

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW: SAVINGS PROPOSALS – IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR STAFF (P.91/2010) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 19th July 2010  
by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

### **Part (a): Language Assistants**

Deputy Southern's proposition makes reference to 2002 when the proposal was to remove all language assistants. For clarity, the current proposal is to reduce provision and make more effective and efficient use of the remaining support.

The Education, Sport and Culture Department is of the view that this proposal will not impact adversely on standards.

In most primary schools it will result in pupils losing approximately 10 minutes per week of contact time with a foreign language speaker. The remaining permanent language assistants will focus their support in secondary schools, on pupils preparing to take examinations in a modern foreign language.

### **Introduction**

The Council of Ministers strongly supports the teaching of modern foreign languages in Jersey schools. An indication of this has been the long-standing decision of the States for the compulsory teaching of French in primary schools. This means that all Jersey pupils receive 5 years of French before the age of 14.

To further develop the teaching of French in our primary schools, the Education, Sport and Culture Department has invested significant time and resources over the past 2 years. This has resulted in the primary teaching resources being re-written, new assessment tools being developed to ensure progression into secondary schools, and 20 primary teachers receiving additional training to teach French in Upper Key Stage 2 (9–11 years).

The teaching of modern foreign languages in secondary schools is delivered by experienced and well-qualified staff in appropriately resourced language departments. These departments have access to new technologies that increasingly support the learning of a language.

Excluding the cost of language assistants, in excess of £1.5 million of the Department's budget is deployed annually to employ specialist qualified teachers of modern languages in provided secondary schools.

In addition to this, the Department has provided, and will continue to provide, language assistants to support the teachers and the pupils in their learning.

### **1. Background**

The CSR process within the States of Jersey requires that all departments examine their existing business and determine where savings can be made.

The Schools and Colleges Team examined in detail the role of the language assistants in schools for the year 2009/2010. This analysis of role included discussions with the temporary assistants at the end of their 2 year contracts. It was the Department's view that sufficient capacity existed to enable current provision to be re-organised without affecting standards adversely.

With the recent investment at primary level, it was considered that the provision for language assistants for the next school year could be reduced without adverse impact on standards.

## **2. Existing provision**

Education, Sport and Culture currently spends £178,220 annually for the provision of modern language assistants.

These assistants deliver 186 hours a week across all provided schools supporting French, Spanish, Italian and German. Of this, only 24 hours is provided to primary schools for work with pupils learning French in Upper Key Stage 2. The common practice is to extract a series of small groups of pupils from the class, for 10 minutes each week, to engage in speaking and listening.

The Education, Sport and Culture Department currently employs 5 permanent staff providing for 84 hours, and 8 temporary staff providing 102 hours between them across 4 languages. It should be noted that the permanent assistants work the full school year of 39 weeks and the temporary assistants only work from October to May.

In secondary schools the assistants work across all ages but their main role is to support those pupils taking external examinations at GCSE, 'A' level and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

## **3. New provision**

It is proposed to reduce the total annual spend on language assistants from £178,220 to £101,725 and re-focus the remaining support more efficiently across our schools.

This budget change would not impact on any permanent States of Jersey employee.

With the benefit of a further 20 primary teachers trained in teaching French, updated resources and curriculum and new technologies, primary schools should be able to compensate for the loss of one hour per week per school of language assistant support. For parents who wish their children to access further language development beyond the Jersey Curriculum there are other organisations available to support this.

If States members support the proposals contained in the Business Plan, secondary schools will use their language assistants to focus their support on those pupils who are taking external examinations. Pupils in Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11–14) will continue to be taught by trained specialist language teachers and supported by the opportunities offered by new technologies.

## **4. Impact of change**

The proposed changes have been discussed with the Heads of Modern Languages and the permanent language assistants.

It is evident that the expectations of schools for the coming year can be met if the proposed budget reduction is agreed and planned changes to provision are implemented.

These changes would be –

- No external support in primary schools;
- Focus of support in secondary schools for examination groups;
- Provision of additional language assistant support in Italian and German (all current permanent assistants are French or Spanish);
- Some additional hours of support in French and Spanish from experienced assistants in the Island;
- Schools to explore the use of video-conferencing as an additional means to support language and cultural development.

In the event that the States do not accept this change in service identified in the Draft Annual Business Plan 2011, the Education, Sport and Culture Department is confident that experienced language assistants already resident on-Island could be used to fully support schools for the next school year.

**Therefore it is not necessary to reinstate the recruitment process for the temporary language assistants.**

However, for the reasons outlined above, the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture does not support Part (a) of this proposition and urges States members to reject it.