

**Cyfieithiad I'r Saesneg gan Gomisiwn y Senedd**  
**English Translation by Senedd Commission**

WESP 13

Cynlluniau Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg – y fframwaith deddfwriaethol sy'n cefnogi Darpariaeth Addysg Gymraeg |

Welsh in Education Strategic Plans – the legislative framework that supports Welsh–Medium Education Provision

Ymateb gan Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC) | Response from Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

Welsh in Education Strategic Plans – Written Submission by UCAC for the Senedd Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee.

- In December 2015, the Children, Young People and Education Committee of the Fourth Senedd published its report on the '**Inquiry into Welsh in Education Strategic Plans**'. Has the current statutory framework for Welsh in Education Strategic Plans improved since then?

UCAC is of the firm opinion that the current statutory framework has improved significantly since December 2015, especially after the urgent Review of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans 2017-20.

The majority of the local authorities managed to deliver draft strategic plans that addressed the needs and were clearly planning to achieve ambitious targets. Obviously, not all authorities managed to do that in their drafts, but we assume that the relevant governmental procedures will ensure compliance.

Another matter, of course, is whether the improvements will ensure governmental ambitions and aspirations in terms of the Welsh language.

- To what extent do Welsh in Education Strategic Plans contribute to the outcomes and targets set out in the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy – **Cymraeg 2050**;

The education system is, of course, key to the success of the Welsh Government's Strategy – **Cymraeg 2050**.

At first glance, it appears that the targets presented by the Government will contribute to ensuring that the outcomes and targets set out in **Cymraeg 2050** are realised.

However, as only plans are available, it is difficult to say how successful the Strategic Plans will be in this regard. We very much hope that consistent monitoring will ensure contribution.

Furthermore, UCAC has concerns in this regard as the whole system is not in place to ensure success, e.g., a shortage of suitable teachers, school language categories and moving schools along a linguistic continuum, and the English-medium sector and Welsh qualifications. We very much hope that the Welsh Education Bill will address some of these concerns.

- How are local authorities responding to changes to guidance on school categories according to Welsh-medium provision, and are they meeting the Welsh Government's ambition to increase Welsh-medium provision in English-medium and dual-stream schools?

We do not have concrete information on the situation specifically, but it seems that not much is happening in general at the moment, although there are a few specific examples that show that there is movement from one place to another. It may be a matter of time, especially as the authorities have had little time to respond.

UCAC notes that the changes to guidance on school categories according to Welsh-medium provision have made it easier for a number of authorities to re-designate bilingual schools as Welsh-medium schools without requiring any change to their provision. UCAC is of the opinion that this is detrimental to the situation of Welsh in education.

Furthermore, setting a requirement of a % of all school activities won't necessarily ensure an increase in the provision or an increase in terms of pupils' Welsh language ability.

In general, there is little evidence that schools are currently moving along the language continuum, especially from category 1 to 2. In fairness, some authorities are clearly planning in detail in this regard.

The Government's ambition of increasing Welsh-medium provision in English-medium and dual-stream schools is clear – but the expectations and guidance are not clear. UCAC is not aware of any English-medium school where there has been an increase in provision so far.

Again, we look forward to seeing how the Welsh Education Bill will offer the statutory framework and mechanism for increasing provision.

- What challenges lie ahead in the planning and development of Welsh-medium provision, ahead of a proposed Welsh Language Education Bill?

Above, we have outlined some of the challenges we face when considering the Welsh Education Bill, but UCAC is of the opinion that specific, urgent attention needs to be given to the following as well.

The Government is planning and starting to act in order to ensure that there is enough expertise in the workforce to ensure that there are enough Welsh language teachers and teachers that can teach subjects through the medium of Welsh. However, it is difficult to see how it will be possible to meet all needs as it stands currently, and we really need to consider how to attract more to the profession.

UCAC has a specific concern about the ability of the workforce to ensure the contribution of the English-medium sector towards the objectives and targets of **Cymraeg 2050**. It is clear that this needs urgent consideration, despite the fact that it may be politically sensitive.

UCAC is of the opinion that it is necessary to continue paying attention to the development of school leaders and ensuring that it is possible to attract people to leadership roles within schools.

It is key that provision and qualifications reflect the needs of Welsh medium provision and that those studying through the medium of Welsh, in all parts of the country, are not at any disadvantage in terms of the breadth of provision and opportunities compared to others. UCAC and others are working to ensure that this will be the case as we discuss the proposed new qualifications. Specific attention is needed to post-16 provision in this regard, especially in terms of vocational qualifications.

Although a few authorities are currently paying great attention to immersion education, it must be ensured that national strategy and planning takes place in order to support authorities, especially in those Welsh-speaking communities.

It is key that significant financial investment and careful planning takes place in order to ensure success. The nature of that funding needs to be considered.

August 2022