
- sustain the development of systems of early identification procedures in primary 1
- embed early intervention strategies within the nursery curriculum and into learning and teaching in P1 to P7
- continue in joint work with the Network Support Team to support pupils identified as 'at risk' in pre 5 and primary establishments
- continue to develop systems, policy and practice to optimise early identification and intervention
- support vulnerable parents in lifelong learning and the development of foundation skills
- pilot the implementation of nurture groups in schools in East Ayrshire

4.2 The rolling programme of staff development will continue to progress Early Intervention strategies into primary four and beyond. Similarly, resources will be identified to support the extension of the Programme in literacy and numeracy in these stages.

4.3 In order to meet these restructured priorities it will be necessary to review the present early intervention structure of 3 support officers. There will be three new posts of Core-Skills Development Officers for the Programme. The remit for these posts will be to support the development of literacy and numeracy from primaries 1 to 7, and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the East Ayrshire Early Intervention Initiative in the middle to upper stages of the primary school.

4.4 These Core Skills Development Officers will work with Learning Partnerships to assist the development and delivery of coherent learning strategies at local level.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Employment costs:

1 x co-ordinator @ £41098	£45,710	
3 x Core skills development officers @ £35098	£108,804	
4 nursery nurses @ £15519	£66,865	
TOTAL		£221,379
Travel and subsistence	£10000	
Classroom supplies	£10883	
Administration	£2500	
Staff development	£60000	
Research costs	£18775	
TOTAL		£102,158
GRAND TOTAL		£323537

All financial requirements will be met with the Early Intervention budget within the National Priorities Action Fund

REFERENCES:

- 1 Report to Education (Community) Sub-Committee - 6 May 1997: Early Identification and Intervention
- 2 Report to Education Committee - 28 August 1997: Early Intervention and Identification
3. Report to Education Committee - 16 April 1998: Early Intervention and Identification
4. Report to Education Committee - 1 June 1999: Early Intervention and Identification
5. Report to Education Sub-Committee - 31 October 2000: Early Intervention and Intervention
6. Report to Education Committee - 3 September 2001: Early Intervention and Identification

AGENDA
