



Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

18 September 2018

Dear Chair,

I write to you regarding the Committee's inquiry 'The status of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification'.

There is no specific consideration given to the Welsh language in terms of reference of the current consultation on the subject. I write therefore to encourage the Committee to dedicate specific attention to the issue during oral evidence sessions following gathering written evidence.

Both education and the workplace are central to the growth of the Welsh language. While our education system is the main source of new Welsh speakers, the use of the Welsh language in the workplace helps to increase the status of the language, normalise its everyday use, and improve speakers' confidence. Only by combining support for the Welsh language in education and in the workplace will it be possible to develop skilled bilingual workforce in Wales.

However, we know that a significant cohort of Welsh speakers lose their Welsh language skills at the end of their statutory education. Clearly, post-16 education – the period bridging the world of education and the world of work – is essential for ensuring that learners continue to use, develop and take full advantage of their Welsh language skills. Programmes such as the Welsh Baccalaureate, which set learners' employability at the heart of the provision, can make an important contribution to realising this vision.

Comisiynydd y Gymraeg
Siambrau'r Farchnad
5–7 Heol Eglwys Fair
Caerdydd CF10 1AT

0845 6033 221
post@comisiynyddygyymraeg.org
Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

comisiynyddygyymraeg.org

Welsh Language Commissioner
Market Chambers
5–7 St Mary Street
Cardiff CF10 1AT

0845 6033 221
post@welshlanguagecommissioner.org
Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

welshlanguagecommissioner.org



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Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

As far as I can see, neither the terms of reference of the current consultation, nor the questions in opinion surveys available on the Committee's website, refer specifically to the Welsh language. I would like to therefore encourage the Committee to take advantage of the oral evidence sessions to question the respondents about the extent of use of the Welsh language in the Welsh Baccalaureate; views on the advantages and disadvantages of completing the framework in Welsh; and the factors likely to influence these views.

My officers would welcome an opportunity to meet with your clerk to discuss some specific aspects that merit attention. For example, their initial inquiries suggest that there are some basic issues regarding the availability of the relevant data on the number and percentage of learners completing the Baccalaureate in Welsh.

I trust that my comments above will be of interest to you and I kindly ask you to consider them when planning the oral evidence sessions. Please contact Lowri Williams, Senior Policy Officer, lowri.williams@cyg-wlc.cymru if you wish to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Meri Huws
Welsh Language Commissioner