

Lynne Neagle AS/MS  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Your ref P-06-1494  
Our ref LN/10537/24

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

18 December 2024

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December regarding Petition P-06-1494 Welsh Government to protect funding in education from WG and Local Authority cuts.

I recognise that the cost-of-living crisis is putting schools and local authorities under significant pressure. I appreciate the great efforts of the school workforce as they continue to operate in a challenging context including persistent levels of absenteeism and impacts to behaviour in classrooms, mental health and wellbeing issues. Since taking up my position as Cabinet Secretary for Education earlier this year, I have listened to our education partners across Wales and understand the challenges they are facing.

On 6 December I announced an additional £50m in 2024-25 to support education standards and infrastructure across Wales. This reflects the importance, and my commitment, to invest in our learners and the education system which supports them.

Whilst we welcomed the UK Government's Autumn Budget which provides extra revenue and capital funding for the Welsh Government in 2024-25 and 2025-26, we continue to face significant financial challenges. Our Draft Budget for 2025-26 was published on the 10 December. Our budget focuses on our priorities, including those set out by the First Minister, and on ensuring public services continue to deliver for Wales.

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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.

We are prioritising investment to local authorities, just as we have in previous years, by providing an increase of £253m to the Local Government Settlement in 2025-26, a like for like basis uplift of 4.3%. We will continue to work in partnership with local authorities to ensure we do all we can within the funding available.

Across 2024-25 and 2025-26, the education sector is set to benefit from £225.5m in funding, with schools, colleges and other settings receiving funding to help meet the needs of learners across Wales. This is in addition to the proposed increase to the Local Government Settlement in 2025-26, which recognises the powerful points that local authority partners and our schools have made around pressures to deliver upon the statutory responsibility for ALN and wider education provision.

In supporting schools and local authorities, and in taking forward the additional investment, we have increased the additional funding we provide through the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) by 5.5% overall compared to 2024-25, to a total of just under £400m.

In addition to a further £15m in-year funding to support Additional Learning Needs (ALN), the 2025-26 Draft Budget also protects and continues to prioritise investment of over £37.6m revenue funding in ALN reform. This includes an extra £14m to increase support to deliver Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act statutory responsibilities. This will bring the total funding directly allocated to local authorities and education settings to £32m.

Since 2020, WG has significantly increased investment in ALN, with more than £107m to support implementation of our ALN reforms as well as providing £60m capital investment to local authorities in Wales to improve facilities and infrastructure for learners with ALN. Over £150m of revenue funding has also been allocated to support ALN in the post-16 FE sector through post-16 specialist placements and Additional Learning Support funding.

The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is investing over £750m over the next nine years to continue to improve and expand existing facilities and create new specialist provision.

A sustained improvement in educational standards in Wales is my top priority and I've set out my key priorities to drive improvements in my [Oral Statement on 5 November](#). These include improving attendance rates and the importance of literacy and numeracy as the fundamentals of learning. The Curriculum and ALN reform also remain central. I've discussed my priorities with Directors of Education and have written to all schools, so they are informed.

An additional £20m will be provided through the School Standards element of the LAEG to improve standards in schools, boosting this package of support to £180m in 2024-25. This additional in-year funding will provide much needed support to schools and other settings to help meet the needs of learners.

We are taking immediate action to support attainment, including an additional £1.1m investment this year in literacy, numeracy, and science programmes. That includes £470,000 to extend the *Research on the Instruction of Language with Literacy* Programme, which has already seen learners improve their reading skills by up to 20% and we have increased our investment in the Maths Support Programme to over £500,000 this year – giving more learners access to maths masterclasses, maths clubs, and further professional learning for teachers.

Literacy and numeracy are the building blocks of learning, and we are also investing an additional £10m to support learning and attainment in these areas as part of the 2025-26 Draft Budget.

It is vital that communication channels are active during these especially difficult times and we are committed to maintaining the open and constructive dialogue we have established with our partners across the system as we work together to deliver the very best for our learners.

Yours sincerely,

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

**Lynne Neagle AS/MS**

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Cabinet Secretary for Education