

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Schools Forum

7 February 2006

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Distribution of Funding Earmarked For Practical Learning Options

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Schools Forum of the DfES criteria in respect of Practical Learning and to propose a funding methodology in respect of the 2006/07 and 2007/08 LMS formula (Local Management of Schools).

Background

2. Since the last meeting of Schools Forum the DfES has announced a number of targeted funds for 2006/07 and 2007/08; one of which is Practical Learning Options. This funding is within the Dedicated Schools Grant.
3. Funding has been distributed for Practical Learning Options (for pupils aged 14-16), based on pupil numbers aged 11-15 within Dudley. Allocations for 2006/07, and 2007/08 have been announced as £271k (approximately £13 per pupil), and £477k (approximately £23 per pupil) respectively.
4. This funding is intended to support the drive to offer more practical learning options for pupils at age 14 to maintain their engagement in education and learning.
5. This funding will need to be allocated via the LMS formula and will be distributed in accordance with the school finance regulations and related guidance by a separate formula factor in order that schools can identify amounts received.
6. In order for the funds to be allocated to schools via the delegated budget for 2006/07 Schools Forum will need to decide the most appropriate methodology for the allocation of funds to schools.
7. This DfES targeted funding for practical learning relates to mainstream and special pupils.

8. At its meeting on 18 January 2006, Budget Working Group recommended acceptance of the proposed methodology for allocation of Practical Learning funds for 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Proposals

9. It is proposed that the methodology adopted for distribution of funds for Practical Learning Options within the LMS formula, be based on the number of pupils aged 11-15 (unweighted) as recorded in school on PLASC (Pupil Level Annual Schools Census) annually. This reflects the basis on which the DfES allocate funds at national level.

Finance

10. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DfES through School Finance (England) Regulations 2006.
11. From 1 April 2006, the Schools Budget will be funded by a direct DfES grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

Law

12. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

Equal Opportunities

13. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

Recommendation

14. That Schools Forum note the contents of this report and advise the Director of Children's Services in respect of the proposed distribution of Practical Learning Options funding, with effect from April 2006, as set out in the proposals.



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