

**Pwyllgor Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Education and Lifelong Learning
Committee**

ELL(2) 06-03(p.3) Annex 2

Jane Davidson AM
Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
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Eich cyf / Your Ref:
Ein cyf / Our Ref:

16 July 2003

Dear Jane

Budget Planning Round 2003

In accordance with standing order 9.8, I am writing to set out the budget priorities of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee for the financial year 2004-05 and beyond. The committee considered this matter at its meeting on 9 July, taking account of your issues paper ELL(2) 02-03(p.4) and the commissioning paper from the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services.

The committee acknowledged the investment that had been made in the key priority areas identified by the previous education committee; namely early years, higher education, the Welsh language, special educational needs and teachers' pay and support - including training and continuing professional development. The committee supported funding for the higher education strategy set out in Reaching Higher and the proposed devolution of responsibility for student support to the National Assembly. The committee welcomed the extra funding that had been provided to address disparity in pay and conditions between further education lecturers and teachers in school sixth forms, which was identified as a priority in last year's budget planning round. The committee wished to see continued investment in these important areas of education and training based on systematic review and equal partnership consultation with practitioners.

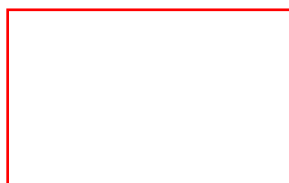
Within these key areas, the committee considered that particular attention should be given to special

educational needs, raising standards in schools and tackling teachers' workload (implementing the national agreement) and implementing the national action plan for a bilingual Wales (Iaith Pawb). Regarding the latter, the committee expressed support for teacher training through the medium of Welsh - with particular reference to early years settings.

You will be aware that the committee has decided to undertake a policy review of special educational needs. This will focus initially on early identification and intervention but also include imaginative speech therapy training initiatives and provision through the medium of Welsh.

I hope these suggested priorities will inform and support your deliberations with cabinet colleagues when determining the Assembly budget. The committee will consider the draft budget as early as possible in the autumn term.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Black AM
Committee Chair

Cc Sue Essex AM, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services