

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1049
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05987/20
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Member of the Senedd
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2 November 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 19 October seeking my views on Petition P-05-1049 Change the school summer holiday break.

Schools play an important role in every child and young person's life, and at the heart of Our National Mission has been the recognition that we need to see the school system evolve as part of our wider ambitions for education in Wales. With that in mind, Professor Mick Waters was asked to undertake an initial look at re-imagining schooling in Wales. Part of its focus was on how the traditional school year could be changed to better suit learning and teaching in the 21st century, with consideration also being given to the role of schools in wider society.

Unfortunately, owing to the shift in priorities resulting from the coronavirus pandemic this year, and the difficulties involved in engaging across the schools system at this time, this work has stalled and I am unable to say with certainty when we might be able to conclude a review.

The setting of school term dates is currently set out in regulations. The Education (Consultation on School Term Dates) (Wales) Regulations 2014 require local authorities and the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools to set school term dates. They place a duty on them to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other when setting term dates, so that the dates set are the same or as similar as possible. Under current law the Welsh Ministers have no role in the setting of school term dates.

Any future review of the existing structure of term times would need to closely involve local authorities and consortia to ensure consistency across Wales. Also, as any changes to existing school term arrangements, including the length of school terms and holidays, would have wide-ranging impacts on the general public and school staff, there would need to be a

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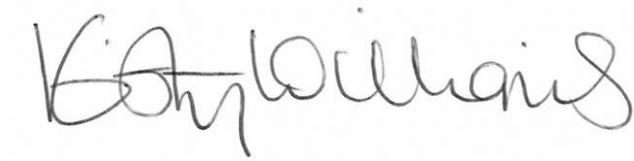
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

wider civic conversation. Issues to consider, for example, would include the effect on teachers' pay and conditions, the timing of public examinations and potential impacts on learner performance and childcare arrangements for parents.

I do believe that this matter warrants further research and review, however at present I am unable to commit the resources it would require. Therefore I am not currently minded to change the law to give Welsh Ministers power over setting term times.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

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