



Kirsty Williams MS  
Minister for Education  
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03/02/2021

Dear Kirsty,

## Stage 2 amendments to the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

I was disappointed that during the Children, Young People and Education Committee's consideration of amendments to the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill, amendment 44 (The Code for Teaching Welsh on a Single Continuum) was rejected. Nonetheless, I was pleased to hear your commitment to working with stakeholders to develop and bring forward a Welsh Language Framework that would seek to provide particular support for the teaching of Welsh in English medium schools. I would be very interested to further understand the proposed framework, and am more than willing to contribute to its development if that is deemed helpful.

During the committee's consideration of proposed amendments, you characterised a 'code for teaching Welsh' as a framework that would place additional and unique statutory obligations on Welsh medium educators in Welsh medium schools, and not on English medium schools. This characterisation is not consistent with what we, and others, have called for in terms of a code for the teaching of Welsh. We have been very clear that the primary purpose of a code would be to raise expectations and provide further support to English medium and bilingual schools in particular (as outlined in detail in our letter to you on 19 January 2021). Learners in English medium schools will of course move along a Welsh language continuum differently to those learners in Welsh medium schools. But the purpose of a code would be to provide further support to English and bilingual medium schools in order to realise the long term ambition of closing that gap in the future. A code would both reflect the reality of the current situation, where it is necessary to place different expectations on learners in schools of different language categories, whilst also providing a legislative mechanism to raise expectations gradually, and to provide the required support and guidance to achieve this.

You also mentioned that my 'asks' in term of the legislation go way beyond what can be achieved by the curriculum Bill. We have called for the Bill to include provisions for

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defining the language categories of schools, but this was in direct response to a commitment included in the Government's own white paper on the curriculum legislation in 2019. In terms of matters relating to Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, teacher training and professional development, we have merely pointed out that the curriculum Bill is inextricably connected to such wider developments. We have never suggested that the curriculum Bill can somehow address the needs around school staffing, or any of the other issues listed. We do believe, however, that the Bill and its contents will significantly shape future decisions in such key policy areas. It is just as true of course that policy developments in areas such as workforce planning is of fundamental importance in achieving the aims and objectives of the new curriculum.

I hope this letter clarifies our position on the above issues, and highlights our shared concern in ensuring schools are clear in terms of the expectations placed on them in relation to the Welsh language, and more importantly that they have the necessary support to achieve this. As I mentioned in my initial evidence to the Committee during the first stage proceedings of the Bill, we believe the best way of doing this is in a statutory code. However, we are hopeful that much of what we wished to see in a code could also be achieved via a statutory Welsh Language Framework, and my officers would be very happy to contribute towards this work.

Yours sincerely,



**Aled Roberts**  
Welsh Language Commissioner

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